

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BEL-RED CORRIDOR PROJECT  
STEERING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

September 6, 2007  
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Conference Room 1E-113

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Lukens, Co-Chair; Kurt Springman, Joel Glass, Doug Mathews, Steve Dennis, Norm Hansen, Earl Overstreet, Faith Roland, Bill Ptacek, Dean Rebhuhn, Ken Schiring, Pat Sheffels, Laurie Tish

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mike Creighton, Co-Chair; Sue Baugh

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Emil King, Matt Terry, Dan Stroh, Michael Paine, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kevin O'Neill, Kevin McDonald, Goran Sparrman, Kris Liljebblad, Department of Transportation

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Gerry Lindsay

**1. Welcome and Review of the Agenda**

Co-Chair Lukens called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

**2. Approval of July 26 Committee Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2007, meeting as submitted was made by Mr. Schiring. Second was by Mr. Mathews and the motion carried without dissent; Ms. Sheffels abstained from voting.

**3. Public Comment**

Mr. David West, Executive Director of Puget Sound Sage, a federation of community, ethnic, religious and labor organizations that share the common goal of spreading the benefits of developments throughout the regional communities. He said the partner organizations have over 40,000 members living and working in King County, many on the Eastside. The members work in many low-wage service jobs in the community. The partners share the same common concerns: making housing affordable for low-wage workers, ensuring equitable wages, and addressing concerns regarding the scale of development. The steering committee was commended for the preferred alternative concept for the Bel-Red corridor; it has a number of positive features, including the transit/density orientation, the interest in workforce housing, and open space development. As the plan moves forward, Puget Sound Sage will bring the interests of its members into the public and land use process. Equitable development is a regional issue, particularly when some of the same development companies are active in more than one community. The issues can be address through city policies that shape development and through community benefit agreements negotiated on a developer-by-developer basis.

Mr. T.J. Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties and Briarwood Center, thanked the steering committee for all the effort put into studying the future of the corridor. He voiced support for the higher density/higher employment/higher housing option. He said throughout the process he has been advocating that no harm should be done to existing businesses and uses. The transition will take a long time to implement, and that principle will be of paramount importance during the transition. He said for his particular property the concept calls for a mix of housing and retail; he urged the committee to keep that focus as open-ended as possible. Flexibility will be the key to implementation.

Mr. Dan Stonington with the Cascade Land Conservancy referenced the letter sent by his organization to the steering committee. He noted that a variety of organizations are working together to set up a regional transfer of development rights (TDR) marketplace in the Puget Sound area. There is a lot of growth coming to the region, bringing with it many benefits. The costs, however, include the loss of farmland and working forests. King County has lost a couple thousand acres of farmland annually for the past several years. TDR offers a way for the region to grow with grace and focus develop where develop is appropriate, such as in the Bel-Red corridor, while preserving important landscapes. A bill was passed by the 2007 state legislature that set up a process to look at incentive zoning mechanisms that effectively would serve as a regional TDR system for rural and farmland conservation. There is going to be amenity funding tied to the regional marketplace; Bellevue should be well positioned when those discussions happen so it can provide recommendations on a meaningful level of amenity funding from the state level, making it feasible for Bellevue to accept credits transferred from resource lands. The implementation plan key concepts should be revised to include rural and resource land conservation on the list of amenities. Additionally, general language calling for coordination with the TDR marketplace should be included.

Mr. Chris Mooi spoke representing an interest in the former Angelo's Nursery property. He said he is very happy to see that the steering committee acknowledges the importance of the area in which the property is situated given its connection to the transit system. He said he is in the process of developing a master plan for the property. Flexibility will be key to the success of the area as it redevelops over time.

Mr. Curt Howler, 16243 NE 30<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke regarding the area in which Angelo's Nursery and Uwajimaya are located. He said the community worked very hard with the organization that was involved in developing the planned unit development for Unigard. He said the community also was involved when the focus was on putting in some office buildings. The community has always been in favor of the Community Business and Office zoning that is in place. The height limits were established for reasons which have not changed. Allowing height of more than 45 feet in the area is appropriate. Microsoft is adding some 8000 parking places at the end of 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Bel-Red Road, and a new 800-stall parking garage. All of that will mean much more traffic on 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road. Attempting to increase building height in that area where traffic is already very heavy does not make a lot of sense. Increasing height adjacent to a residential community does not make any sense either. The only advantage to increased building height is increased density, which would feed the light rail station down the street. Because the area is on a hill, however, additional height there would stick out like a sore thumb.

