

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BEL-RED CORRIDOR PROJECT  
PROPERTY & BUSINESS OWNER PANELS  
MINUTES

June 6, 2006  
7:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Council Chambers

**1. Welcome**

Strategic Planning Manager Kevin O'Neill welcomed everyone and thanked them for their willingness to participate in the Bel-Red corridor project. He said the public input received to date has been largely incorporated into the draft land use and transportation alternatives.

Mr. O'Neill said the draft alternatives were released to the public and the steering committee on June 1. He said the focus currently is on developing a set of alternatives to be moved forward for analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Planning Director Dan Stroh explained that it has been 30-plus years since much of the Bel-Red area developed, and it has been 20 years or so since the city has systematically talked about what the future of the area should be. The city does not have a very good idea about how the area fits into the overall land use and growth management strategies. The world has changed quite a bit since the area was last studied. The Growth Management Act is the law of the state, the focus of which is aimed at using urban lands more efficiently. Major centers have developed at either end of the Bel-Red corridor, Downtown Bellevue and Microsoft in the Overlake area of Redmond. Sound Transit is moving into its Phase II planning stage, and should high-capacity transit run through the corridor there will be significant opportunities for land use around any station location. Unless a new vision is created for the corridor, some major opportunities will be lost. Some of the areas where there are currently light industrial uses will probably stagnate over time without some planning.

A 16-member steering committee appointed by the City Council is guiding the study. They have been working over the last few months to develop a good background of the issues facing the area. The committee has reviewed the market and economic forecast for the area, land use, transportation and environmental conditions, and has reviewed a great deal of public input.

In working to develop a vision for the future of the Bel-Red corridor, the steering committee is taking the various building blocks and working to assemble them into logical alternatives. One approach would be to just leave the uses and zoning as they are and let the market do what it will. The problem with that approach is the area has been essentially locked up for decades by a lack of transportation capacity. There are very few cross streets and through roads in the area, and there is a lot of congestion. Any change to the existing land use picture could send the area into gridlock and could negatively impact the surrounding areas as well. The steering committee is facing critical choices with regard to where growth should go, how much growth should be permitted, and how to grow smart.

Mr. Stroh said the preliminary alternatives are deliberately broad and focused on vision. He said the visioning process is bigger than a zoning exercise; it is not just about drawing lines on a map. Once there is agreement on a vision for the area, implementation will take a number of forms, including zoning, public investment in infrastructure and parks

and open space, special financing tools, catalyst projects, and incentives.

The task at hand is to review the range of alternatives to make sure there is a menu that captures the best ideas. In the end the steering committee likely will pick and choose from the various components of the preliminary alternatives and pull them together into a hybrid alternative. The steering committee will be reviewing the input from the panel discussions and will then give staff direction to proceed with analysis of a specific set of alternatives in the EIS.

Mr. O'Neill said the Council provided the steering committee with ten principles to guide the process. There have been several opportunities for the public to offer its input, including at project scoping meetings, at community meetings, at steering committee meetings, and at a previous property and business owner panel discussion. The steering committee will be meeting again on June 12 and June 29 to finalize the list of preliminary alternatives to be moved into the EIS process. A preliminary preferred alternative will be identified early in 2007.

In addition to the Council principles, the steering committee adopted a series of objectives to be met in developing the alternatives. The objectives are focused on market feasibility, land use, neighborhood impacts, environmental quality and sustainability, parks and open space, and transportation issues.

With regard to the market study, there are objectives around incorporating elements of the market forecast produced by Leland Consulting Group; serving a distinctive market niche; meeting market needs and economic realities; and taking advantage of the area's strategic location. Between the core anchor uses at either end of the study area, there are a lot of different uses operating. Much of the land is underdeveloped with older buildings, and the land values make it difficult for new light industrial and manufacturing uses to be built. The market study recommendations include the opportunity for the area to compete for corporations; development types that will complement but not compete with the Downtown; opportunity for adding housing; treating environmental amenities as development amenities; aligning new development with transit and the broader transportation structure. The study concluded that a do nothing scenario will lead to piecemeal development and unplanned change over time.

The market study looked out to the year 2030 and took into account the Puget Sound economy, the Eastside economy, and historic absorption rates and concluded that there is a strong market in the area for office uses, some retail, possibly hotel uses, and for additional auto dealers. The study concluded that there will be a general loss of demand for industrial/warehouse space.

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald said the transportation system in the Bel-Red corridor is immature at best. There are few connections east-west and north-south. The transportation component of the study is focused at identifying ways to create a fine-grained system for all modes of travel. There is recognition of the fact that access needs to be provided to and from the regional freeways while improving local access within the corridor. The transportation system to be developed must accommodate the proposed land uses.

Mr. McDonald said the study is focused on establishing priorities and projects to help target resources toward connections to and from the freeways; supporting Sound Transit in developing high-capacity transit through the corridor and regional bus services; and finding ways to promote the use of high-occupancy vehicles on the freeways. The current transportation layout in the corridor greatly affects the way land uses have

developed and can develop in the future.

The corridor is ideally located within the city and the region to capture opportunities for redevelopment. At the same time, the location of the corridor means a large number of vehicle trips must pass through the area on a daily basis. Some of the trips are internal, but most of the trips during the morning peak are leaving the area. In considering the transportation infrastructure, it will be necessary to anticipate that as the corridor grows there will be an increase in the number of trips affecting the regional system, and that connections to the regional systems will be required. The afternoon peak travel patterns are just the opposite of the morning peak time.

Mr. McDonald said there are several streams and wetlands within the corridor. As redevelopment occurs, the environmental amenities will need to be addressed. The steering committee has expressed an interest in sustainable development practices that will improve both the natural and human environments. The stream systems in the corridor are categorized relative to their potential for supporting fish. Those streams that either do or could support fish populations are subjected to larger buffers. Some streams in the area are piped, and daylighting them is not necessarily the preferred alternative. There are provisions in the critical areas ordinance that allow for the retention of existing buildings within stream corridors and on top of piped streams without being considered nonconforming.

Just as land uses can be implemented through a variety of tools, improvements to riparian corridors can be accomplished through a variety of means, including regulations, volunteer programs, incentives, and grants.

Sustainability as a concept applies to the built environment as well as the natural environment. The steering committee recognizes the need to grow smartly by avoiding the squandering of scarce resources; making sure there is a multimodal transportation system in place; conserving water in landscaping and within buildings; considering mixed uses; and taking advantage of high-capacity transit by focusing on transit-oriented development that is denser close to transit station locations.

Mr. McDonald said the parks and open space component provides value to the overall parks system and is crucial to providing amenities for the people who could be living in the Bel-Red corridor. The corridor is centrally located between key parks such as Bridle Trails State Park, Marymoor Park, Wilburton Park and Mercer Slough. The steering committee is interested in looking at all opportunities to integrate new parks into the system and providing better connections to existing parks in the region.

