



## Management Brief

**TO:** Mayor Grant Degginger and Bellevue City Councilmembers

**FROM:** Goran Sparrman, Director, Transportation Department  
Matt Terry, Director, Planning and Community Development

**DATE:** October 16, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS)

**cc:** Steve Sarkozy, Brad Miyake, Myrna Basich

This Management Brief is intended to update the City Council on the public engagement that has taken place during the summer, and the work with staff from the City of Redmond, both of which will contribute to the projects included in the updated BROTS interlocal agreement. At a joint meeting last November, Bellevue and Redmond City Councils considered framework principles to guide the update of the existing BROTS agreement. Both Councils adopted these principles, included as Attachment A, in December.

### **Background**

Redmond and Bellevue established the BROTS interlocal agreement in 1999, which provides for coordination of land use and the funding and construction of a transportation improvements in the defined BROTS geographic area. The current BROTS agreement is set to expire in 2012. Attachment B shows the location of the projects in the current BROTS agreement, and the study area boundaries.

Bellevue and Redmond have recently undertaken land use and transportation planning for the Bel-Red Corridor and Overlake areas, respectively. These efforts are intended to update land use and transportation planning through 2030. Redmond adopted initial updates for Overlake in December of 2007, and plans to adopt additional updates in 2008. Following the two-year steering committee effort, Bellevue's boards and commissions transmitted Bel-Red Subarea Plan and Code recommendation to Council on September 22 - adoption of which is targeted for the fall/winter of 2008.

This recent planning work has superseded a number of the assumptions underlying the existing BROTS agreement, including the 2030 timeframe and land use assumptions. The BROTS successor agreement will include the current land use assumptions for 2030, and address the associated transportation impacts that cross city borders.

### **Framework Principles for a Successor to BROTS**

The attached principles (Attachment A) were approved by the City Council via Resolution 7665 (12/6/07), and by the Redmond Council through a companion resolution the same month. These joint principles outline the interest of both cities to adopt a BROTS successor agreement that will continue and improve on the coordination that has occurred under the existing BROTS

agreement, while providing a simplified structure and process of administration. The principles provide for technical analysis to test the efficacy of projects proposed to mitigate growth-related cross-jurisdictional traffic impacts; and to identify the proportionate shares of cross-border trips associated with development in Bel-Red and Overlake.

This framework relates to projects both in the current agreement that have not been completed, and to new project concepts. Projects in the existing agreement will be modified to reflect progress to date, along with changed land use and transportation assumptions. New projects in Bellevue will be focused in east Bellevue, which was not included in the 1999 BROTS agreement, but is an area that updated modeling shows will be affected by planned growth in Overlake, and to a lesser extent by growth in Bel-Red. East Bellevue and impacted portions of Redmond would be added to the area covered by the successor agreement.

### **Public Participation**

Public outreach is being accomplished in accordance with the direction from Council on May 5, 2008. The public outreach has engaged the community and collected comments on project ideas for east Bellevue.

A BROTS Web site has been set up to both provide information and to receive comments – an on-line questionnaire allows residents to express their opinions and suggestions about east Bellevue traffic. This Web site, accessible through the City of Bellevue’s home page is: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/brots.htm>.

The east Bellevue community has provided input about the potential BROTS mitigation projects that they consider the best fit for their neighborhoods. The outreach effort has engaged the community in a number of different ways:

- Staff briefing and discussion with the East Bellevue Community Council in June.
- A series of focus group meetings in August - further discussion of these focus group meetings follows.
- On August 19, 56 members of the Lake Hills Community Club heard a presentation on BROTS and asked questions and provided comments.
- BROTS Open House on September 17. At this meeting was a review of the transportation system ideas identified through the focus groups and on-line comments that could help mitigate east Bellevue traffic concerns. The public was asked to express their preference for certain projects or combinations of projects.

### ***Focus Groups***

Staff facilitated four focus groups – two with Bellevue staff who live in east Bellevue and volunteered to provide their personal observations as knowledgeable residents, and two with the broader community. Bellevue staff focus groups were held on August 6. The latter two were held on August 20 and August 27 in the Crossroads Community Center, with 15 and 10 participants respectively.

### ***Community Response***

Residents expresses that 148<sup>th</sup> is congested in the AM and PM peak commute periods, but it is not bad at other times. West Lake Sammamish Parkway is congested during peak commute periods and it is difficult at those times to merge into the stream of traffic from side streets and driveways. Residents familiar with the area and the traffic patterns practice “avoidance” – they

know when not to try to use certain roads and what alternate routes to take. However, they expressed frustration with motorists - commuters and others – who speed through neighborhoods seeking alternate routes. They would walk or bike more if facilities and connections were better – there are some missing links to transit stops, shopping, parks, etc.. And they thought transit service and facilities could be improved to serve both commuters and for local trips.