Ms. Pamela Toelle, 14845 NE 13<sup>th</sup> Street, said she was actively involved in the Crossroads study in 2005 and 2006. She said her major concern is the need to maintain and protect the designated areas that provide essential services. The residential and business communities rely on the businesses and services that are located in the Bel-Red corridor. Preserving the area will allow for a variety of economic opportunities. It is not known why the map was redrawn to place CB land from Crossroads in the Bel-Red corridor, along with some GC land from Wilburton. The

height and density proposed for the Crossroads CB land is incompatible with the local neighborhood and with the Crossroads subarea policy for Planning Area B, which states “Multifamily use is not allowed within District B.” The district includes the Unigard property, the meadow along 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, areas on both sides of Bel-Red Road, Highland Middle School, and the single family development south of 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The extensive amount of study time has been a planning reaction in response to the designation by Redmond of a portion of its Overlake neighborhood as an urban center. It is nothing more than a density dual. There is no integrity in such planning.

Mr. Lane Staples spoke on behalf of Unigard, owner of the 47-acre site to the east of 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He said he was present for the staff presentation in which digital renderings of what buildings at various heights would look like in the corridor and was disturbed by the findings. Unigard purchased its property in 1970 at a time when there were other plans to develop what had been a horse farm. The community liked the plan offered by Unigard for a low-impact development to be done in three phases over time; the local community was very involved in the planning process. In the late 1990s Unigard had the opportunity to complete the PUD on the site. The previously approved plan for the site included two buildings, one 55 feet tall and the other 40 feet tall. The community reviewed the plans and voiced concern that the taller building would restrict views to the west. In the end, four three-story buildings were constructed. If taller structures are allowed in the corridor, Unigard will lose its views to the west. It would be completely out of place to locate a highrise structure adjacent to Unigard and certainly would be incompatible with the long-standing direction of the local neighborhoods. Ten-story buildings should not be allowed in that area.

#### **4. Committee Review and Confirmation of Elements of Recommendation to City Council**

- i. Presentation**
- ii. Committee Direction**

Long-Range Planning Manager Kevin O’Neill reviewed the process to date, noting that the present meeting made 19 committee meetings, not including workshops and the trip to Portland. There have been a number of community meetings and events with the business community and property owners, all of which were very well attended, and there have been multiple updates to city boards and commissions as well as the City Council. The focus of the committee since March has been on developing the elements of the recommendation.

Continuing, Mr. O’Neill said the committee picked a preliminary preferred alternative to be analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in May and continued to discuss the various elements in June and July.

The vision statement is intended to serve as a broad expression of what the committee would like to see in the corridor. It is intended to stand in addition to the map. Mr. O’Neill asked the committee members if any revisions to the document are required.

Ms. Sheffels called attention to the last sentence under “A comprehensive, connected parks and open space system” which states that components will include trails along stream corridors, community facilities and neighborhood parks. She suggested that as written the sentence implies

that there will be trails along community facilities and neighborhood parks. Mr. O'Neill said the intent is to indicate that trails along stream corridors is one component, and that trails along community facilities and neighborhood parks is another component. He agreed the language could be reworked.

Mr. Hansen commented that often when infrastructure improvements are made, the surrounding neighborhoods are not afforded the same amenities. Underground power is an example. He suggested the vision statement or implementation plan should include the notion of equity for all areas of the city.

Ms. Tish suggested the issue goes much deeper than just Bel-Red.

Ms. Sheffels said the Planning Commission is currently studying the Utilities Element and has been informed that undergrounding power has a great deal to do with Puget Sound Energy. The city is not able to simply direct them to pay for all undergrounding work; it must occur through a partnership involving Puget Sound Energy, the city and others. The result of the Commission's work will likely be a recommendation for a citywide policy.

Mr. Springman said the city has an excellent track record of seeking to underground utilities at the time work is otherwise being done on a particular street. The concept could be expanded to leverage ongoing construction activities to enhance the areas around the Bel-Red corridor.

Mr. Lukens said economic realities make it impossible to expect that when something happens in the corridor it will automatically happen for the surrounding neighborhoods as well.

Department of Transportation Director Goran Sparrman clarified that the issue of whether or not overhead powerlines and other utilities can or should be undergrounded as part of a transportation project is a specific design discussion. There is in place policy guidance to underground utilities to the extent possible where feasible. One thing the Planning Commission is in the process of looking at is the undergrounding of utilities in the absence of a transportation project, which is a much broader perspective.

No other revisions were offered to the vision statement.

Turning to the issue of the development program, Mr. O'Neill commented that the corridor study began with an economic study by Leland Consulting Group. They looked at the corridor in its entirety and the overall Puget Sound region market and developed a forecast for what they believed to be a reasonable future market for office, housing and retail uses in the corridor. In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement the alternatives were arrayed with different combinations of development; the highest was 4.5 million square feet of future commercial space and 5000 housing units. Based on direction from the committee, that is the development program that was modeled in the FEIS. The anticipation is that the development program would need to be phased in over time based on infrastructure capacity.

No revisions were made to the development program.

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King reminded the committee that the DEIS analyzed three action alternatives alongside the No Action alternative. The committee then formulated the preliminary preferred alternative which was analyzed in the FEIS. He reviewed the preliminary preferred alternative land use map with the committee, noting first that there are two development nodes within the corridor at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, each of which includes a unique land use vision. The committee also acknowledged the work in the area of 152<sup>nd</sup> and its relation to the Uwajimaya and Angelo's portion of the study area. The committee also acknowledged the separate Sound Transit process that includes the notion of a floating station in the Overlake Hospital area the exact location of which will be determined through a separate process.