If the corridor developments with housing uses and more jobs, there will need to be some park amenities. The area will need a number of local parks two to five acres in size with features that tie to adjacent uses and demographics. Such areas can be formal or informal, active or passive. The steering committee has considered the possibility of creating a major recreational facility in the area requiring 15 to 20 acres. Such a facility could include a large building to accommodate an aquatic center, indoor sports and other fitness uses. A building of that sort would probably be more compatible with employment or industrial uses in the corridor than with housing uses. The Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad is considering abandoning its right-of-way that runs through the corridor on the east side of I-405, and King County is in active negotiations focused on purchasing the right-of-way. One potential use for the right-of-way is a trail for the benefit of the community.

Mr. O'Neill said during the public scoping exercises early in the process there were

several positive comments about including a major park facility. At the property and business owner panel discussions, however, there was general support for smaller park facilities but not so much for a major facility.

Mr. O'Neill said there are a variety of existing land uses in the corridor ranging from light industrial to office, warehouse and retail. The area is home to a large number of service uses that are important to the community. One objective the steering committee established is centered on finding ways to accommodate those uses in the alternatives.

Mr. O'Neill explained that the initial alternatives range from higher amounts of commercial use and low amounts of housing to lower amounts of commercial use and higher amounts of housing. One of the alternatives pushes the envelope on both ends. Within the ranges there is room for a lot of mixing and matching. The idea of developing nodes of development is linked to the idea of having high-capacity transit in the area; in case studies around the country, high-intensity land uses are sited near transit stations to maximize the transportation and land use benefits. In fact, stations should not be located where that cannot happen, such as along SR-520. The alternatives suggest stations and nodes of development near the hospital at 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, along the 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE area, near 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE in the core, and locations in the east end of the area. In any case, any development node will have to be designed to make sense with or without high-capacity transit.

There are a lot of residential neighborhoods surrounding the study area. It is important to the Council and the steering committee to avoid impacting them as the area redevelops over time.

Mr. O'Neill stressed that the maps depicting the various alternatives are not intended to be anything but vision maps; they are not zoning maps. Over the next month the steering committee will be refining them before sending them on to the EIS process.

The No Action alternative is based on the existing land use and zoning patterns in the area. It contemplates inclusion of the local and regional transportation projects that are planned and funded. High-capacity transit is still assumed to run through the corridor connecting Downtown Bellevue with the Overlake area, but there would be no stations in between, with the possible exception of a station at 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE near the hospital where the existing and planned land uses would support it.

The first action alternative has nodes of development around the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE/124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE area with mixed housing and commercial uses, and one at 152<sup>nd</sup> in Redmond consistent with what is planned for Overlake Village. The alternative carves out an area called the service core specifically for service uses in addition to the area along NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street where such uses are already accommodated.

Alternative 2 has development nodes in the same places, but the alternative is framed around pushing the future employment envelope as high as the market forecast goes. The alternative includes much less housing.

Alternative 3 assumes lower employment levels and more housing. It has development nodes at 116<sup>th</sup> near the hospital, at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and to the west of 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The alternative anticipates much higher intense land uses near the hospital, and keeps an area specifically designated for future light industrial uses. The node on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE would be focused on mixed use higher density housing and commercial. The node near 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE would also be focused on mixed use development.

Alternative 4 pushes both the employment and housing envelopes. The alternative has a development node at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE focused on employment, a node on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE near NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street focused on mixed use housing and commercial, and a third node on 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE in Overlake Village.

Mr. O'Neill noted that any major enhancement of land use in the corridor will require changes to the transportation system. All of the action alternatives assume extending NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street across I-405; adding capacity along 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE; adding capacity to SR-520; and extending NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and possibly to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The notion of a major recreation facility in the area is not specifically located in any of the alternatives; it is assumed that it could be part of any of the alternatives.

Each of the action alternatives are based on future land uses in the market forecast: an office forecast for the area along 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE; low-density office on the south side of Bel-Red Road; and retaining retail and commercial uses along NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Each alternative assumes the same package of transportation improvements, parks projects, and improvements to wetlands and riparian corridors.

## **2. Panel Discussions**

Property Owners Panel 1  
Morning Session  
*Moderator: Kevin O'Neill*

Morning Session  
Room 1E-118

Strategic Planning Manager Kevin O'Neill asked the panelists to introduce themselves.

Steve Wells said he is with the Cascade Land Conservancy but is not a land owner. Mr. O'Neill informed Mr. Wells that he will be able to participate in the community meeting on June 8, but asked him to be an observer for the panel since he was not an area business or property owner..

Ellen Glann said she is a resident at Lake Bellevue Village, one of the few residential developments in the Bel-Red corridor.

Linda James said she is one of the owners of Evergreen Center on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. She said she also owns property on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street near 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. She said her properties are impacted by the riparian corridors associated with Goff Creek and Valley Creek.

Joe Balden with CB Richard Ellis said he was present as an observer.

Barb Congleton said she is an asset manager for Columbia West Properties that owns property at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road.

Roger White said he owns four different properties in the corridor. He said the Bel-Red corridor is the last area of the city that can be developed out with commercial uses.

Rod Johnson said he owns a property on Northup Way between 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He said he was surprised to hear that residential uses are being contemplated for the area.

Mike Yuell said his property is adjacent to Mr. Johnson's near the bend on Northup Way where the tall trees are.

Mr. O'Neill opened the floor to general questions about the draft alternatives and the process.

Mr. Yuell asked where the eastbound connections to SR-520 are planned. Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning, explained that in the late 1990s there was an added access study conducted that looked at a connection in the vicinity of 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. While the notion did not pan out well at the time, there has since been a lot of work done by the Washington State Department of Transportation regarding how to make the interchange of SR-520 and I-405 work better. Design work is under way to fix the weave problem between NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and SR-520 that will stack the northbound weave from NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street around the corner at SR-520. The current thinking is that a complete interchange could be constructed at 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE location is no longer on the radar.

Mr. White asked if there is anything in particular that is driving the planning, such as the interest in redevelopment of the Safeway site. Mr. O'Neill said Safeway is the biggest land owner in the area. Thirty-seven of their 75 acres are being readied to be put on the market, and it is fair to say they have an interest in the planning process, but they are not driving the process. What is driving the process is the fact that the area has not been looked at in a comprehensive manner for almost 20 years, during which time there have been a number of significant changes in the land use patterns, including expansions on both the east and west ends of the corridor. In addition to improvements being planned for the regional transportation system, there is the plan of Sound Transit to bring high-capacity transit across the lake from Seattle to Downtown Bellevue and on to Redmond passing through the Bel-Red corridor. The study is in part focused on what it would take to accommodate a transit station in the corridor.

Ms. James voiced concern with regard to the proposed street grid, commenting that it appears 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE does not extend all the way through to Northup Way. Mr. Liljeblad explained that the street grid is still in a conceptual state. The intent is to indicate that more streets will need to be created in order to provide more local access to enable higher intensity developments; there will also be a need for additional capacity on the arterials, but a lot more work is needed to figure out the particulars. Mr. O'Neill added that the street system will need to be designed in a way that will accommodate the land use vision for the area.