Several types of transportation system improvements were seen as essential components of a multi-pronged strategy to address increasing traffic volume. Improvements were recommended for transit, non-motorized transportation facilities, and traffic calming, as well as for transportation demand management strategies. Transit was envisioned in the form of a bus rapid transit corridor that would serve both the Overlake employment area as well as other major destinations such as Crossroads and Bellevue Community College. New and improved sidewalks would provide better and safer access to the transit service. Bicycle system improvements along the lines of those in the draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan would improve commuting and recreation access on north-south corridors in east Bellevue. Roadway projects on both neighborhoods and along arterials would be developed to reduce the amount of cut-through traffic and to address aggressive driving behavior .

**Project Concepts for the BROTS Interlocal Agreement**

***Projects in the BROTS “Core Area”***

Concurrently with the east Bellevue transportation planning efforts, Bellevue and Redmond staff have been working together to develop a comprehensive set of transportation system improvement projects for the BROTS “Core Area”. This area covers the border areas of the cities along 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and Bel-Red Road.

The current BROTS agreement includes projects within the “Core Area” as well as projects well within the cities of Bellevue and Redmond – Attachment B is the map that shows the BROTS boundary and the status of the projects. In accordance with the principles adopted by both Councils (Attachment A), the updated BROTS agreement will include only a subset of the 1999 BROTS projects. This subset will include “Core Area” projects – those on or near the border of the cities, east Bellevue projects – those addressing impacts related to Redmond-based regional trips on east Bellevue roadways, and Redmond projects – those addressing Bellevue-based regional trips on Redmond roadways. The remaining projects on the current BROTS list will be the sole responsibility of each city within which the project is situated.

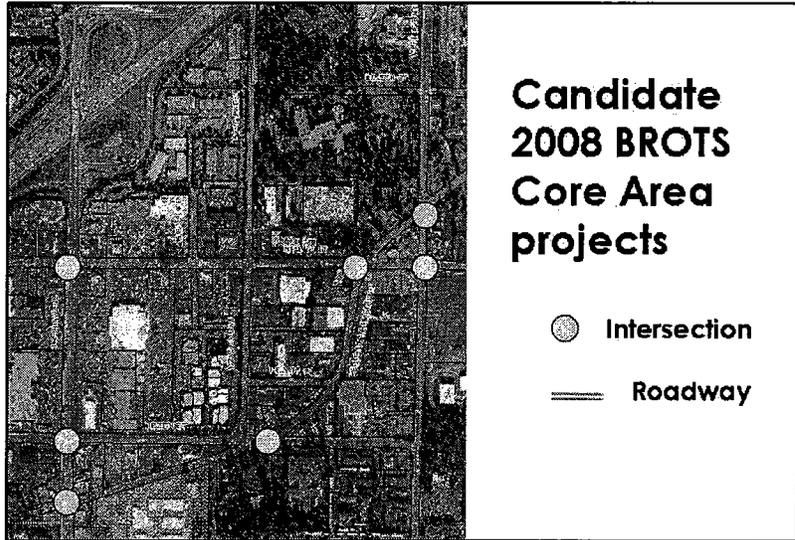
Two 1999 BROTS projects in the “Core Area” are programmed in Bellevue’s current 2007-2013 CIP. Projects at 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/Bel-Red Road (CIP Plan No. PW-I-76) and 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street (CIP Plan No. PW-I-78) are currently funded with a total of \$10.755 million (including \$1.944 million in Redmond contributions). Potential modifications to the scope, budget, and cost sharing arrangement on these and other, unfunded 1999 BROTS projects are issues being identified by the two cities’ staffs. These are issues that may be considered in both a final reconciliation of the 1999 BROTS agreement and in the development of a successor agreement.

Staff is reevaluating BROTS “Core Area” projects in light of the 2030 land use assumptions for Overlake and Bel-Red. Intersection improvements in the vicinity of 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street/Bel-Red Road are under consideration, as are three alternatives that include intersection improvements along 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE between Bel-Red Road and SR-520. The alternatives reflect completing a northbound through lane or completing a southbound through lane, and testing implications of adding a grade-separated by-pass ramp between the 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/SR 520 interchange and 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. While the by-pass ramp is not

considered a core project, it does reflect earlier recommendations based on previous BROTS work. Modeling will test the intersection and arterial street improvements with the 2030 land use and transportation assumptions, will be used to evaluate system and intersectional operational performance, which will serve to help discuss distributed costs. This work is expected to be completed in October.