The preliminary preferred alternative map also includes the notion of a connective green linkage along NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, a medical office area along 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, continuing the retail/commercial focus along Northup Way/NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street, the idea of a cultural arts district where NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street turns into 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and a number of mixed use/housing/retail areas. The preliminary preferred alternative also envisions the key transition area between the Bel-Red corridor and the neighborhoods to the south happening on the south side of Bel-Red Road.

Ms. Sheffels asked about the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE node and the emphasis on office uses. She noted that the largest property in that vicinity is the old Safeway site which is slated to be redeveloped with more of an emphasis on housing rather than office. She asked if including on the map an emphasis on office could prove to be too limiting. Mr. King said the discussion the committee had on the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE node started at the time the preliminary preferred alternative map was being formed. Alternative 3 from the DEIS served as the general starting point, and in that alternative the entire node had an office focus. The committee had a lengthy discussion about fusing office into that mix, and in the end it was concluded that there should be a mix of office and housing without specific quotas. Some of the concepts presented to date by Wright Runstad have a predominant emphasis on office.

Department of Planning and Community Development Director Matt Terry commented that the preliminary thinking was quite deliberate about wanting to concentrate the employment-generating uses on the west side of the study area where there is the infrastructure capacity to accommodate them, and where they could be accommodated without impacting the neighborhoods. The notion of mixing housing and office was done quite deliberately for the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE node.

Mr. King said the phrase "with more of an emphasis on housing" could be removed, which would be consistent with the direction of the committee to date.

Mr. Overstreet said there was solid reasoning behind including that phrase and suggested it should not be taken out.

Mr. Springman suggested that the wording as proposed is acceptable given that it emphasizes the node as an employment center.

No changes were made to the preliminary preferred alternative map.

Ms. Roland asked if the documentation includes any language from the committee relative to what direction should be taken if one of the development nodes is not ultimately selected. Mr. Lukens suggested that the market will dictate; if there is no transit brought to the area, the nodes likely will not develop as outlined.

Mr. Terry commented that from the beginning light rail coming to the corridor has been anticipated. At the same time, however, the focus has always been on developing alternatives that are not dependent on light rail. If light rail does not happen for some reason, there will still be bus transit serving the area, so the notion of mixed use transit-oriented nodes makes sense in any case. Mr. O'Neill concurred and added that also embedded in the documentation is the notion that transportation capacity must be in place for the land use to happen.

Mr. Rebhuhn said the overwhelming focus has been on light rail. If in the end light rail does not come to the area, some other form of transit will have to be brought in. He suggested the language of the documentation should emphasize transit without specifying light rail. Mr. Springman suggested the issue could be footnoted. Mr. Lukens proposed clarifying that from the standpoint of the committee the recommendation is not dependent on light rail.

Mr. Terry noted that in the final analysis whether or not light rail will come to the corridor is fully dependent on whether or not the voters support the funding package. The land use plan for the corridor is fully dependent on transit service, but it will be for someone else to decide what form the transit will take.

Mr. Sparrman agreed, but pointed out that light rail is a much different picture from other transit services when it comes to capacity and travel times. The issue of light rail versus some other form of transit is a very large one. The Council has voted to endorse light rail for the corridor; if something happens to derail that approach, a new transit plan will have to be developed.

Mr. Schiring said one area of direction offered by the Council in initiating the corridor study was neighborhood protection, enhancement and creation. The portion of the study area near Uwajimaya and Angelo's is really a part of the Crossroads subarea and stands on a ridge. What happens down below it will be fully up to the city of Redmond. If there is a change from light rail to some other form of transportation, the circle that has been drawn on the map will become arbitrary.

Motion to drop the "triangle" area on the east end of the planning area from the Bel-Red survey area was made by Mr. Schiring; second was by Mr. Hansen.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Rebhuhn, Mr. Schiring said removing the area would take the height issue off the table. A building of up to 125 at that location would serve more as a wall than a gateway.

Mr. Overstreet commented that whether or not it was the right decision to include the triangle in the study area, it has been part of the study for almost two years. The issue of height can be addressed without removing the triangle from the study; it would not make sense to remove the area simply because of concerns about height.

Ms. Tish concurred. She said she would not want to see the committee punt the height issue off to some other group to decide. The issue is controversial, but the Bel-Red steering committee should make the decision.

Mr. Hansen disagreed. He said the triangle is separated from the rest of the Bel-Red area and is more akin with what Redmond will do with the area. The issue should be discussed when the matter of building height is under discussion.

Mr. O'Neill clarified that the triangle area has been part of the Bel-Red study from the beginning. When the committee was working to develop alternatives for the EIS, the land uses in the triangle area were looked at differently. The questions are what the appropriate land use type should be, and what the appropriate height should be. The proposed land use designation is shown as housing and retail and does not depend on any particular building height.