Mr. Yuell observed that the maps depict two corridors for high-capacity transit. He suggested there is the potential for a route along NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street and another along SR-520. If condemnation proceedings are used to obtain the needed right-of-way, it will be necessary to show that there is no alternative route to running through the middle of developed areas. At least four routes should be included in the study with a comparison of each. Mr. Liljeblad said the process is out in front of what the planners and engineers for Sound Transit may be thinking; the Sound Transit Board will ultimately make the decision regarding route alignment and station locations. If there are to be stations within the study area, they should be more in the southern part; very little land use benefit would flow from having an alignment running along the edge of the freeway. Sound Transit could choose a SR-520 alignment, but that would probably mean there would be no station at all within the corridor.

Continuing, Mr. Liljeblad said the downtown areas of Bellevue and Seattle are the main

attractors for Sound Transit Phase II. Overlake Hospital is a big potential destination, and there is a strong possibility of getting a station on the east side of I-405. Sound Transit has indicated that any extension through the Eastside is likely to require a maintenance base to serve the lake-crossing vehicles, and preliminarily they have identified a potential base in the vicinity of Lowes Hardware using the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way for access.

Mr. Yuell suggested that the EIS should include the SR-520 alignment as an alternative. Mr. O'Neill said the EIS the city will do will focus on land use, zoning and transportation improvements in the corridor. The study in part is aimed at determining the best high-capacity transit alignments and station locations for serving the Bel-Red area and the city generally. Sound Transit will be conducting its own EIS, both under SEPA and NEPA, and their work may very well consider a SR-520 alignment. Mr. Buell held that at the very least the city should include the SR-520 alignment in its considerations, even if it is ultimately found to be infeasible. Mr. O'Neill said he would add the issue to the missing items list.

Mr. O'Neill asked the panelists to indicate what they like about the draft alternatives.

Ms. Glann noted her support for mixed use development. She said patterns of that sort are a given for most metropolitan areas. Bellevue has traditionally been a driving city, but with changing demographics and new land use patterns, new habits can be learned.

Ms. Congleton agreed. She said being able to get around without using a car, and being able to walk to obtain goods and services, is key to livability. She said she could support Alternative 4 in the way it combines retail with housing and office uses into a cohesive whole. She pointed out the need to include green areas. Mr. O'Neill allowed that parks and open spaces will be required to serve any scenario with housing in mixed use areas; they will show up in the next iteration when it comes to refining the overall vision.

Ms. Glann concurred with the need for green areas in the mix.

With regard to Alternative 4, Mr. Yuell said he does not like the way it converts the Safeway site to some new use. He suggested the Safeway site should be left alone and the transit station should be moved to the area of the hospital.

Mr. White noted his support for Alternative 4 in that it allows for the highest densities. He agreed that mixed use developments will be good for the area.

Mr. Johnson backed Alternative 3.

Mr. Yuell said he likes Alternative 3 because it leaves the light industrial use on the Safeway site alone, allows for mixed use near 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and includes a transit connection in the hospital core.

Ms. James said she likes the idea of developing housing along 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. That area could develop faster than the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE area; until the Cadman site redevelops, the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE area will not seem appropriate for residential uses. There are also a lot of body shops to the south of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street along 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Developing the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE area with housing and commercial would set a precedent for the whole area. People who work at the hospital could walk there from homes on 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. Coca Cola has indicated it wants to stay where it is on 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. O'Neill asked the panelists to indicate what they do not like about the draft alternatives.

Mr. Yuell reiterated his desire to see the Safeway area left to light industrial uses and the transit stop moved to the hospital corridor. He said he likes the idea of including mixed uses on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. O'Neill commented that Safeway has already moved its warehouse/distribution use to the south but plans to retain its bakery and ice cream plant in the corridor.

Mr. White suggested a high-capacity transit alignment along SR-520 could be to the benefit of the city. The grade is such that streets could be constructed to run alongside and below on the south side. He proposed the study should take that option into consideration.

Mr. Yuell said if housing is developed along 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, the auto body shops will need to go somewhere else, and the Safeway site may be the right place.

Ms. James held that the notion of a services core that is included in Alternative 1 should be carried over into Alternative 2 as well.

Mr. White asked if under any of the scenarios the city would create nonconforming uses by rezoning the area. Mr. O'Neill said any time the focus is on transforming land uses, nonconformity becomes an issue. The current process, however, is focused on developing a vision for what the area could be in 25 years. How the vision gets implemented will be another aspect entirely. The steering committee has expressed the notion of being open to new uses while being as sensitive as possible to the uses that are already on the ground. It is very possible that new zoning districts and new zoning overlays will ultimately be created for the area specifically to avoid making some uses nonconforming.

Mr. White suggested Alternative 4 is the most attractive for landowners in that it retains the current uses and allows for more uses in the future.

Mr. Yuell said the total square footage in use by all the auto body repair shops should be added up, then a determination should be made with regard to where that same amount of square footage could be placed in the corridor. That would probably mean allowing multistory buildings.

Ms. Glann asked if existing businesses would be forced to relocate if the zoning were to change. Mr. O'Neill said there are multiple ways to approach the issue. One way would be to create a sanctuary for such uses, which is the approach outlined in Alternative 1. Another approach would be to create mixed use zones that allow for a variety of different kinds of uses. Yet another way would be to introduce new uses over time without disallowing the existing uses.

Mr. O'Neill asked the panelists to point out things that are missing from the draft alternatives.

Ms. James suggested that if a Main Street concept were to be developed on the northern portion of 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, the southern half could be offices and body shops with less residential. The transit station could stand in the middle. The same could be true along 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. Johnson commented that the existing mix of uses is quite varied. He proposed allowing to the extent possible for small nodules here and there to accommodate the existing uses.

Ms. James said the area should be open to a wide range of uses. The problem currently is that there are too many restrictions on the allowed uses.

Ms. Glann pointed out that there have been industrial spills over the years that have flowed into Lake Bellevue. With help from the city, many of those issues are being resolved. She said she would be inclined to keep the heavy industrial uses in a specific location to avoid conflicts of that sort.

Ms. James noted that body shops are very highly regulated to prevent environmental damage.

Mr. Yuell commented that industrial operations that occur outside are more liable to trigger environmental concerns given that with the rains the runoff flows to the streams. If the same uses were enclosed in a building, any spills would be captured by the sewer system. One way to reduce impacts is to require industrial uses to be carried on indoors. Capturing runoff from parking lots where cars are leaking oil is another issue altogether.

Mr. O'Neill explained that over the next few weeks the steering committee will be asked to take the draft alternatives and refine them. The process will include some mixing and matching. He asked the panelists what they would pick and choose to create a preferred alternative.

Mr. Yuell said he favors putting high-capacity transit through the middle of the area. However, that would require converting NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street from a two-lane road into a five-lane road. He asked if there will be a need for that much capacity and what will happen at the east end of the roadway. Mr. Liljeblad said the city will want to avoid creating a new intersection that will not work, and clearly it will be necessary to deal with both ends of the roadway. It is too early in the process to say what will be needed. For one thing, the various alternatives include a wide range of uses and contemplate different locations for those uses. Until there is a development program pinned down for each alternative, it will not be possible to do any specific transportation analysis.

Mr. O'Neill said NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street could potentially serve multiple functions, including general purpose capacity, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, and as a transit corridor. If high-capacity transit is to be run through the middle of the corridor, the right-of-way should accommodate multiple transportation purposes.