While the precise description of these “core area” intersection and roadway projects has not been determined, the following intersection and roadway locations - shown in Figure 2 - are being considered as “candidates” for the BROTS successor agreement:

- 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/ Bel-Red Rd
- 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/NE 20<sup>th</sup> St
- 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/NE 24<sup>th</sup> St
- 152<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE/Bel-Red Rd
- Bel-Red Rd/NE 24<sup>th</sup> St
- 156<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/NE 24<sup>th</sup> St
- 156<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/Bel-Red Rd
- 3<sup>rd</sup> NB lane on 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE between NE 20<sup>th</sup> St and SR 520
- 3<sup>rd</sup> SB lane between SR 520 and NE 20<sup>th</sup> St
- Eastbound “by-pass” from SR 520 under 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE to 152<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE



Modeling will test the intersection and arterial street improvements with the 2030 land use and transportation assumptions, will be used to evaluate system and intersectional operational performance, which will serve to help discuss distributed costs. This work is expected to be completed in October.

### ***Projects in East Bellevue***

In work with the community, and with our transportation consultants, staff has developed a list of east Bellevue transportation projects that address existing and anticipated traffic issues. Some of these projects will be candidates for the BROTS interlocal agreement – these are projects that clearly would address traffic impacts associated with employment growth in the Overlake area. Based on the framework in the BROTS interlocal agreement , BROTS projects – and the proportionate share of the cost - will be based on the number of trips each city produced that end in a regional (non-Bellevue or Redmond) destination. Further analysis will be required to identify the specific project descriptions and the cost share to be part of the BROTS interlocal agreement.

Many good project ideas were generated through work with east Bellevue. However, not all of these projects meet the criteria established for a BROTS project. Projects that do not qualify for BROTS will be incorporated into other Bellevue programs.

Transportation system project ideas that are currently being considered for the BROTS interlocal agreement include the following:

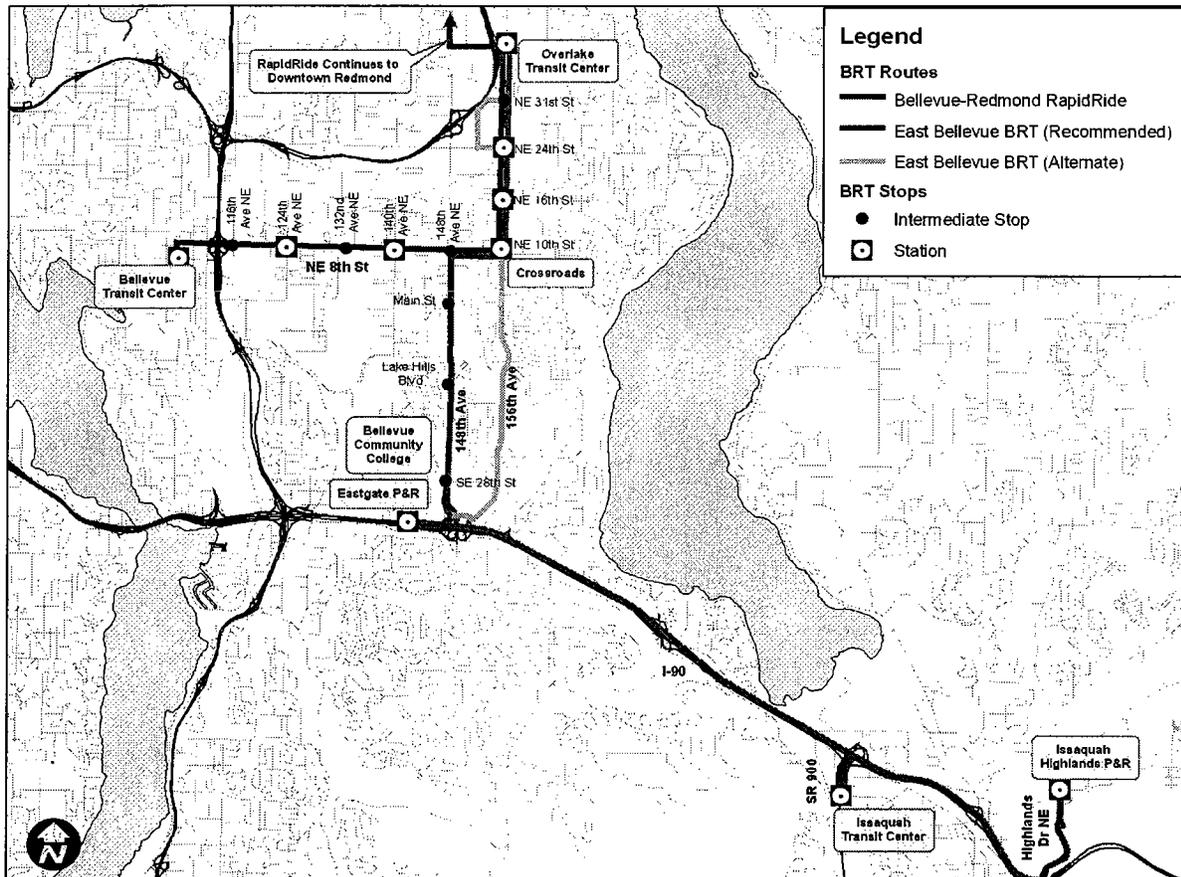
- Bus Rapid Transit service – *see further discussion of bus rapid transit below.*
  - Deploy a bus rapid transit (BRT) route between Eastgate and Overlake on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue (south of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street) and 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue (north of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street)

