

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

June 12, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairman Carlson, Commissioners Hamlin, Laing, Tebelius

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Ferris, Turner

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Mike Katterman, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development;

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairman Carlson who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Ferris and Turner, both of whom were excused.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Deputy Mayor Robertson reported that interviews to replace former Commissioner Pat Sheffels have been conducted and a new Commissioner will be appointed soon by the City Council.

Deputy Mayor Robertson said the Council discussed the Comprehensive Plan update process at its meeting on June 10. She said there was general interest in favor of changing subarea boundaries and having a subarea plan update process, particularly for the older subarea plans. The Council spent quite a lot of time talking about the vision and she suggested the Commissioners might find the minutes for the meeting to be an interesting read. The Councilmembers expressed interest in having the vision be a part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, and in including a more human element focused on multiple centers and third places, or mutual gathering spots in which the community takes ownership. The Council believes the vision discussion should be held at the forefront of the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Deputy Mayor Robertson said there were four asks regarding Comprehensive Plan adds. The Council concluded that the Commission should study the issue of the triangle area on Bel-Red

Road and whether or not it is part of the Crossroads, East Bellevue or Bel-Red subarea, and whether or not the southern boundary of the Downtown subarea, which bifurcates some parcels, should be changed. The Council will make a decision later regarding the two other asks, which were folding the Bel-Red five-year review into the Comprehensive Plan update, and whether or not the Lorge-Benis site should be given additional consideration.

The Commissioners were also informed that the Council has approved a CAC process for the light rail design. The committee will have between seven and nine members, none of which have been selected yet.

Deputy Mayor Robertson announced that applications are being received for a pilot leadership program called Bellevue Essentials. The program will begin in the fall and will be for emerging neighborhood leaders. If successful, the program may be conducted annually.

Finally, Deputy Mayor Robertson thanked the Commissioners for attending the Council meeting at which the Shoreline Master Program was delivered to the Council. She noted that the issue will be before the Council again later in the summer. The Department of Ecology, without being solicited, submitted to the Council its own analysis of the plan.

Chairman Carlson asked if it would be in order for the Commission to offer to review the letter from the Department of Ecology. Deputy Mayor Robertson said it would be fine if the Commission wants to do that. The issue is in the Council's lap at the present time, but a supplemental transmittal with additional thoughts from the Commission would not be out of order.

6. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said a report on auto dealerships in the city, including where they are currently located, some of the tax revenue implications, and impacts on them from several transportation projects, was given to the Council on June 10. The presentation was for informational purposes only. The Council expressed an interest in looking at the issue more holistically rather than addressing the issues that arise when a dealership wants to relocate.

Mr. Inghram took a moment to update with Commission with regard to comments that have been made by the public on the new Bellevue's Best Ideas website. He said the city is continuing to highlight the website encouraging people to add their suggestions to the site, which will be active until July 4.

Commissioner Laing reported that the first meeting of the Downtown Livability CAC was held on May 15. The focus of the first meeting was on the schedule, getting a better sense of how information will be presented, and seeking public stakeholder feedback. The next meeting is slated for June 19.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Station Area Planning

Senior Planner Mike Katterman noted that the Council and Sound Transit have for the last year and a half been focused on four cost-saving options, namely 1) a lidded trench in front of the Winters House and a combined driveway at that location for both the Winters House and farm stand; 2) an elevated section of 112th Avenue SE at SE 15th Street that will cross over the light rail as it transitions from the east side to the west side of 112th Avenue SE, and realigning SE 15th Street farther north of its current location while continuing to allow access to Bellefield Office Park and

Bellefield Residential Park limited to right-in/right-out; 3) closing SE 4th Street to all but emergency vehicles, leaving Surrey Downs Park accessible only from the neighborhood; and 4) locating the Downtown station along the south side of NE 6th Street between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE at the north portal of the tunnel on the west end and elevating it on the east end before it crosses over 112th Avenue NE.