Answering a question asked by Mr. White, Mr. O'Neill said the visioning process is looking out 30 to 40 years; it will take years and probably decades to fully build out the vision. Along with a preferred vision for the area, the study will likely yield a preferred implementation plan that will include phasing and options for paying for the infrastructure. Both the infrastructure improvements and the land use changes will need to occur in a thoughtful, phased approach.

Ms. James referred to Alternative 3 and suggested that the areas marked for housing on the west and east of the transit station on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE would be appropriate for mixed use office/housing. Mr. O'Neill allowed that they could be.

Ms. Glann commented that the Grandview Park area of Vancouver, B.C. has housing separated from the mixed commercial uses along the waterfront by a big green field.

Mr. White pointed out that identifying specific areas for particular uses will result in restrictions on other uses. Flexibility that will allow growth over time will be key to the success of the area. Mr. O'Neill said the steering committee likely will not be inclined to allow something like a Washington Square development with four tall towers and a variety of uses. The committee is seeking to find a niche for the area that will complement rather than compete with the Downtown. In developing objectives for the study, the committee concluded that the appropriate scale of development in the area is on the order of four to six stories.

Mr. O'Neill asked the panelists to identify the points of consensus that should be passed on to the steering committee. The need for flexibility and a general support for mixed use developments were highlighted.

Ms. James asked if two Main Street retail areas could be developed, one at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and one at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Mr. O'Neill said that could potentially work. He noted, however, that the land use consultants said the notion of a Main Street is the hardest thing to get right. From a design and location standpoint, it could be difficult to have two Main Streets.

With regard to station location, Mr. Liljeblad noted that Alternatives 1 and 2 assume a station at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, and Alternative 3 assumes a station at 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. From a regional transportation perspective, having stations too close together does not facilitate rapid travel. It potentially could work to have stations located at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. Buell suggested that any industrial use that has noise, odor or other impacts should be required to mitigate them.

There was agreement that a transit route running along SR-520 should be considered in the study.

Mr. O'Neill thanked everyone for their participation and input.

Property Owners Panel 2  
Morning Session  
*Moderator: Kevin McDonald*

Morning Session  
Room 1E-120

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald asked the panelists to introduce themselves.

Scott Hall with Burnstead Construction noted that his company has a property at the corner of 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road and is in the process of purchasing the adjacent property. He said the company also owns property at the intersection of Northup Way and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Len Matson and Ken Matson said they own an auto repair shop on 136<sup>th</sup> Place NE.

Rob Johnson with Cadman said the company operates at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

Carlotta Esmorris said she owns property on 136<sup>th</sup> Place SE.

Eric Nickols said he manages properties for several different owners, and owns nine retail buildings on NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street, NE 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and a property at Bel-Red Road and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

David Ling said he owns the property at 13401 Bel-Red Road.

Peter Koch and Christina Koch said they own two office/warehouse buildings on 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE.

Allen Benedict said he owns property on NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street between 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Todd Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties said his family owns Brierwood Center.

Will Daniels with Sterling Realty said his company owns Campus Office Park on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Dick Hagen said he owns a building at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road where the biggest tenant is a manufacturing use.

Mr. McDonald stressed that the alternatives on the table for discussion are at the draft stage and are focused on how the different components can be arranged and how intense the land uses can be within the different components. It will be the job of the steering committee to take the alternatives, fold in the input received from the public, and combine the four alternatives into three for analysis in the EIS.

Mr. McDonald asked the panelists to comment on what they like about the proposed alternatives.

Mr. Koch said he likes the fact that under Alternative 1 space is provided for small service uses. The other alternatives do not have that aspect. He stressed the importance of retaining areas for service uses and small businesses. Mr. McDonald said that point has been stressed by a lot of people in the process to date.

Mr. Woosley said he likes Alternative 1 and the fact that it allows for flexibility and an increase in the allowed development intensity and types of uses. He said no one knows what the market will be like in 20 years. With the right amount of flexibility, the market will determine the optimum time for redevelopment. Mr. McDonald said under Alternative 1 the intensity of uses could vary over time as high-capacity transit comes online in the area. However, even before those services arrive, the alternative allows for higher intensity in conjunction with some transportation system improvements, including connecting 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to SR-520, improving 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and providing an east-west connection between 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Johnson, Mr. McDonald said the long-term vision for the services core area outlined in Alternative 1 would be to provide a place for service uses and businesses such as auto repair and print shops. The exact location and size of the services core could change. Implementation through zoning, regulations, incentives and programs will have to be consistent with the overall vision, allowing for the retention and expansion of those services.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that Alternative 3 is the only alternative that includes light industrial uses. Mr. McDonald explained the intent of the alternatives is to provide a

range of options. In the end the steering committee likely will mix and match the different options to create alternatives to be studied further. If the steering committee hears loud and clear that the community wants both a light industrial sanctuary and a services core, one of the alternatives will include them.

Ms. Koch asked what types of commercial uses are contemplated for the areas marked as appropriate for mixed use housing/commercial. Mr. McDonald said in mixed use settings with housing above commercial, the commercial uses must be compatible with and supported by the housing. The uses could include small shops, restaurants, and professional services. The commercial uses envisioned are not those that generate a lot of traffic.

Mr. Ling commented that in order for the city to create a new route along NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, the city will have to purchase a lot of property. If the owners do not want to sell, the city would have to condemn the properties. If a case were to end up in court, questions would be asked about why the city only offered the one proposal. He proposed the city should have a second arterial option and a second consultant firm offering a recommendation.

Mr. Nickols said he would prefer to see more of a commercial focus rather than housing. Mixed-use developments with housing above could be compatible with what is already existing in the area. If too much housing is developed, the transition will be harsher and the necessary accoutrements such as parks and open space would be very expensive to provide. The area is generally commercial in nature currently and that should continue to be the focus, though in a more intense format. He offered his support for the alternative with a higher employment and lower housing emphasis.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Hall, Mr. McDonald said the alternatives are based on the high-end forecast for jobs and housing through 2030, including 4.5 million square feet of office, 5000 housing units, 200-300 hotel rooms, and 200,000 to 300,000 square feet of additional retail. Mr. Hall noted that Alternative 4 does the best job of accommodating the high end for each category. He stressed the need to have a services core given that they are so important.

Mr. Daniels asked if the development of a major recreation center would be in addition to Highland Center. Mr. McDonald said it would, adding that it would be a different facility with different components. In the thinking of the parks department, the region and the city needs a large indoor sports venue with an aquatic center, indoor soccer, and other types of year-round indoor activities, along with a compliment of outdoor activities. The complex would require perhaps as much as 20 acres, and with strong enough support from the community the notion could be included in any of the alternatives.

Mr. Koch asked if the recreation center could be in conjunction with a stadium for the Sonics. Mr. McDonald said the two notions are not necessarily related. If there is to be an arena built to house the Sonics in the Bel-Red area, it might make sense to look at a major parks facility adjacent to it.

Mr. Woosley said it is very possible the Sonics may choose to move to Bellevue, and if they do the logical site in the Bel-Red area is the Safeway site. He asked if any of the alternatives would allow for that to occur. Mr. McDonald answered that while none of the alternatives anticipate a major sports arena, none of the alternatives precludes the idea either. A major sports arena use would be compatible with an office campus use.