- Employ transit signal priority and queue jumper lanes to improve transit travel time and reliability
- Incorporate rider amenities such as shelters at transit stations
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connections
  - Complete and enhance bicycle routes between Eastgate/I-90 and Overlake. The draft 2008 Pedestrian And Bicycle Transportation Plan identifies specific projects along these routes that will enhance bicycle commuting as well as neighborhood connectivity.
- Traffic calming on arterials and neighborhood streets where regional trips are diminishing neighborhood quality of life. Candidate corridors include 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of NE and SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street between 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.
- Traffic operations – signalization and signal timing adjustments:
  - Signalization adjustments on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue to benefit transit and traffic flow
  - New signals in West Lake Sammamish Parkway to improve neighborhood access

### ***East Bellevue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)***

Staff's work with the east Bellevue community revealed a great deal of support for enhanced transit service, for both commute trips and local trips. A preliminary report on implementing bus rapid transit (BRT) in east Bellevue has provided some answers to questions regarding BRT routing, potential ridership, and costs for operations and infrastructure.

BRT service would provide fast, frequent service through east Bellevue between Overlake and points south (Eastgate) and further east (Issaquah Highlands). Through east Bellevue, BRT would operate in mixed traffic, with a recommended routing on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE south of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and on 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE north of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street – see Figure 1. North of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, the potential east Bellevue BRT would overlap with the planned Bellevue-Redmond RapidRide route to provide outstanding transit service to the Crossroads neighborhood.



**Figure 1 – Potential east Bellevue BRT routing, plus Bellevue-Redmond RapidRide**

Ridership is projected to exceed the combined ridership on King County Metro routes that currently provide north-south service through east Bellevue. BRT tends to attract additional riders due to its travel time advantage and passenger comfort – both on the bus and at the stations. Existing ridership on the routes 221 and 245 is approximately 4,000 passengers per weekday. A conservative ridership estimate that the BRT would provide is 20% above the current daily bus ridership. Statistics from other new BRT systems in North America show ridership increases from 17% to 42% over existing regular transit service.

Travel time advantage in a BRT system would be achieved in a number of ways, including transit signal priority (TSP) at intersections and queue jump lanes. TSP extends a green signal longer to allow for a transit vehicle to through an intersection, or changes a red light to a green more quickly. TSP is being implemented in association with the Bellevue-Redmond RapidRide. Queue jump lanes are auxiliary lanes at intersections that allow a transit vehicle to jump to the head of the line, where a signal phase would allow it to cross the intersection ahead of general traffic and arrive at a bus bay on the far side. The proposed east Bellevue BRT would employ TSP at all signalized intersections. Further analysis is being conducted to determine whether one or more queue jump lanes would be feasible and effective.

To develop and implement an east Bellevue BRT service would require King County Metro to agree to fund and provide this service. The Cities of Bellevue and Redmond may have to support this METRO investment with improvements to signals, and any modification to the roadway to support transit. The cost of implementing a BRT system would be determined principally by two components: operating costs and capital costs. Operating costs are based on

service characteristics and are commonly expressed in terms of “service hours”. It is estimated that approximately 41,000 new service hours would be required to run BRT at 10-minute frequency between Overlake and the Issaquah Highlands Park& Ride. The current cost of a service hour is \$132. Capital costs include the new buses and the improved infrastructure such as TSP to help the buses achieve a travel time advantage. Estimates for capital costs range from \$16.6 million for a basic system of buses and TSP to \$25.3 million for a high profile BRT system with passenger amenities such as comfortable shelters and real-time transit information at shelters and on the bus.

### **Reconciliation of Project Cost Sharing under the 1999 BROTS Agreement**

Each city has multiple projects identified in the 1999 BROTS agreement which have been recently completed or are in various stages of implementation.

In Bellevue, two 1999 Bellevue BROTS projects have been combined into one CIP project, Northup Way – 120<sup>th</sup> to 124<sup>th</sup> Avenues NE (CIP Plan No. PW-R-133). This project is currently in final design and scheduled to go to construction by early 2009. Construction of the project will likely overlap the adoption of a successor agreement.

In Redmond, three projects were recently completed by a private developer, two projects are components in a city pre-design effort for a larger corridor project, and several others are identified for completion by a private developer based on a formal agreement with the city. Project implementation in the latter two categories will likely overlap the adoption of a successor agreement.