The motion failed.

With regard to the transportation components map, Senior Planner Kevin McDonald noted that with the preliminary preferred alternative comes an increase in land use intensity, primarily on the west side of the study area. He observed that the existing transportation system is relatively immature, and would not support the types and intensity of uses the vision calls for. A number of transportation components for a variety of modes were analyzed in the DEIS and FEIS, including a package of roadway improvements that has a new roadway running through the center of the corridor approximately aligned with NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, expansions of the north/south connections are envisioned, including 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE with a new full interchange at SR-520. The list of transportation components also includes a n extension of NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street; the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street extension; and expansions of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

In terms of high-capacity transit, the package includes a proposed light rail corridor through the center of the area with a connection with the Downtown Bellevue on the west and Redmond on the east. Stations are shown on the new NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street at 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. There are several options for how to get the transit line between Downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red study area, and between the study area and the Overlake area of Redmond.

Most of the area is lacking in pedestrian and bicycle facilities. As redevelopment occurs, pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be included on the arterial expansions and all new streets.

In addition, trail systems connecting parks and the BNSF corridor are envisioned.

Mr. McDonald said the committee identified the need to protect adjacent neighborhoods from traffic impacts by utilizing mitigation measures. A process has been started to review the available options; the communities will be involved in that process.

Mr. Glass asked if changing the level of service (LOS) standard for the corridor from 0.85 to 0.95 was part of the analysis that was done. Mr. O'Neill explained that the EIS was based on the existing LOS standards for the corridor. Changing the standard was not part of the modeling. However, in other parts of the city that have a mixed use land use pattern with higher levels of transit, the LOS standard is set to reflect that. Accordingly, revising the LOS standard should be considered as potential changes to the Comprehensive Plan are studied.

Mr. Glass suggested that extending NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street past Lake Bellevue will be problematic. He asked what would happen to the overall transportation patterns for the area if NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street were not extended. Mr. McDonald said a number of different design ideas for NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street are under consideration; some of them would have less of a footprint on the south side of Lake Bellevue than others. The modeling shows the extension as a critical link; if not included, other streets would have to carry the load, and that may result in a need for additional roadway or intersection improvements.

Mr. O'Neill said NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street is not critical to serve the developed program for the overall corridor. However, one of the objectives is to try to improve overall mobility in the corridor, which the extension does.

With regard to the pedestrian/bicycle section, Mr. Ptacek suggested that there should be a statement included highlighting the fact that the Bel-Red corridor system should connect to other parts of the city and the regional system. Mr. Sparrman said the comment is appropriate. He pointed out that the city is currently in the process of updating the pedestrian/bicycle plan. Integrating the Bel-Red corridor will be a part of that process.

There was agreement to add language regarding the need for connectivity in the text and on the map.

Ms. Roland raised again the need to include language regarding how the land use development patterns will be impacted if light rail is not in fact brought to the corridor. Mr. Sparrman said the fundamental question is what level of transportation system capacity will be needed to support the land use. The implementation plan will need to address that issue and touch particularly on the need to phase in the system along with redevelopment.

It was agreed that the essence of the statement made earlier by Mr. Terry should be included in the document.

Mr. Hansen said it had been his thinking all along that in order to develop the area to the

preferred alternative, it would be necessary to have all modes of transit, including light rail. That is in fact what the document says in the first sentence under transportation components. What will be needed is phasing, and some language making that clear should be added. Mr. Lukens suggested language of that sort should be included in the implementation strategy.

Mr. O'Neill observed that the committee has been focused on a 2030 planning horizon. A number of challenges and difficulties will arise between now and then. In order to bring about the desired vision, it will be necessary to do everything possible in the short term to build up the transit system, starting with bus service leading up to light rail. Implementation will take time and will by necessity require phasing.

Mr. Overstreet asked if additional work to develop the vision for 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE needs to be done, along with the transition from 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. McDonald said the two streets are quite different; each will see much different volumes. Additional work to design the streets is needed. The important point to be made, however, is that 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is the arterial extension of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street and that it connects with NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Hansen said one of the concerns is where 136<sup>th</sup> Place NE comes into NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Currently, it can take a long time to get around the corner onto 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE from NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street. There will need to be some work to facilitate the traffic flow in that direction. Mr. Sparrman said there a large number of similar conceptual issues that will need to be addressed in the implementation plan.

With regard the BNSF corridor, Mr. Rebhuhn suggested some thinking should be given to focusing the use on rail first and trail second rather than the other way around. The two uses should be compatible without being mutually exclusive.

Ms. Roland said her understanding of the process of rail banking is that the requirement is to preserve the corridor for transportation uses even if a conversion to trail is made. The safe approach would be to simply refer to the BNSF right-of-way as a transportation corridor in order to be consistent. Mr. Sparrman said the position taken by the City Council reflects that the corridor has been identified as a potential rail corridor for the long term. King County is currently working with BNSF to secure the right-of-way and keep it in the public domain, and their stated goal is to convert the corridor to trail uses for the short term.