Mr. Daniels observed that there are plans to extend NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street across I-405. He asked about NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and the proposed NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street improvements. Mr. McDonald said

NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street could be extended beyond 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to provide better east-west connectivity. NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street will be rebuilt as part of the I-405 expansion project, and it will become a major pedestrian route across the freeway. NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street could also be the location for moving high-capacity transit across the freeway. If NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street is constructed, it could have its own separate crossing of I-405, though likely without any direct access to the freeway. There is also the idea of curving NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the south to intersect with NE 12<sup>th</sup> in order to cross the freeway.

Mr. Woosley noted his support for the highlighted roadway improvements, including the widening of the existing corridors of 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. He said it also makes sense to add a new east-west corridor using NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. A new connection to SR-520 also needs to be constructed; that additional connection will be the key to unlocking the development potential of the Bel-Red area.

Mr. Nickols agreed with the need to add a connection to SR-520 in the vicinity of 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He suggested consideration of including a new connection to SR-520 at 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE or 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE as well. Mr. McDonald said he would add the suggestion to the things to change list.

Ms. Hall asked what the city's definition of medium density office is. Mr. McDonald said it would be something between what is allowed in the Downtown and walkup developments, possibly five to seven stories tall with an FAR of 1.0 to 1.5. Buildings of that type are not currently allowed anywhere else in the city. Such developments would add value to the office market for the whole city without competing with the Downtown. In the vicinity of a high-capacity transit station, the buildings could possibly be a bit taller.

Mr. Woosley suggested that an FAR of more than 1.5 would be needed to get five to seven stories.

Mr. Hagen voiced his support for completing the street grid and adding NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. He said he particularly likes the notion of increasing the westbound capacity to improve the traffic flow out of the area.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Woosley, Mr. McDonald said there has been no decision made relative to where a new connection to SR-520 should occur. The alternatives show a connection at 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, which appears to be the best location. He said he doubts that either 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE or 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE would work, but it is possible that there could be another connection to the east of 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and west of 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The further east the greater the impacts on the neighborhoods to the north, which is something the Council is particularly guarding against.

Mr. McDonald asked the panelists to comment on what they do not like about the draft alternatives.

Mr. Hagen commented that in the consultant's report it is stated that many of the existing buildings and uses are stagnated. He said at some point a vision for the Bel-Red area will be chosen, and implementation of the vision will involve zoning. Property owners may then find themselves unable to re-lease to a similar user who could take advantage of the improvements already in place because it does not fit the new vision. The market will require a long time for the new vision to take over, and property owners could find themselves caught between the two worlds with a functionally obsolete property. When

zoning is changed, there is the presumption that the market will eventually weed out all currently allowed uses. Existing uses can be grandfathered, but if there is a lapse of six months the use or a similar use is not allowed to return. During the transition time, there should at the very least be an expansion in the list of allowed uses to avoid loss of property value. The concern is valid for any of the draft alternatives.

Mr. McDonald said it will be vitally important for property owners to be at the table down the road when the focus turns to developing implementation strategies.

Mr. Nickols noted that under each of the alternatives much of the transportation grid is manufactured out of essentially nothing. He allowed that while the need to complete the grid is great, the process will be very expensive. Different types of uses require higher levels of grid connections, with housing requiring the most. The grid connections are generally paid for by property owners as they develop and redevelop; for the larger properties in the corridor that may not be a big issue, but for many of the smaller property owners it could be. Mr. McDonald said staff is admittedly struggling with the notion of how to implement the vision. It is intuitive that greater densities can only be supported with a better roadway grid system. The draft alternatives include a conceptual grid, but it should not be understood that the grid will develop as depicted. Development of the grid over time will occur through a variety of means, including developer contributions, CIP dollars, and grant funding.

Mr. Hagen highlighted the fact that residential uses will require amenities that do not currently exist in the corridor, and said there is some question about how long it would take to get them in place. If the vision leans more toward more intense commercial development, it will take less time because that is already the character of the area. Mr. McDonald agreed and pointed out that amenities vary depending to a large extent on demographics. The vision should clearly articulate that amenities are needed, and the implementation strategy should provide a mechanism for their development. The city has a level of service calculation it uses to determine the need for parks; for X number of housing units, there must be Y components of outdoor recreation potential. All of that will be programmed as redevelopment occurs over time.

Mr. Woosley pointed out that the vision for the Downtown was put into place in 1978. It has taken nearly 30 years for the components to be constructed. Redevelopment of the Bel-Red corridor can be expected to take a long time as well. During the interim, great care should be taken to avoid creating legal nonconforming uses. Alternative 1 allows the existing uses and adds in mixed use housing and commercial; all of the other alternatives tend to constrain the area along Bel-Red Road and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to what is currently allowed there, which is retail and commercial.

Mr. Woosley suggested it is likely that medical office buildings will extend east from the hospital campus. Uses complementary to the hospital should be allowed in the western section of the corridor.

Mr. Hall concurred and said he could see no compelling argument for limiting medical uses to the west side of I-405. He said Burnstead has had to turn away some potential clients with medical uses. If a line has to be drawn, it should be near 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The Lake Bellevue campus development could easily expand with medical-type uses. Flexibility in meeting market demands will be key to the success of whatever vision is ultimately put in place.

Mr. Hall asked if there has been any discussion of locating light rail in the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way. Mr. McDonald answered that the city is not pushing the

idea, nor are any of the transit agencies. Sound Transit is thinking about using a portion of the corridor to provide access to a maintenance base, however, in the north part of the Bel-Red corridor. The railroad right-of-way will not accommodate a roadway; it could accommodate a trail along with rail.

Mr. Woosley proposed that for purposes of freight mobility consideration should be given to retaining the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way for rail transportation.

Mr. McDonald asked the panelists to comment on what they would change about the draft alternatives.

Mr. Woosley suggested extending NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street beyond 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to connect with 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is unrealistic. The extension would require wiping out all of the buildings on the south shore of Lake Bellevue, which would be very expensive. The better approach would be to focus on expanding NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and adding a new corridor on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. With regard to high-capacity transit, he expressed the view that the focus should be on creating a regional express bus system rather than rail. Buses can provide a lot more service for the same cost. In order for Sound Transit to pay for light rail through the area, there would have to be an increase in the sales tax by as much as five-tenths of a cent; that is neither politically or economically feasible. There are enormous hurdles associated with bringing rail to the Eastside and through the Bel-Red corridor; bus rapid transit is much more likely to occur.

Mr. Hagan asked what priority is given to including another connection to SR-520. Mr. McDonald said the project is seen as key to unlocking the development potential of the Bel-Red area. He added that adding a connection to the freeway would be fruitless without also expanding the arterial system.

Mr. Hall said he would add two connections to the freeway, one at 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE as outlined and another near 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. Woosley concurred. He noted that the Downtown has four freeway connections located very close to each other. The same type of access to and from the Bel-Red area is needed. He suggested that an additional general purpose lane in each direction on SR-520 should be added and questioned whether the grid system within the corridor has sufficient capacity. Mr. McDonald said the EIS will say whether or not the area has enough capacity. It is known the arterial system will need to be expanded, and the analysis will indicate how much expansion will be needed. He added that it is not within the purview of the steering committee to comment on the need for additional lanes on SR-520.