With regard to Bellevue Way SE, Mr. Katterman said the decision reached was to go with the design that has light rail elevated through the station at the park and ride and into a lidded trench in front of the Winter's House in order to preserve the historic context of that site. The retail part of the blueberry farm stand will be moved to the entrance for Winter's House and additional parking will be created there.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if the Council will be making the final decision regarding adding HOV lanes to Bellevue Way SE and asked where the lanes would be located. Mr. Katterman said the decision to include an HOV lane along that roadway is the Council's to make. An additional lane would be added to the four existing lanes and that would involve cutting into the hillside on the west side. The HOV lane project has been added to the Transportation Facilities Plan and will later be considered for the overall Capital Investment Program. There is already an HOV lane that is part of the Sound Transit project to be constructed from the main entrance to the park and ride south to I-90. The city project would extend the HOV lane from that point to the Y at the north end.

Mr. Katterman said previously the light rail alignment on the east side of 112th Avenue SE continued up the east side to SE 6th Street and then crossing over to the west side. The cost savings idea is to elevate the roadway to allow the light rail to cross under SE 6th Street while remaining at-grade. Realigning SE 15th Street will be necessary as well.

Answering a question asked by Chairman Carlson, Mr. Katterman said the original proposal regarding SE 4th Street was for the light rail to run in a trench on the west side passing under the roadway. The cost-saving options included having the light rail run at grade with a crossing having bells and gates, and closing SE 4th Street to all but emergency vehicles. The Council and the Sound Transit board ultimately concluded the latter option was preferred. Accordingly, the city plans to move the court from its Surrey Downs location prior to the start of construction, and to re-designate the park from a community park to a neighborhood park, which will mean there will be no programming of activities in the park. Access to the park is still to be resolved, but it would be via SE 4th Street or from 111th Avenue SE.

Commissioner Laing asked how the decisions regarding the park will affect the adopted park master plan that is on the books. Mr. Katterman said the parks department is looking into that issue. The overall plan will not be scrapped, but some changes may need to be made, particularly relative to the ball fields and the programming. The loss of parkland will be mitigated by adding green space over the tunnel portal at the intersection of Main Street and 112th Avenue SE.

Answering another question asked by Commissioner Laing, Mr. Katterman said for the area north of the park the entire properties to be obtained will be used in accommodating the station and the setbacks and landscaped buffer requirements. The exact placement and height of the noise wall has not yet been determined, but if placed at the property line there is some additional land that could be landscaped. Some 11 single family parcels south of the park will need to be acquired, and once the buffer landscaping and noise walls are constructed, it is possible there will be some remnants created.

Mr. Katterman said in making the decision to close SE 4th Street to all but emergency vehicles, the Council left on the table the notion of extending SE 15th Street through Bellefield into the southern end of Surrey Downs to maintain some neighborhood access to 112th Avenue SE. However, through outreach efforts Bellefield, Surrey Downs and Bellecrest all three said no thanks, so the option has been taken off the table.

With regard to the Downtown station, the options were to have the station located in the tunnel roughly centered on SE 4th Street, or locating the station on the outside of the tunnel. The determination to locate the station primarily outside represents a considerable cost savings, though it will be partly underground, partly at grade, and partly elevated. Up to \$5 million of the cost savings will be earmarked for enhancements to the station.

Mr. Katterman said the design process has reached the 30 percent stage. Sound Transit is moving what they call final design, which will move the process from 30 percent to 100 percent. Their work will include the actual station designing and the naming process for each station. The inclusion of art will also be folded into the design work.

The responsibility for station area planning falls on the city. Sound Transit is responsible for the light rail system and the stations themselves, but the city is responsible for everything that occurs outside the stations themselves in roughly a quarter mile radius, the distance study has shown people will walk to a light rail station. Each station is unique in terms of the issues to be faced, so the outreach efforts will be individually tailored. Public engagement will be critical and it will also be tailored to each station.

Chairman Carlson highlighted the need to address parking in and around the stations. Mr. Katterman said parking at the more residential stations can be regulated through the creation of residential parking zones. Parking could, however, be an issue in the business districts. Mr. Inghram added that the city has not traditionally allowed Diamond-type parking lots in the downtown.