Mr. Rebhuhn said he would like the steering committee to step forward boldly and proclaim an intention to list the corridor as an important transportation corridor.

Motion to list transportation corridor first in importance over trail was made by Mr. Rebhuhn; second was by Mr. Hansen.

Mr. Ptacek said it was his understanding that the corridor was intended to accommodate both rail and trail. Mr. Rebhuhn said his main concern was that the corridor is shown under the pedestrian/bicycle heading in the document, rather than as a transportation issue. Mr. Lukens

proposed calling out the corridor separately and with its own heading, and Mr. Rebhubn said he would prefer to see it done that way.

There was agreement to take that approach. The motion and second were withdrawn.

Turning to the traditional light industrial uses strategy, Mr. King observed that the committee had spent a lot of time discussing it and the related topic of service uses that have an LI characteristic. He allowed that many of the major industrial, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution uses have a long history in the corridor, and that many of them have come forward indicated a desire to remain in the corridor for the long term. The committee analyzed four different options and settled on Option 3 which would allow for all of the traditional LI uses to continue into the future, including expansions, but with the provision that no new LI uses would be allowed and discontinued LI uses could not be reestablished; the provision allows destroyed LI structures to be reconstructed.

The committee offered no revisions to its previously adopted position.

With regard to the service uses, Mr. King noted that the committee honed in on that with LI characteristics, such as auto body repair. The committee recommended strategy for the areas outside the nodes and outside the standalone housing areas allows existing service uses to continue into the future. Expansions of those uses is allowed, along with new service uses and rebuilding destroyed service uses. For the areas within the identified nodes and inside the standalone housing areas, the approach is similar to the recommendation regarding LI uses. The committee also directed staff to develop during the implementation phase a new term for non-conforming uses.

Mr. Glass asked if the documentation includes a list of LI-type uses. Mr. King explained that a list of example uses was used by the committee during its discussion. Part of the process of crafting new zoning regulations will include differentiating between LI-type service uses from the broader service category.

No revisions were made to the section.

Mr. McDonald described the preliminary preferred alternative as it relates to the parks and open space components. He said the vision is for a much more robust park system than exists in the corridor currently. A number of the components will need to be implemented over time through different mechanisms. One of the most important components is expanded green corridors and open space along the streams and using them for multiple purposes. A number of upland park facilities are envisioned to be developed either by the city or by the private sector as development occurs, ranging from pocket parks to community parks. Green infrastructure is an integral part of the recommendation. The corridor remains an opportunity site for a major recreational facility that may include both indoor and outdoor components.

Ms. Roland noted that the parks and open space facilities outlined in the text are not shown on

the map. She suggested the map should include a footnote referencing the text. Mr. O'Neill noted that the concept map does indicate generally where some of the parks and open space concepts could play out.

Mr. Dennis suggested that because the need for a major recreational facility is a citywide issue, it should not be called out specifically for the Bel-Red corridor to avoid giving more emphasis to it than necessary. It would be better to be more generic in that regard. Ms. Roland countered by saying the Parks and Community Services Board fought long and hard to get some acknowledgement that there could potentially be an appropriate site in the corridor, and having a reference in the preferred alternative that such a facility is an appropriate use in the Bel-Red Corridor is important.

It was agreed not to make any changes to the map, but to reference the facility in the final report.

Mr. McDonald said much of the land use that has been developed over the past half century in the corridor has not given much regard to the riparian corridors and retaining the quality of the streams. A "Great Streams" strategy to help restore some of the integrity of those streams is part of the preliminary preferred alternative. The focus is on incentives rather than additional regularly burden and on green infrastructure components.

Mr. Dennis asked if the city envisions developing a set of green infrastructure regulations or design standards applicable only in the Bel-Red corridor or citywide. Mr. McDonald said the answer is actually both. Citywide, opportunities are being sought to incorporate low-impact development techniques in conjunction with all new development and redevelopment. Specifically in the Bel-Red corridor, a consultant has been engaged to help develop a toolkit of techniques specifically applicable to the soil types and hydrology of the corridor. Part of that work will be an attempt to identify how well each of the various components will work; that information will be utilized to develop the incentive system.

Mr. Springman asked if the notion of TDR is something being considered citywide. Mr. Terry said that will certainly be part of the discussion on the implementation strategy. He said the approach has been considered for the corridor as a means of accomplishing the stream corridor preservation idea. Both King County and the Cascade Land Conservancy are working to develop a regional TDR program under which developers within the corridor could buy development rights from the rural areas and incorporate them into their Bellevue developments. To the extent that approach is adopted, it may well be that the city will be trading off local amenities for regional amenities; how to balance the two will be a policy question.

No revisions were made to the section.