Mr. Woosley commented that Microsoft intends to add 12,000 new jobs just to the east of the study area, and that will tend to eat up the available BROTS capacity. The fact is that redevelopment of the Bel-Red area is being held hostage to the redevelopment occurring in Overlake and the Downtown; those developments coming online are eating up the available capacity, making concurrency difficult.

Mr. McDonald asked the panelists what messages should be communicated to the steering committee regarding the alternatives.

Mr. Ling said he would like to see them recommend hiring a second consultant to provide a recommendation. Mr. McDonald said it is not within the purview of the steering committee to recommend that.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Ling, Mr. McDonald said the technology used for the high-capacity transit system, whether it be rail or bus, does not change the fundamental land use patterns for any of the alternatives. Where there is transit, higher density uses can be supported, especially in the vicinity of the stations, but the general land use patterns will need to be able to stand on their own regardless of whether high-capacity transit comes to the area.

Mr. Hagen asked if all of the concurrency issues would go away if magically all of the proposed transportation projects could be constructed. Mr. McDonald said each development proposal would have to be studied on its own merits. He explained that concurrency is a citywide calculation. For any development, the trips to and from a site are analyzed to determine how it affects intersections throughout the city. The high-end land use forecasts for the Bel-Red corridor have been modeled, and the results show some problem intersections outside of the corridor.

Mr. Woosley said it would be very helpful for the public and the steering committee to have a list of the problem intersections identified in the modeling. As the Council moves ahead with developing a budget for the next biennium, voices from the Bel-Red area should be advocating for investments in the corridor so the vision can become a reality.

Mr. Hagen suggested that to the extent there are constraints beyond what the draft alternatives identify, the steering committee should be informed so it can discuss them. Mr. McDonald said the steering committee and the Council is aware of the intersections that did not fare well in the modeling. He agreed the committee needs to understand that the vision for the Bel-Red corridor will be impacted from development outside the corridor as well as inside the corridor.

Mr. Ling asked if the vision for the area along Bel-Red Road is for the same kind of development that currently exists. Mr. McDonald said the anticipation is that development along Bel-Red Road will continue to provide a transition between the higher intense uses within the corridor and the neighborhoods to the south. The alternatives include low-intensity office uses along the south side of Bel-Red Road. Mr. Ling suggested the steering committee should consider allowing buildings of five to six stories along the south side of Bel-Red Road.

Mr. Woosley suggested more permitted uses need to be considered for the commercial zones to increase the level of flexibility.

Mr. Koch concurred. Ms. Koch pointed out that over the years the uses that have done the best during economic ups and downs are those with a combination of office/warehouse. She added that office and residential uses all spawn adjunct businesses that do well in office/warehouse configurations. There will always be a need for upholstery shops and glass companies to service the needs of people in nearby residential areas. Office/warehouse uses are definitely not stagnated in the corridor.

Mr. Daniels asked if any consideration has been given to the increased level of water/sewer/electricity infrastructure capacity that will be needed as the area redevelops. Mr. McDonald said there has been no specific focus on that aspect; he added that utilities will be added over time to match the land use vision for the area.

Mr. McDonald thanked the panelists for their participation.

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald asked the panelists to introduce themselves.

Linda James said she is one of the owners of Evergreen Center located on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE near NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and is part owner in another property on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the west of the Safeway store.

T.J. Woosley said his family owns Briarwood Center at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He said he is a commercial real estate broker and manager.

Brian Kelly with **Kelson(?)** Distributors said he is a tenant in a building at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road.

Perry Singh said he and his father own the Aamco transmission shop on 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at Bel-Red Road. He said they do not own the building they are in.

Frank Spicer said his business, Auto Logic, is located on 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. He said he has been a tenant there for 28 years.

James Edwards with Eastside Transmissions said he is a tenant in the building on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street near 138<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He said he has been in the same location since 1990.

Sharif Robles said he and his wife operate a marshal arts studio in Bel-East Business Park. He said they have been tenants there for about 15 years.

Santiago Ramos said he operates a Farmers Insurance office on 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE as a tenant.

Darin Croston said he was present representing the Coca Cola Bottling Company operating at 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road.

Mr. McDonald informed the group that their comments would be summarized and provided to the steering committee prior to their meeting on June 12.

Mr. McDonald asked for general questions regarding the process or the draft alternatives.

Mr. Croston asked if there are any existing uses that are not included in one of the draft alternatives. Mr. McDonald said visioning process is use-neutral in that no attempt is being made to say one use is in and another use is out. The vision is intended to provide a framework for discussion. Implementation of the vision will be through zoning, and that will be the time to preclude or favor specific uses.

Mr. Kelly said it appears the alternatives shrink the light industrial uses out. He asked if the city has taken any steps to determine the actual amount of land needed for the various uses as the population continues to grow. Mr. McDonald said a market analysis was done early in the study that included a long-term look at what the market will favor in the corridor. The analysis shows a market for housing, office space, some additional retail, and possibly a hotel. The report indicated that the footprint for light industrial uses will shrink over time. Mr. Kelly commented that once a use is precluded by not giving it a

place to locate, it will be nearly impossible to bring it back again. Mr. McDonald said no specific acreage figures have been attached to any of the uses; further analysis will be needed to decide exactly how much light industrial land may be needed and where a light industrial sanctuary could be located.

Mr. Kelly said he has lived in Bellevue his entire life and has over time seen light industrial space consumed by other uses. There is very little of it left, and if it is allowed to disappear altogether the city will not be able to replace it.

Planning Director Dan Stroh said the issue of what the best use is for the Bel-Red corridor is one the steering committee has been wrestling with. The area is within an urban growth area and is governed by the Growth Management Act which in part directs the more efficient use of land. There have been voices raised highlighting the need to retain existing services alongside voices calling for more housing. From a transportation perspective, the more houses there are near where the jobs are the better. Clearly there are tradeoffs to be discussed. He added that while the draft alternatives do not preclude any land uses, they do favor certain land uses. For example, one of the alternatives calls out a light industrial sanctuary; others tend to favor housing and commercial uses, including office. Favoring one use over another does not mean the non-favored uses will become illegal or nonconforming.

Ms. James noted that the proposed street grid shows neither 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE or 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE going through. She said she would prefer to see the study focus on a pattern that is more akin to what exists in the area already with a new grid superimposed over it. Mr. McDonald explained that the street grid shown on the map of the land use alternatives is representative but not necessarily geographically specific. There are, however, transportation system improvements that are common to each alternative.

Mr. McDonald asked the panelists to indicate what they like and do not like about the alternatives.

Mr. Edwards called attention to Alternative 2 and the indication that transit will supposedly be traveling along NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street and asked how much of the right-of-way of the roadway will be needed for the transit service. Mr. McDonald said it is too early to know what the actual cross section may be, or even what the specific alignment may be. Currently, NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street does not exist as a through street, so an entirely new transportation system corridor would need to be constructed to accommodate both high-capacity transit and a new five-lane arterial.