Consistent with provisions of the 1999 BROTS interlocal agreement, reconciliation of cost share for the three developer-completed projects in Redmond is being conducted by staff in both cities. Subject to the outcome of this analysis project cost increases and/or scope changes may need to be approved by both the Redmond and Bellevue City Councils before final cost sharing payments can be made. As necessary, staff of the two cities will bring details of project specific reconciliation to each Council for consideration and potential action later this fall.

Final reconciliation and the cut-off of cost sharing on 1999 BROTS projects under active implementation by the cities or private developers will need to be a consideration in the development of the BROTS successor agreement.

### **Next Steps**

Bellevue and Redmond staff will continue to develop and evaluate intersection and roadway improvement options to address congestion in the BROTS “Core Area” and will prepare cost estimates for a suite of projects. Simultaneously, staff will continue to refine BROTS candidate project descriptions and cost estimates for east Bellevue.

A framework for the BROTS interlocal agreement is being jointly developed and will be brought forward for the consideration of both Councils this fall/winter. The interlocal agreement will include the recommended transportation system projects and cost-sharing, potential land use phasing, and administration.

**Attachments**

- A. Framework Principles adopted by both City Councils in December, 2007
- B. BROTS Interlocal Agreement project map
- C. East Bellevue Public Outreach Report

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**FRAMEWORK FOR A BELLEVUE-REDMOND SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT**  
**Adopted as part of Resolution 7665 in December, 2007**

**PREAMBLE**

The following principles are intended to guide development of a successor agreement to BROTS, the interlocal agreement between Bellevue and Redmond (Cities) that provides for the coordination of land use and transportation between the two cities related to the Bel-Red and Overlake areas. The assumptions behind the existing BROTS interlocal agreement are being superseded by newer planning work that has been conducted by each city. It is in both cities' interests to adopt a successor interlocal agreement that will continue and improve upon the coordination that has been taking place under the BROTS agreement. With approval of this Framework, the cities are establishing their intent that a successor interlocal agreement should be adopted based on the following principles.

**PRINCIPLES**

**Cooperative Planning and Advocacy**

- The Cities commit to cooperative planning to accommodate each city's desired growth and development in the Overlake/Bel-Red area and to develop strategies and funding mechanisms to mitigate development impacts that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- The Cities will jointly advocate for regional, state and federal investment in support of projects and strategies included in the successor BROTS agreement.
- The Cities will also jointly advocate for regional, state and federal investment in support of regional transportation projects that are integral to supporting the needs of the BROTS area.

**Growth Caps**

- The current commercial growth caps provided in the existing BROTS Interlocal Agreement will apply through 2012 (unless superseded by the successor Agreement), and growth up to the caps is not affected by these principles.
- It is the intent of the Cities that a new commercial growth cap beyond 2012 for Bel-Red and Overlake will be included in the successor agreement
- It is the intent of the Cities to phase commercial growth as transportation services/ facilities are put in place.

**Identification of Impacts**

- The Cities agree that the following technical analysis needs to be performed to identify the impacts of planned growth and development:
  - Transportation modeling to test the efficacy of projects proposed to mitigate cross-jurisdictional traffic impacts; and
  - Transportation modeling to identify the proportionate shares of cross-border trips associated with development in Bel-Red and Overlake.
  - The details of this technical analysis will be mutually agreed upon by the two Cities.
- Each city will be responsible for 50% of the cost of any additional mutually agreed upon technical analysis and outside legal assistance needed to draft the agreement. Either city can perform and fund additional technical analysis as desired.

- The BROTS Interlocal Agreement scope will be expanded in the proposed successor agreement to address transportation impacts that cross city boundaries outside of the study area, to include East Bellevue and impacted portions of Redmond.

### **Mitigation Strategies/Projects**

- Subject to the results of the technical analysis, both cities have an interest in updating the BROTS transportation project list to determine if currently identified projects are still desired or should be removed and the funds redirected to alternative mobility solutions. The intent is to explain the rationale as to why any projects targeted for removal are no longer needed, or have been superseded by new projects.
- Each city will be responsible for implementing transportation projects specific to its city. Implementation means design, construction and funding.
- Each city will take necessary actions to monitor and meet its set mode split targets.
- The Cities commit to work together to develop key specifically designated traffic mitigation projects to address transportation impacts crossing jurisdictional boundaries. Each city is responsible for final selection, design and construction of these projects within its jurisdictional boundary.
- These designated mitigation projects will be incorporated into the successor BROTS agreement.
- The Cities commit to jointly establish a cost sharing agreement to fund these designated mitigation projects that is informed by transportation modeling, demonstrating each city's proportionate share of cross-border benefits and impacts.

### **Funding strategies/Commitments**

- Any exchange of funds between the two cities to jointly fund projects will use a single, mutually agreed upon method to account and distribute funds.

### **Review**

- The interjurisdictional transportation review process set out in the current BROTS agreement should be streamlined to eliminate review of individual projects, changes to concurrency systems and project delivery.
- The Cities agree to include a process in the successor BROTS agreement for review of proposed land use or zoning changes that exceed adopted Comprehensive Plans and codes.