Mr. King said the adopted vision statement contains a statement outlining the need for a variety of housing types within the corridor to meet the needs of a diverse population of various income levels. The committee also included the notion that housing strategies in the corridor should be integrated with the citywide approach, that a housing strategy should be included as part of the

zoning and land use strategy, and that a multi-pronged approach of incentives, regulations and tax policies will be the best approach.

No changes to the section were offered.

With regard to building height, Mr. King noted that the FEIS there was an analysis of more building height in five different areas of the corridor. He reminded the committee members that additional building height does not necessarily translate into additional floor area or more density. The committee acknowledged that any allowance for potentially taller buildings would need to be achieved through a system of incentives.

For the Overlake area, the current recommendation is for building heights up to 150 feet. For the smaller area to the east of Lake Bellevue, the recommendation is for heights up to 60 feet, unless within a transit node in which case the allowed height would be 90 feet. For the large transit nodes that lie entirely within the corridor, the committee recommended up to 150 feet in the core, transitioning to 125 feet on the perimeter. The committee recommended up to 90 feet within the node and up to 60 feet outside the node for the area that includes Uwajimaya and Angelo's.

Mr. King explained that buildings 75 feet and taller require a different type of construction, and the additional cost makes it hard for a 90-foot building to pencil out.

Mr. Dennis asked if the committee established a base height for each of the areas. Mr. King said exact base heights have not been set; that action will be part of developing the new zoning regulations. However, the general idea is that the base heights will be very close to what is permitted under the current zoning. To get to the higher numbers will require participation in the incentive system.

Mr. Schiring pointed out that the city code allows for an additional 15 feet of height for rooftop mechanical equipment.

Regarding Area B to the east of Lake Bellevue, Mr. King said if the committee wanted to go with a lower number, the logical figure would be 75 feet; if the committee wants to go higher, the logical figure would be 125 feet.

Motion to set the upper height limit for Area B at 75 feet was made by Mr. Ptacek; second was by Mr. Overstreet and the motion carried with only one vote opposed.

No change was proposed to the height limits in Areas C and D.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Schiring regarding the node on at 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, Mr. King explained that the city attempts to avoid creating split zone situations. The line in the area in question diagonally cuts through a number of parcels. As part of the process of developing the new land use regulations, staff will use their best judgment in creating some logical

boundaries. The diagonal area touches a lot if not all of the Uwajimaya area and a substantial portion of the Angelo's site. The current Office zoning in the area allows building heights of up to 45 feet, while the CB zoning allows buildings up to 60 feet tall.

Motion to change the height within the 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE node to 75 feet and outside the node to 60 feet was made by Mr. Glass; second was by Mr. Dennis.

Mr. Mathews said he would like to see accommodation of what has been happening in the area for many years, namely preserving views and open space. He asked if it would be possible to restrict height right along 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and allow for taller buildings further down the hill.

Ms. Sheffels said the current approach could best be maintained by making no changes to what is presently allowed.

Mr. Springman said he remembers the horse farm on which the Unigard development stands. He voiced concern that consideration would be given to changing the zoning across the street from a site that has been so very carefully crafted over the years. He said he would prefer to be conservative and to recognize the history of the local neighborhood by leaving the heights as they are.

A substitute motion to leave the heights for the area as they are currently was made by Ms. Sheffels. Second was by Mr. Springman.

Mr. Dennis pointed out that the area in question is far from being undeveloped property. The only thing being talked about is height. He said he can certainly understand the concern about building a wall of height along the roadway and suggested that could be addressed by making once of the height incentives the preservation of view corridors.

Mr. Overstreet suggested that getting too conservative in what is allowed will guarantee the construction of a wall of buildings. Allowing additional height through an incentive system could be the way to lessen the impacts.

Mr. Glass pointed out that because the FAR is not being considered for change, the opportunity for view corridors will be preserved.

Mr. O'Neill observed that just about anything poorly developed on the site will block views because of the elevations of the street. Accordingly, it would make sense to offer a system of incentives that would include the creation of view corridors.

The substitute motion carried 7-6.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

## **5. Implementation principles**

Mr. Terry said the work done by the steering committee has clarified the vision for the area and set the foundation, but there is still a lot of work to be done. The 30-year land use vision will not happen overnight, and the infrastructure necessary to support the vision will not be in place overnight.

Mr. Terry said amendments will need to be made to the Comprehensive Plan. Staff are contemplating reconfiguring the Bel-Red subarea boundaries to create a standalone subarea; the corridor currently lies within the boundaries of two or three separate subareas. A series of policies implementing the vision will need to be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, and the road infrastructure will need to be established in order to protect the needed rights-of-way as redevelopment occurs. The preference of the city for the light rail routing and station locations will also need to be established, though Sound Transit will have the final say on that.