Mr. Edwards said if the alignment and development issues were such that his business would be able to remain where it is, having high-capacity transit adjacent would be a very big plus.

Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning, said there are two potential high-capacity transit routes shown in the alternatives, one along Bel-Red Road, and one using NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. He allowed that Sound Transit will have the authority to decide the route and station locations, but the Bel-Red corridor project will serve to inform that process.

Mr. Croston suggested that regardless of what happens on either side of 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, the dip will need to be addressed. He said that is a major concern for trucks accessing SR-520 heading westbound.

Mr. Kelly said his business regularly has 28-foot and 40-foot trucks coming in, and that is

already problematic on Bel-Red Road. Adding transit may not help at all with that problem, especially if industrial areas are retained in the mix. Mr. McDonald said the horizontal geometry of the connection to westbound SR-520 from northbound 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE simply does not work. Mr. Kelly said because his place of business has no through street on the back side, trucks must literally back in across Bel-Red Road, blocking traffic in the process.

Mr. Woosley strongly encouraged the notion of allowing all existing uses to continue operating as legal uses long into the future; no business should be forced to leave or become legal nonconforming. He indicated his support for the NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street alignment, and the notion included in Alternative 1 of a Main Street retail area. Improving the whole grid around the Safeway block will be critical. One of the biggest challenges will be maintaining concurrency with intersections outside the Bel-Red area as redevelopment moves forward; accordingly, it will be important to extend NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street to connect to the old Bel-Red Road. Great caution should be taken in exploring taking NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street across the south side of Lake Bellevue; it would be very expensive just to purchase the necessary right-of-way. He noted his strong support for connecting NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Consideration needs to be given to improving the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street/120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/old Bel-Red Road intersection.

Continuing, Mr. Woosley noted that on Alternative 1 the medical office bubble along 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is good, but suggested the demand for the use should be looked at in a radius fashion that would extend to the east side of Lake Bellevue. Allowing medical office uses in the mixed use housing/commercial bubble would take care of that. He commented that he is pleased overall with the alternatives as outlined.

Mr. Spicer said he likes the idea in Alternative 1 of having a hub based in the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE area, but said he worries about the fact that it could push Coca Cola out of the picture because they are a light industrial use. He said they have been a very good neighbor and should be allowed to stay, as they want to do. He noted that the services core shown on Alternative 1 takes in the place where his business is located, which is good.

Mr. Spicer asked if the city is currently working with developers regarding the vacated portion of the Safeway site. Mr. McDonald said there have been no development proposals for the site made public yet.

Mr. Spicer suggested that there are some excellent opportunities for parks facilities in the area, notably because of the wetlands. However, King County Metro is nearby and they would not be a good neighbor for a park use; he asked if the city has worked with Metro to determine what their long-term goals are for the Bel-Red area. Mr. McDonald said staff met with Metro early in the process and were informed that Metro has no interest in relocating. Mr. Spicer asked if any air quality tests or soil studies have been done to determine if developing housing on the site would even be feasible. Mr. McDonald said he is not aware of any soil studies done, but noted that an air quality analysis may be done as part of the EIS. Mr. Spicer suggested there may be issues of that sort attached to all areas below the SR-520 corridor because of the terrain.

Mr. Spicer said his specific concerns are centered around anything that would negatively impact Coca Cola; environmental issues in areas where housing is proposed; losing areas designated for light industrial uses; and the fact that King County Metro is located adjacent to an area that could be key to a major parks development and mixed use buildings.

Mr. Spicer pointed out that some of the areas in the corridor have ridgelines with very good views. He noted that Alternative 1 shows mixed use housing and commercial near the area of Lake Bellevue and asked if the idea is that condominiums in that area would have good views. Mr. McDonald said the view opportunities were taken into account in developing the draft alternatives.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Spicer, Mr. McDonald said the issue of affordable housing has been raised by the public and by the steering committee. He allowed that no specific housing types are being discussed at the current stage in the development of the alternatives. He allowed that mixed use housing will differ from pure housing complexes.

Mr. O'Neill added that when the steering committee endorsed the objective that talks about having a jobs/housing balance, they discussed the affordability issue, but without establishing a specific objective around affordability. It is generally known that supply affects affordability, and the steering committee recognizes that the Bel-Red area is suitable for enhancing the supply of housing overall, and that could have positive impacts on affordability. Mr. Spicer said his concern is that the value of the land is such that affordability will not occur in the area, and that could preclude people living near the jobs in the corridor.

Mr. Spicer commented that if Bellevue gives up all its light industrial space, those who rely on those uses will be forced to travel further to get what they need. He agreed that all existing uses should be permitted to continue operating as legal uses while the area undergoes change.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Spicer, Mr. McDonald explained that the various draft alternatives have been designed to accommodate the number of housing units and the total square footage of commercial and office uses forecast for the area through 2030. The alternatives do not prescribe any particular density, FAR or building height; those issues will be addressed as strategies to implement the preferred alternative are discussed.

Mr. O'Neill said the land use patterns outlined in the alternatives are not random; they are based on the broad development program. The actual way the area redevelops in the future will be based on a variety of factors, many of which are not even known yet.

In stressing the need to retain auto-related businesses, Mr. Spicer allowed that over time the industry will change and the service uses will have to change along with it. The changing technologies will not, however obviate the need for auto-related businesses; they may just take on another transportation-based form. The same is likely true for other small businesses and light industrial uses.

Mr. Kelly pointed out the auto dealerships in the area cannot keep up with the demand for services. If an approach is adopted which will eliminate the small service businesses in the area, the people of Bellevue will have to drive further to get what they need. Mr. McDonald noted that Alternative 1 accommodates service uses as a preferred use, but added that does not mean that none of the other alternatives will not also accommodate the uses. The critical aspect will be the way in which the implementation strategy is crafted to provide a sufficient level of flexibility to accommodate the variety of uses that are compatible with the long-range vision.

Mr. Kelly asked to what degree the notion of high-capacity transit running through the area is driving the study. Mr. McDonald explained that the No Action alternative includes an alignment through the corridor for high-capacity transit, but no stations.

Sound Transit intends to implement a high-capacity transit system that connects Downtown Bellevue with the Overlake area in Redmond. The system has not been funded. The study is intended to inform the planning process in anticipation of transit running through the corridor. No specific alignment has been chosen, and no decision has been made relative to the number of stations there should be in the corridor.

Continuing, Mr. McDonald said there is a relationship between land uses and high-capacity transit. In putting together the various draft alternatives, an attempt has been made to arrange the various land uses in a way that allows them to relate to each other and to the surface transportation system. The development patterns will have to make sense regardless of whether high-capacity transit ever goes through the corridor. If high-capacity transit does come through the area, it will unlock more potential for land use development by creating additional transportation infrastructure to support more land use density.

Mr. Liljeblad added that a potential transit station has been identified for the area adjacent to Overlake Hospital on the west side of Lake Bellevue, and another in Redmond around 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and the Microsoft campus area. Under the No Action alternative, there is no reason to include a station in the Bel-Red area. Part of the purpose of the study is to identify where it would make sense to have a transit station and the necessary land uses.

