

Lake Hills Shopping Center advances to design review

Construction could start in spring 2008

By James E. Bell, East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC) Chair

At the September East Bellevue Community Council meeting Mike Upston, senior land use planner with the Bellevue Planning & Community Development Department, and Oscar Del Moro, Senior Vice President for Cosmos Development, reviewed the current plans to completely redevelop the shopping center. The current design will have approximately 69,200 square feet of retail space, approximately 44,800 square feet of office space and 90 residential units on the 6.7-acre site.

This is about the same retail space as the current shopping center. Parking will be provided for about 600 vehicles on the surface and under ground garage. The Lake Hills Library will relocate to this site from the present building and increase to 10,000 square feet. The library will become a key feature on the corner of 156th Avenue Southeast and Lake Hills Boulevard.

The plan includes demolishing the existing five buildings and constructing 14 new ones. The north and west sides of the site will include nine, two-story, multi/residential units that face inward to a pedestrian/vehicle access way. A residential street will run from 156th around the perimeter to the Lake Hills Boulevard entrance. This permits emergency response and heavy moving vehicles access to the residential units.

Two buildings inside the circle will provide retail shopping on the ground floor facing into the plaza/surface parking area and two or three levels of residential units. A third building on the inner circle provides a community/recreation/meeting facility. Finally the two main buildings, one next to 156th and the other adjacent to Lake Hills Boulevard will house retail space on the ground floor that opens to the parking plaza and retail/office space on the second/third floors.

The underground parking facility will house gated parking for the residential units in a separate, secure area. Access to the residences will be by elevators and/or stairs.

While the City of Bellevue design review has imposed some detailed changes, the total plan is almost identical to the conceptual plan developed by the stakeholders group in 2004. It closely matches the Master Redevelopment Plan proposed for the zoning changes approved in 2005. Some of the city's requirements have been 30-foot buffers against the adjacent residential areas and 20-foot buffers against the street sides. Special effort is being made to shield the single-family dwellings on the west side from sight/glare/noise impacts.

Del Moro said Cosmos Development is in design review and negotiations. The next step will be to get firm bid contractors selected. The most favorable schedule is to start construction in the spring of 2008. The decision about a one or two-phase construction plan depends on the design details and the contractor proposals. Overall construction time is estimated to be 18 months.