With regard to the level of service standard for the area, Mr. Terry clarified that the current standard is 0.90. Consideration will be given to changing the standard to 0.95. In all of the mixed use districts in the city – Factoria, Overlake and Downtown – there is a lower level of service, specifically to avoid over-investing in roadway and intersection segments that are not appropriate for a transit-oriented mixed use neighborhood. The anticipation is that parking standards and transportation demand management practices will be implemented along with other strategies to make sure that the development that takes place will be transit oriented.

Mr. Glass asked how a LOS E standard of 0.95 will affect the grading of intersections and concurrency. Mr. Terry said LOS is the standard used to evaluate concurrency. The change would allow for a slightly higher level of congestion, but would result in facilities that are more appropriately sized for a mixed use environment.

Mr. Hansen said his concern from a neighborhood viewpoint is that the residents must pass through the area to get to and from their homes. Changing the LOS standard will not benefit the neighborhoods. Furthermore, Bel-Red is not supposed to compete with or mirror the Downtown, so setting the standard that low would be problematic.

Mr. Glass said the traffic in both Overlake and Factoria is a mess and noted that it is much easier to get around in the Downtown. He asked how that can be if the LOS standard for all three of those areas is the same. Mr. Terry explained that there is a unique set of circumstances facing Factoria in that there is only one north-south arterial that penetrates the area; despite good efforts to establish other north-south traffic options, the city has not been able to relieve the congestion that occurs on Factoria Boulevard. Regardless of the LOS standard, Factoria is likely to see the same level of congestion. Because the anticipated grid for the Bel-Red corridor will be more complete, the flow of traffic in the area can be expected to function more like the Downtown.

Mr. Terry allowed that certain intersections within the corridor likely will operate at LOS 0.95 or lower, and Mr. Hansen suggested that fact will negatively impact the livability of the neighborhoods that must pass through the area.

Mr. Dennis commented that as congestion rises, the speed of the traffic decreases, and the result is a more pedestrian-oriented environment. Mr. Terry agreed. Urban areas are designed to focus on mixed modes, pedestrian travel, and ways of travel other than SOV. Congestion comes with the package.

Mr. Sparrman said where a higher standard is used in areas where there is a high volume of traffic, it becomes necessary to employ double left-turn lanes and longer queue lanes. In short, the maximum amount of pavement that will fit in the right-of-way must be used. He pointed out that by lowering the standard, more of the right-of-way can be used for non-automobile modes.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Rebhuhn, Mr. Terry explained that in Downtown there is a maximum parking ratio of 2.7 stalls per thousand square feet of office use. In more suburban office districts, the maximum ratio is 4.5 stalls per thousand. The contemplation is that the Bel-Red transit nodes will fall somewhere in the middle. There likely will be structured parking, and employees likely will have to pay to park. The transportation improvements contained in the vision for 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Bel-Red Road all add capacity. By setting the LOS standard at 0.05, the focus will not be on designing those roadways to function as suburban facilities with free flowing traffic during the peak hours. The road conditions during the non-peak hours will generally be very good, but there will be congestion during the peak times.

Motion to maintain a level of service standard of 0.90 for the Bel-Red corridor was made by Mr. Hansen; second was by Mr. Schiring.

Mr. Springman commented that with a higher standard will come less land for non-motorized facilities, less park and open space area, and longer stretches of road for pedestrians to cross. Congestion in urban areas is part of the city growing and maturing.

The motion failed with only two votes in favor.

Mr. Terry said most of the development capacity of the area is concentrated in nodes, particularly in the two shown in the middle of the study area. The thinking is that approximately 80 percent of the office capacity, and 70 percent of the housing capacity, would be accommodated in the circles. What that means is that while the rest of the area will change, it will not change dramatically. The intent is to use the incentive zoning system extensively, utilizing FAR and height increases to leverage investments in amenities for the area. There is still a lot of technical work to be done in refining the numbers.

Protections for existing service and light industrial uses will be accomplished through changes in the way in which the city deals with nonconforming uses.

Generally, the zoning system will be very similar to the one in play in the Downtown, though the density limitations and incentives will be somewhat different. The anticipation is that the

increase in FAR and height will produce a development form that is quite different from all other areas of the city. There will be office buildings with structured parking, pedestrian amenities, attractive streets, and taller but slender residential buildings. Hopefully the incentive system will result in low-impact development that will encourage green space, parks and a generally improved environment.

Mr. Dennis asked how staff views the notion of establishing a regional TDR program. Mr. Terry allowed that the issue is a difficult one. The basic idea is a very good one; preserving open space and rural land is a laudable regional objective. The challenge for the Bel-Red corridor, however, is that the city will need all the incentives it can devise to accomplish the development program. In order to get the stream restoration program in place, it will likely be necessary to implement some form of TDR. Under such a program, people with property adjacent to stream corridors would be able to recover some return for their investment by selling density credits to a property owner within a node, who could use them to accomplish higher height or more intensity. A program aimed only at the Bel-Red corridor would completely directly with any regional TDR program. How to balance the two will be the big question.

Mr. Ptacek said it is his understanding that the state legislature is working on a number of options related to the TDR approach. He suggested the city should continue to explore the option.