### **Implementation of Plans**

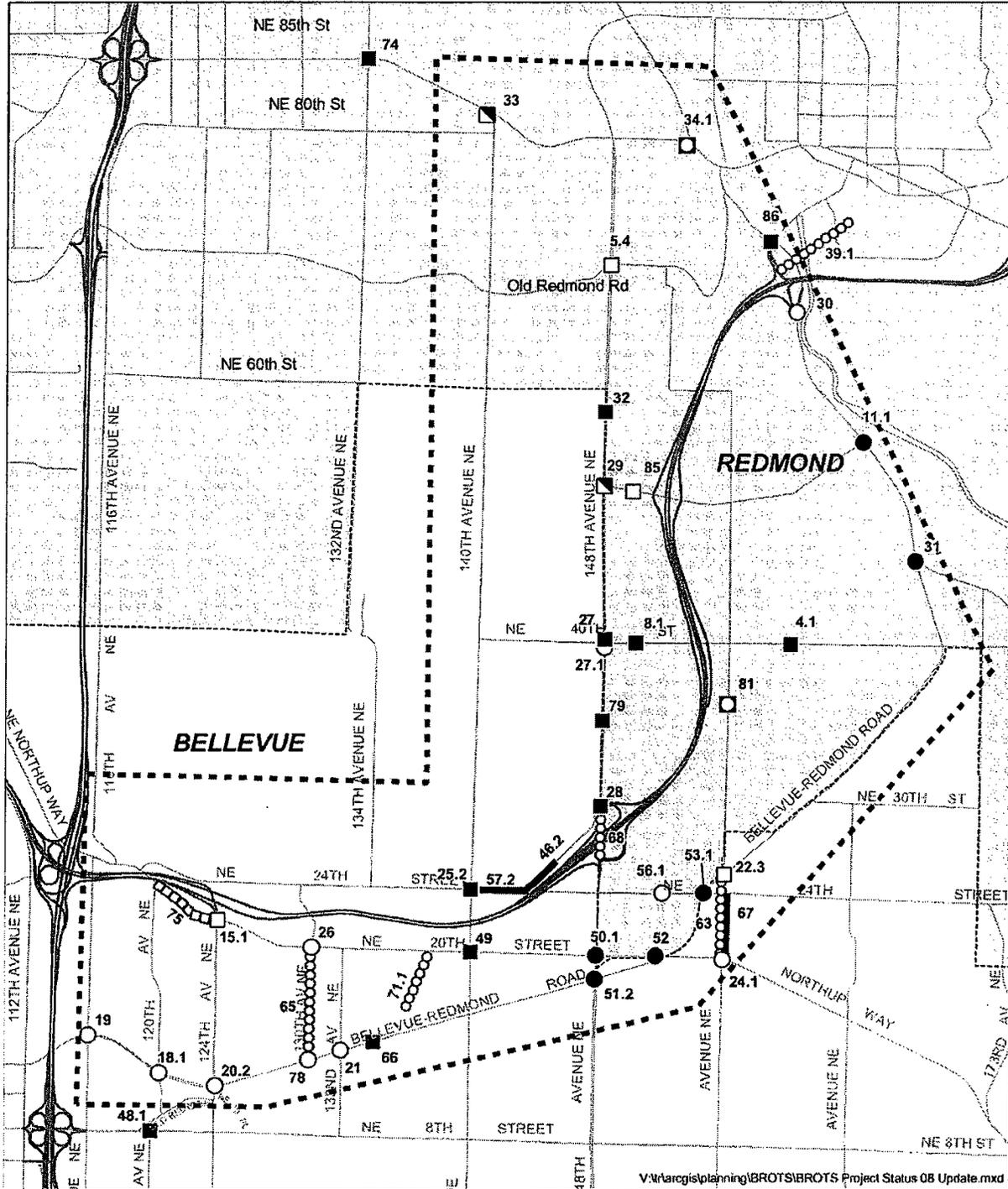
- The Cities agree to establish a schedule which emphasizes proceeding immediately to develop the successor BROTS agreement based on the principles set forth in this Framework.
- The Cities commit to adopt the successor BROTS agreement preferably by August 2008 and in any event no later than December 2008. Given this commitment, the Cities agree that Comprehensive Plans and code amendments can be adopted at any time. It is the intent of both cities that the commercial floor area permitted shall not exceed that allowed by the existing BROTS Agreement until the successor agreement is adopted by both cities, as long as both Cities agree that progress is being made in negotiations on the successor agreement.

### **Timeframe for new Agreement**

- The Cities intend that the term of the successor BROTS agreement will be through 2030, with an interjurisdictional meeting and brief update occurring annually, and a report every 5 years.

Defined phases in the agreement should correspond with each city's transportation facilities plan.