Mr. Singh noted his support for Alternative 1 in that it recognizes the value of the services sector. He said there is a critical need for independent auto service providers in the Bellevue area. He said out of 1100 stores, his is the second busiest dealer in the United States and Canada. Customers come to him from all over because they need him as an alternative to going to the dealers who charge considerably more for the same work. Too many cities are becoming unfriendly to auto repair services and are pushing them out. During a recent meeting someone mentioned that auto services could move to Woodinville, but the fact is that city is shoving the use out as well; even if they were not, the citizens of Bellevue would not be well served by having to drive that far to get the services they now can get in the Bel-Red area. As more residential uses are added to the city, the need for auto services will increase even more.

Mr. McDonald asked if a transmission repair shop can be compatible with an office-type setting or a mixed use development. Mr. Singh said it could be, adding that the business does make some noise, so having housing too close could be a problem.

Mr. Robles said his business is generally community oriented, and noted that his customers come from all over; a large number work at Microsoft. He said the Bel-Red corridor has a large number of clubs for martial arts and dance, primarily because the rents in the light industrial zone are affordable. Bellevue has the unique opportunity with the Bel-Red project to create a place for those who live and work in the area. The surrounding residential neighborhoods are intact. Bel-Red could become a center without pushing anyone out in the process. He said the alternatives that retain some amount of light industrial/warehouse space will be more conducive to retaining his type of use.

Mr. Robles said he is not supportive of having the Main Street retail area located next to the highest density of luxury car dealerships; that would do nothing for the image of the area. There is a great deal of office space available in Downtown Bellevue, but no one can afford to use it. The Bel-Red area should embrace a variety of uses, but they should be aimed at the general public, not just the very rich.

Mr. Edwards said he has been in Bellevue since 1962 and has seen a variety of changes

over the years, all of which have been good for the surrounding area. He said he could support creating a zone for service uses around where they are already located. He said he is situated off the beaten path in a big building where everything is done inside and nothing outside. Nearly any use could locate next door without even knowing what goes on inside the building. The alternatives all look good in their own way. The big unknown is what Metro will do and how a high-capacity transit alignment could mess things up in terms of causing businesses to relocate.

Mr. Singh referred to Alternative 1 and suggested the location of the services core as shown is the right place. He said there is a string of body shops along 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE that are all very busy. He suggested expanding the size of the bubble just a bit towards the east a block or so beyond 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE where there are also longstanding auto repair businesses.

Mr. O'Neill explained that the idea of the service core is not just to say that service uses are allowed there but that services constitute the long-term vision for the area. There is nothing, however, that says service uses would not be allowed in the other areas.

Mr. Croston suggested that having high-capacity transit running through the area could serve those who may not be able to afford to live in the area but who do want to work in the area. Wherever the Main Street retail area ends up, that is where the transit station should be located. He voiced concern that Alternative 1 appears to push Coca Cola out of the picture. The alternatives generally will add density to the area, and that will benefit the city. As the densities increase, so will the need for service uses. He agreed that flexibility will be the key.

Mr. Spicer commented that San Francisco undertook a process similar to the one being undertaken for the Bel-Red area. They had areas with established light industrial and warehouse uses, and when the dot coms came along they bought up a lot of the land, put their offices in there, and proceeded to drive out the martial arts clubs, dance studios and other small uses that had been there. The small uses that were displaced mostly ended up in Oakland, and the clients and workers all had to increase their commutes.

Mr. Spicer voiced his support for getting high-capacity transit in the corridor. He said it will be a way to get his customers to and from his shop, and to get residents to and from work. He said he also likes the idea of having a Main Street retail core, but said it may tend to draw people away from Downtown Bellevue.

Mr. Spicer questioned why Bel-Red Road has not been considered as an alignment for high-capacity transit. Mr. McDonald said the roadway remains in the menu of options for high-capacity transit alternatives. However, a station on Bel-Red Road would not afford the same opportunities for developing uses and amenities all around it by virtue of the existing land uses on the south side of Bel-Red Road. The draft alternatives show stations in the locations where there is the most redevelopment potential.

Mr. Liljeblad said the importance of Bel-Red Road as an arterial street cannot be overlooked. He said it would be very difficult to fit high-capacity transit on the alignment without taking out traffic capacity or displacing adjacent businesses.

Mr. Singh added his support for having high-capacity transit through the corridor as shown in the alternatives. Mr. O'Neill allowed that whether or not high-capacity transit comes to the Bel-Red area will depend in large part on the public vote in the fall of 2007. Mr. Liljeblad added that Sound Transit will want to put its services where they can maximize ridership. The forecasts for the I-90 corridor show ridership dropping off

significantly east of Factoria, so going on toward Issaquah is probably not going to be a preferred route. The line through Bellevue and on through the Bel-Red corridor shows far more promise given the Microsoft campus at the eastern end. Redmond would like the line to extend beyond its downtown area in order to intercept traffic from the plateau.

Mr. Robles asked if bus services will increase as well. Mr. Liljeblad answered that Sound Transit has three major lines of business: commuter rail, light rail, and express bus. There has not been a mode selected yet for the high-capacity transit alignment through Bel-Red; it could be a rail convertible bus system or light rail. However, wherever there are transit nodes created, feeder services and strong local circulation systems are needed.

Mr. Robles commented that currently it is quite difficult to move around in the corridor at any time of day. He suggested that if housing and the like is permitted in the area, there will need to be transportation system improvements. Mr. McDonald said there are transportation system improvements already on the books to address congestion issues. Beyond that, a number of improvements will be needed to support additional density in the corridor. Improvements would likely be needed outside the corridor as well.

Answering a question asked about the LI-zoned southeast corner of Northup Way and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, which does not allow retail or restaurants, and where the alternatives appear to be office campus and housing, Mr. McDonald said housing is shown in the alternatives for the area because of the potential views. The questioner said he would like to see higher density housing and retail uses allowed.

Mr. McDonald said the steering committee will be meeting on June 12 to review the alternatives and public comments. He asked what specific comments should be forwarded to the committee.

Ms. James said they should be asked to consider a wide range of allowed uses.

Mr. Kelly suggested the size of the light industrial area shown in the alternatives should be increased.

Mr. Liljeblad said he heard from the group a consensus in favor of having a services core. Mr. O'Neill suggested that the notion of having a core area for specific uses could be interpreted as being opposed to allowing a wide range of uses generally in the corridor.

Mr. Singh pointed out that the services core shown on Alternative 1 takes in an area that is comprised solely of existing service uses.

Mr. Liljeblad said he also heard consensus in favor of creating a Main Street retail core, but said he was not clear as to where it should be located, at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, or somewhere else. Ms. James suggested there may be the potential to begin at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE since Safeway has left and then to eventually build at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, but only after Cadman moves out. There was general agreement with her proposal.

Mr. Spicer suggested using the high-capacity transit corridor as the focus for the Main Street notion. With the transit services and with park amenities and green space it could work very well. Mr. McDonald said it could be done but it would have to occur in the vicinity of a station. He said there is nothing to say the focus cannot be east-west as opposed to north-south.

Mr. Singh asked staff to pass on to the steering committee the gratefulness of the public

for the ability to have their opinions heard.

Mr. McDonald thanked the panelists for their participation and comments.