Motion to encourage the city to explore the TDR option, both for Bellevue specifically and how it might interrelate to a regional program, was made by Mr. Ptacek; second was by Mr. Overstreet.

Mr. Terry agreed with Mr. Ptacek and noted that the city has already had a conversation with King County about the TDR issue. In that meeting, the county generally indicated it might be willing to invest in Bel-Red in exchange for some TDR program in Bellevue. Of course, there are still a myriad of details to be explored.

Mr. Dennis asked if the city can live with the suggested language changes offered by the representative for the Cascade Land Conservancy.

Mr. Springman said he favors the idea of exploring the TDR issue further but was not willing to incorporate such directive language.

Ms. Roland concurred. She noted that the city does not need enabling legislation in order to implement its own TDR program. More study is needed to determine how a regional program would complement or hinder a Bellevue-specific program.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Terry said the challenge of building all the new investment in transportation capacity as development takes place is complicated by the challenge of figuring out how to pay for it all.

The current approach is to use the concurrency strategy to look at the next six years of transportation investments, which is modeled against the LOS standard. If the traffic of the development in question fits, the development is allowed to proceed; if it does not, the development is stopped while other fixes are identified. The proposal of staff is to keep that system but supplement it with a more direct phasing strategy that links development to the construction of specific transportation improvements. Staff agrees that it all must be tied to a number, but the number has to be tied to the capacity of the infrastructure. Work is under way to model the capacity provided by each of the transportation improvements in the package in order to determine the logical progression of improvements to the overall system and how it can be tied to development.

Mr. Terry said the financing plan represents the biggest challenge facing the city. The transportation package represents a need for some \$200 million in investments and new transportation improvements. The state will be responsible for some of them, but the lion's share will fall to the city. That is a staggering sum given that the annual CIP totals only about \$40 million. Transportation and finance consultants have been hired to help identify the tools that can be used. A set of financing principles and a financing scheme will hopefully be in place by the time the zoning is implemented in April 2008.

Mr. Ptacek said from the start the view of the corridor has been that of a gem in the rough. If it is in fact as good as everything thinks it is, the market will make it all happen; if it is not, it simply will not work. Mr. Terry concurred, noting that there is a market place in which the financing scheme will have to work.

Mr. Terry commented that Bellevue and Redmond have had a long history of trying to deal with the traffic impacts of Overlake growth. Microsoft has been incredibly good for the region, but as a use it has generated a lot of traffic that both cities have had to deal with. An interlocal agreement is in place with Redmond that pays for a series of transportation investments designed to mitigate the impacts of growth in and around the Overlake area. That agreement is going to have to be modified to reflect the growth assumptions contemplated in the Bel-Red corridor and the Redmond portion of the Overlake area. The two cities have been working closely together and the anticipation is that later in the fall a set of principles will be brought to the joint Councils aimed at guiding the adoption of a new agreement. The hope is that the city will be in a position to adopt BROTS III concurrent with adoption of the new zoning, Comprehensive Plan and finance plan for the corridor.

Mr. Ptacek asked if Bellevue is working with Kirkland the same as it is working with Redmond. Mr. Terry said a great deal of technical work has been done on analyzing where Bel-Red and Overlake trips go. While many trips head north, they tend to stay on I-405 and avoid the Kirkland residential streets. Kirkland is not and will not be impacted by development in the corridor in the same way Bellevue neighborhoods are and Redmond is.

Mr. Glass asked if there is any way to incentivize quality construction and the use of specific materials. Mr. Terry said highrise development tends to bring with it more permanent and high

quality construction because of its very nature. The primary quality challenge will be in the wood frame structures of less than 75 feet. The city intends to pay full attention to that issue.

## **6. Committee Direction on Transmittal to City Council**

Mr. Lukens said the formalized direction of the steering committee will be transmitted to the City Council on September 24. It will then be sent to the various boards and commission for further analysis and discussion. The committee may be called back together on an informal basis to receive briefings and updates regarding the process.

## **7. Wrap Up/Next Steps**

Mr. Lukens took a moment to thank all of the steering committee members. He said the level of participation on the part of each member has been very high, which has resulted in a quality recommendation. A thank-you event may be scheduled for later in the fall.

Mr. Terry also thanked the committee members for their efforts over the past two years. He said the group has challenged staff and the consultant team along the way, has rigorously taken up each issue, and has been very inclusive throughout the process. Staff is very excited about the product. The Council has been tracking the process very carefully and appears to be onboard with the concepts of the plan. There is a great deal of momentum and excitement in the community.

Mr. Sparrman said the committee has helped to develop a transportation plan that provides a vision for how to deal with the traffic challenges in the corridor for the next 20 years or more. It does not provide all the solutions, but a framework on which to build. Similarly, when the Downtown Implementation Plan was completed a few years ago, there were still some unanswered questions at the end of that process that the City is still grappling with.

## **8. Adjourn**

Mr. Lukens adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.