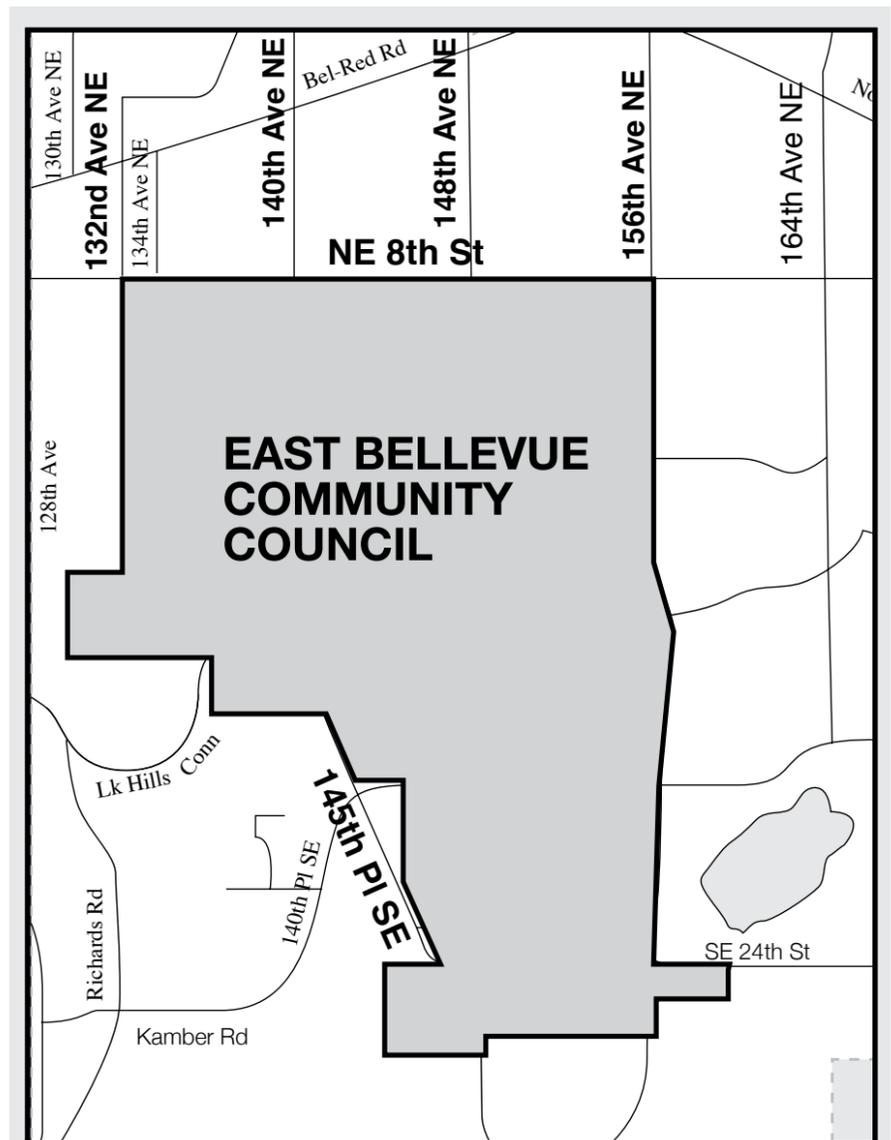
Kasner and Gooding join the EBCC

Neil Penrose and **Jim Keffe** recently resigned their positions on the East Bellevue Community Council. Penrose moved out of the area and was no longer eligible to serve. Keffe resigned for manifold personal reasons after serving 27 years on the council.

Following the procedures to fill vacant positions, EBCC advertised for interested candidates, reviewed the applicants in open meeting and then voted to fill the positions. The new members are:

Steven Kasner, a 16-year resident of our area, will fill position 3 until the end of term in December 2009. He is a teacher at the Jewish Day School. Kasner has considerable experience in Bellevue community programs, including two years as chair of the Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board and the East Bellevue Neighborhood Improvement Task Force.

Ross Gooding, an eight-year resident of the EBCC area, will fill position 5 until December 2009. He is an investment advisor and retirement planning specialist at Wachovia Securities. Gooding has experience as the 48th District precinct committee member. He has a master's degree in business administration and has served as an Air Force cost analyst, dealing with large responsibility financial decisions.



For information about the city's Community Council, call Deputy City Clerk Michelle Murphy, 425-452-6466, or contact the East Bellevue Community Council Chairperson, James Bell.

East Bellevue Community Council meets the first Tuesday each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Lake Hills Clubhouse, 15230 Lake Hills Blvd.

Members

James E. Bell, Jim Eder, Ross Gooding, Steven Kasner, Ken Seal

Critical areas ordinance creates new rules for subdivisions

The City of Bellevue adopted four critical area ordinances this past summer. Three of them dealt with technical requirements, a Shoreline Overlay District and impervious surface standards. These were outside the jurisdiction of EBCC so no action was taken. The fourth ordinance (5682) established a new "zoning density calculation" for subdivisions with critical areas or critical area buffers. EBCC approved it at the Aug. 1 meeting. The ordinance also included density incentives for planned unit developments that incorporate conservation design features.

Under the city's existing Land Use Code, residential density for sites without critical areas is generally controlled by the allowed minimum lot size. See LUC 20.20.010 and note 15.

Under Ordinance 5682, density is calculated somewhat differently for sites with critical areas. See LUC 20.45A, 20.45B.060 and 20.25H.045. Density is based on the allowed dwelling units per acre, with some portion of the development potential of the "unusable" critical area portion transferred to the "buildable" portion of the site. In order to accommodate that transferred potential, and to place the critical area in a separate tract, minimum lot sizes may go below the minimum lot size required for sites without critical areas. In no event would density for a short plat exceed the density allowed for the site if it had no critical areas.

An example of the allowances for a two-acre short plat in R2.5 zoning that includes an acre of critical area would look like this:

Number of dwelling units for parcel with one-acre critical area, nominal density and development factor = 3 units

(The density calculation provides 3.75 units, which are rounded down to the nearest whole unit). In order to accommodate three units within the one-acre buildable area, minimum lot size may be reduced to 65 percent of the otherwise required minimum lot size, or 8,775 square feet.

The same "buildable" one-acre lot without the critical area restrictions could have three units based on the minimum lot size for R2.5 zoning, 13,500 square feet. (The density calculation would provide 3.23 units, which are rounded down to the nearest whole unit.)

We welcome comments about the East Bellevue area. You can share your views with the Community Council via e-mail at EBCC@bellevuewa.gov. To find out more about the agendas and decisions of EBCC go to http://www.bellevuewa.gov/EBCC_Homepage.htm.