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**BROTS Project Status Categories Map**



- Status of 1999 BROTS Projects**
- Completed
  - ◻ Partially Completed / Remainder No Longer BROTS Priority
  - ◻ Project Implementation Underway
  - ◻ Partially Completed / Remainder Implementation Underway
  - No Longer BROTS Priority
  - Potential Project for BROTS Successor Agreement
  - BROTS Study Area Boundary

Plot Date: 4/30/2008



## ATTACHMENT C

### Bel-Red Transportation Study (BROTS) Update East Bellevue Public Outreach Program Report

**BROTS** 1 : Bel-Red/Overlake Transportation Study 2 : An interlocal agreement between Bellevue and Redmond regarding land use planning, funding and construction of transportation improvements in Bel-Red/Overlake 3 : *see also* BROTS Successor Agreement

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the BROTS public outreach program was to solicit and receive broad feedback from the east Bellevue community about which potential BROTS mitigation project approach is considered the best fit for east Bellevue neighborhoods.

#### **Program Objectives:**

1. Serve as the means to collect meaningful community comment on the proposed interlocal agreement from the east Bellevue study area, and in particular, preferences for east Bellevue improvement projects;
2. Keep that same community informed of the review process and outcome.

#### **Report Overview**

The September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 BROTS Open House was the culmination of a concentrated five-month public outreach effort for east Bellevue and BROTS. The Open House gathered together the various strands of the outreach effort to include residents and commuters, both new and old, in east Bellevue.

The effort got underway with BROTS participation and FAQ information at the May 15, 2008, citywide Spring Forward Transportation Project Expo. City staff briefed and solicited comment from the East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC) in June. Staff did the same for the Lake Hills Neighborhood Association in August. Four focus groups were held in August. Two focus groups were held in the east Bellevue area at Crossroads Community Center and two were held at Bellevue City Hall. Other conversations with individual residents about community traffic issues occurred over the summer and into the fall.

An informational postcard was mailed out to the fifteen thousand study area households in July. It was followed by a September postcard to the same households to specifically invite them to the Open House. BROTS articles were published in the August Neighborhood News and in the October It's Your City. The Bellevue Reporter had a BROTS story in its September 17, 2008, edition, and the Seattle Times announced the open house event in its September 15, 2008, edition.

The Transportation Commission was briefed on the BROTS outreach effort and preliminary project ideas in study session on September 25, 2008.

A specific Web presence <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/brots.htm> was established with process information, updates, and various document links. The Web site was later expanded to solicit and collect comments online.

## **Conclusions**

What do east Bellevue residents, commuters, and workers believe are viable, long-range transportation solutions for east Bellevue? What are their preferences for such projects?

The city hired a consultant to propose transportation improvement strategies based on BROTS traffic modeling that had occurred earlier in 2007 and in 2008. The detailed strategies are grouped by category as a means to best mitigate expected traffic impacts in east Bellevue..

Participants were asked throughout the outreach effort to react to these transportation improvement strategies, or to propose others. Preferences were discussed. In the end, a general community priority was identified for three categories of strategies:

- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**, providing identified (148<sup>th</sup> Ave) north-south corridor improvement for commuters, and then benefiting residents with east-west pedestrian links from the neighborhoods both to use the BRT and to increase east-west pedestrian safety.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle projects** supporting east-west connectivity for pedestrian movement, and enhancing certain north-south corridors (164<sup>th</sup> Avenue) for safe and direct bicycle movement for both commuters and residents.
- **Neighborhood and arterial traffic calming** discouraging cut-through traffic and reducing speeding and aggressive driving behavior on neighborhood streets as well as on certain arterials (156<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue, SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street). Examples mentioned of this kind of successful roadway treatment that induced traffic calming included recent projects on the Lake Hills Connector, and 140<sup>th</sup> Ave south of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **Details of the outreach program**

Each outreach tool is detailed below. Complete comments are attached.

### **September 17, 2008 Open House in Bellevue City Council Chambers**

The open house was an opportunity to reiterate previously identified and discussed priorities for transportation improvement strategies. Preference for the top three categories of strategies was affirmed.

Open House comments (Attachment 1) generally reflect a clear, practical understanding of how east Bellevue residents use their transportation system to live, work, and play. Comments reflect

reluctant awareness of growing amounts of traffic, but also a belief that improvements can be made that will help their mobility and safety. One written comment submitted at the Open House objected to the Bel-Red Subarea Plan proposals, and another detailed concern about the ecological impacts on the Lake Hills Greenbelt of increased traffic usage of 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### **Online comments**

Comment forms were prepared for online responses to the transportation solutions and preferences questions originally developed in the [FAQ](#).