Chairman Carlson observed that the Seattle system appears to have been laid out by someone who forgot that it rains there. There is a difference between walking a quarter mile in the sun and in a constant drizzle. If people cannot drive to and park by stations, either they will not use transit or they will park somewhere they should not be, which will create problems for someone else. Mr. Katterman said much will depend on the station and who the typical users will be. In the downtown, most who use the station will be those who live and/or work in the downtown, so parking will be less of an issue. For the hospital and other stations, parking certainly will be an issue to address. People typically get to stations either by walking or by transit, so it will be necessary to make sure the transit services align with the stations in a way that will reduce the need for parking. Parking is something that tends to regulate itself over time given that where parking is not convenient, people will find other options.

Mr. Katterman reiterated that each station will be unique and as such a vision should be established for each. The vision should capture the existing and future contexts. The value of optimizing the use of the transit system will need to be captured through connectivity to the

stations via pedestrian and bicycle connections as well as by auto and transit. Good community involvement will be paramount to the success of the design process.

The Downtown Livability study that is underway will incorporate the station area planning for the downtown station. Some work has already been done regarding the 130th station area planning and more work is under way through the Growing Transit Communities process the city is involved in.

Commissioner Laing noted that the issue of the station area planning for the 130th station was first brought before the Commission about a year ago. Following a rich discussion, one of the things the Commission uniformly panned was the locating a significant surface parking lot in what otherwise is a prime transit-oriented development location. He asked why that notion is still on the drawing board. Mr. Katterman said the Commission will be involved on the land use side of things as things move ahead, including some possible code updates.

Mr. Katterman said the South Bellevue park and ride will not involve any land use changes and the issues are fairly well defined, so the area planning for that station should wrap up in late 2013 or early in 2014. The hospital/Wilburton station planning will be complex and will take up much of the overall planning schedule in that it could involve some significant zoning and land use changes, and because it will involve transportation and environmental issues. The planning work for that station will likely begin with pedestrian access across I-405. The downtown station area planning could involve some significant land use changes to the 112th Avenue NE area adjacent to I-405, but little controversy is anticipated. Potential land use changes along the east side of 112th Avenue NE could mean heavy involvement for the Commission relative to the East Main station area planning.

At the beginning of each station area planning there will be a public outreach process aimed at helping to define the scope of issues. Sound Transit has completed an open house for each of the designs for the stations in Bellevue. Schematic drawings for each station were shared with the Commissioners, and it was noted that the art program is ramping up.

Commissioner Laing suggested it would behoove the city to adopt a standard multipurpose trail design for the construction of a system following along the light rail line. Mr. Katterman said the multipurpose path envisioned along 112th Avenue SE extends all the way down to the South Bellevue park and ride. Some similar bike paths are planned for along Bel-Red. Those kinds of things will be considered during the station area planning process.

B. Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Inghram referred to the project principles. The city has put a lot of investment into the current plan, and while there are things that are out of date, and while there are emerging issues that need to be added, the plan is essentially solid. No CAC will be formed to spearhead the update; the body charged with doing the work is the Planning Commission in consultation with other boards and commissions and the public.

At the direction of Mayor Lee, the vision is to be highlighted as a key issue for the update. Mayor Lee also stressed the need to highlight the human element in the vision statement and to make sure the vision statement describes what the community is as opposed to what it looks like.

Mr. Inghram noted that Deputy Mayor Robinson had highlighted some of the individual requests to be added to the update. He said the Council has raised the issue of accelerating the Bel-Red review, the issue of whether or not the triangle area in Bel-Red should revert back to the Crossroads subarea, the issue of whether or not the downtown boundary should be adjusted, and the issue of what can be done about the Lorge-Benis site in Factoria. The Council is seeking an understanding of the process options.

Mr. Inghram called attention to the neighborhood areas map and said the city recognizes that the subarea plans are out of date. The plan is to complete the Comprehensive Plan update process before commencing a process for updating the subarea plans. The Council has suggested the subarea plans should be prioritized by those that are the most out of date and address them first. During the Comprehensive Plan update process there will be opportunity to engage the broader community on the question of which areas need updating, what the boundaries should be, and what the subarea names should be.

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz said the Transportation Element is one of the largest elements in the Comprehensive Plan and certainly is one of the most complex. It is very much keyed to the Growth Management Act requirements that look for transportation policies to be implemented and consistent with the land use plan. Three state-owned transportation facilities pass through the city, and impacts on those systems must be taken into account. There is a mandate to also show how all transportation improvements systemwide will be funded. Documentation is also required to show intergovernmental coordination within the region and the state. Demand management strategies for managing travel demand must be included, along with a ped/bike component. The city decided a long time ago not to try to build its way out of congestion, seeking rather an approach that balances autos with other forms of transportation. The transit plan certainly is part of that focus, as is the ped/bike plan.

Mr. Inghram said while the Transportation Element is large, the Commission will need to be very cautious about throwing anything away in attempting to make the plan easier to read and understand. There are four different policy sections covering transit and there may be an opportunity to combine them. Much of what is in the element is mandated by the state, but Bellevue will get to put its own spin on it. There continues to be talk about what concurrency means relative to timing transportation projects to land use development. Previously things were done on a strict vehicle-to-volume basis, but there is new research coming online about how to measure mobility in different environments. The question of how to measure mobility will not be solved during the update process, but it will be researched and that may influence the policies going forward.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if any cities have taken aim at limiting the number of persons who can live in their jurisdiction. Mr. Inghram said some have, and those that have been most restrictive have been small vacation cities. The next tier up are those cities that have a combination of regulations and environmental constraints, followed by cities that are primarily

residential and which do not have a lot of vacant land, such as the Points communities. In such cases, however, where the supply is limited the demand is not and the market reacts accordingly.

Chairman Carlson left the meeting at 8:45 p.m., and passed the gavel to Commissioner Tebelius.

Mr. Matz said there are six functional plans in the Comprehensive Plan. They overlap in jurisdiction and essentially outline how congestion is to be managed. The Transportation Facilities Plan is located in Volume 2, as is the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan. The Parks System Plan, the functional plan for parks development, is an entirely separate document, as are the Water and Sewer facilities plans. Each exists as a key component outlining funding and construction parameters. One issue to be discussed during the update process is how to manage the relationship between implementation and policy in a more coherent fashion.

Mr. Matz said the Parks, Open Space and Recreation Element, also required by the Growth Management Act, is structured in a slightly different way. He said one can think of the different elements as a combination of organic homegrown creations and mandates. While only relatively recently required by the state, Bellevue has had the Parks, Open Space and Recreation element in place for a long time. It has three different goals and it is broken up into three different theme areas: parks and open space system acquisition; parks system development, redevelopment, and renovations; and community services and programs.

The system plan was last updated in 2010. The update will address consistency with the system plan, will update the long-term capital project list, and will focus on the level of service methodology used to determine how much parkland the city should have. The long-range goals that preserve and expand the park system will be reviewed, and the community service policies will be updated.

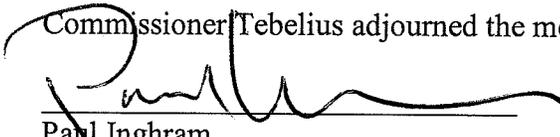
Mr. Matz said there is no requirement for the Comprehensive Plan to include the Urban Design Element. Bellevue has had the element in place for some time. The goal of the element is to create an attractive, lively and gracious city for people to live in. The element includes four sections: design quality; public places and connections; community design; and landmarks and historic resources. The topics to be addressed during the update will include the successes associated with the downtown wayfinding project, building signage, neighborhood business districts, the Cultural Compass, street corridors and urban boulevards, station area planning, and the downtown livability outcomes.

Mr. Inghram briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the projected schedule for updating the Comprehensive Plan.

9. OTHER BUSINESS - None
10. PUBLIC COMMENT - None
11. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
 - A. June 26, 2013

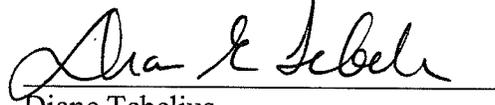
12. ADJOURN

Commissioner Tebelius adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m.



Paul Inghram
Staff to the Planning Commission

9/25/2013
Date



Diane Tebelius
Chair of the Planning Commission

9/25/13
Date

* Approved September 11, 2013