During June and July the following questions were posted on the Web site for comment:

- *What do you think about improvements that would potentially increase the speed, reliability and use of transit between East Bellevue and nearby job sites?*
- *What measures do you think would help minimize non-local traffic from driving through neighborhoods?*
- *Where should we concentrate on improving bicycle and walking routes?*
- *What types of transportation improvements and strategies do you support? (list of five)*

As responses began to come in (Attachment 2) it became clearer which strategies (BRT, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and neighborhood and arterial street calming) were proving to be of community interest. Based on this reaction, at the end of July staff revised the [online questions](#) to provide more details—and thus promote more comment—about the strategies.

The revised comment forms listed seven Transit strategies, four TDM strategies, nine Non-motorized strategies, three Urban Livability/Neighborhood Amenities/Traffic Calming strategies, eleven Channelization/Operations strategies, and three Joint Regional Advocacy strategies.

When asked the following lead question, respondents could select and/or comment (Attachment 3) on any or all of the projects listed under a strategy:

- *What do you think of the following transportation strategies, which could improve mobility and help reduce traffic impacts in East Bellevue neighborhoods?*

Here is a summary of what we heard:

- When asked **what's it like out there**, respondents indicated that congestion affecting them occurs typically where and when they expected it to occur, and residents practice avoidance techniques during peak commuting hours. Of particular concern was congestion on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West Lake Sammamish Parkway, and increasingly on 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They experienced that transit is overburdened, and they felt unsafe when using pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are discontinuous.

- When asked **what should we do about it** respondents were pretty specific: Manage traffic flow with specifically-sited signal operations – particularly on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue; keep BRT service off of 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue but add it and other transit technologies to 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue; extend the BRT service range eastward of the Eastgate P&R to other P&R stations in the I-90 corridor.
- Finally, when asked **what is most important to you** respondents listed improving transit and ped/bike facilities, as well as implementing traffic calming and aggressive TDM strategies, and enforcing speed limits.

Judging from the comments, people are thinking both in practical terms of getting out and around their Bellevue areas and are also thinking in terms of longer-term transit solutions, including light rail, enhanced transit, and east-west movement. At the same time questions are raised regarding the success level of BROTS mitigation so far, and why additional growth is contemplated in the first place, when traffic is so bad.

### **Focus Groups**

The opportunity to engage fellow residents proved to be the most beneficial aspect of the focus groups. The forty-five people who participated in these groups came from many different addresses in the study area. Their discussion ranged from sharing their own experiences with an intersection or thoughts about a round-about to how NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street shapes their commute. See Attachment 4.

However, transit and ped/bike facilities were the most talked about issues. In both cases, the experiences that people shared were not generalities but were specific in location or context. The regional consequences of implementing light rail and continued improvement of the state highways were discussed as well.

### **Individual Discussions**

The outreach process also sought out the viewpoints of specific individuals. These residents generally have lived in east Bellevue for a long time and have had direct experiences with BROTS development and implementation processes. They expressed discouragement over the varying levels of success in mitigating what is perceived as Redmond/Overlake-based traffic through east Bellevue. Questions were asked about the degree of emphasis placed on bicycles as transportation solutions, and whether or light rail attracted more development or was a solution to that development. See Attachment 5.

### **East Bellevue Community Council**

City staff briefed the EBCC at its June 2008 meeting. In July, the EBCC documented its views (Attachment 6), based on the four objectives and five strategies originally identified in the Successor Agreement framework.

The EBCC agreed with objectives to direct regional trips that do not have a destination in either Bellevue or Redmond to the regional transportation system, and to identify strategies to minimize cut-through traffic in neighborhoods. The EBCC did not agree with the objective to minimize peak

hour trips by single-occupancy vehicles on north-south arterials in east Bellevue, noting that the term “peak hour” trips seemed vague and hardly achievable.

The EBCC also disagreed with Neighborhood Livability—improving neighborhood amenities—as a transportation improvement strategy. They believe this strategy concedes that nothing will be considered to mitigate or minimize the impact of greater regional traffic throughout the east Bellevue area. The EBCC saw it as a strategy much more concerned with the north-south traffic than the east-west traffic that may be part of local area mobility and would surely be impacted by greatly increased regional traffic.

The EBCC made two recommendations:

1. Add an objective for East Bellevue that says “Identify strategies to improve safety and minimize the impact of regional traffic throughout the East Bellevue area.”
2. Traffic impact studies [should] include schools and churches in the area as stakeholders. Their operational issues can have a great deal of effect on traffic flow.

### **Spring Forward Expo**

The Spring Forward Expo was the first opportunity to make a lot of material available for review, including the FAQ, a hard copy comment form, maps showing the status of the 1999 BROTS agreement projects and a chart of the adopted BROTS network.

### **Attachments (Available in the Council Office)**

- Attachment 1 September 17, 2008, Open House comments
- Attachment 2 First set of online BROTS comments
- Attachment 3 Second set of online BROTS comments
- Attachment 4 Focus group summaries
- Attachment 5 Individual comments
- Attachment 6 EBCC letter