

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

April 13, 2011  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Hamlin, Himebaugh, Lai, Mathews,  
Sheffels, Turner

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Ferris

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Andrew Kidde, Patricia  
Knight, Janet Lewine, Department of Planning and  
Community Development; Carol Hamlin, Development  
Services Division; Kevin McDonald, Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Commissioner Lai who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Mathews, who arrived at 6:37 p.m., and Chair Ferris, who was excused.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brian Parks, 16011 SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, reported that as of April 3 the Phantom Lake outlet weir was locked up to the maximum height setting in the midst of the rainy season, which has elevated the water mark to at least an elevation of 262, which is nearly a foot and a half higher than where the gate was set in 1993 through 1995. The boards were taken out following citizen complaints and it appears they are detaining some of the runoff in Pond A; often during the winter months the outlet valves for Pond A were left wide open, meaning no detention was occurring there. The lake level has dropped to the height of the overflow rim for the first time since October. The levels used to pop up during peak times but would drop again once the rain event was done. He presented the Commission with a petition signed by more than 90 percent of the Phantom Lake property owners indicating opposition to Shoreline Master Program restoration plan PL-2, the private inlet renovation, and PL-3, the notion of the city buying up shoreline lots on which to establish conservation easements. He offered a different plan for PL-7 which would shift the PL-2 money to the much needed outlet work. A policy is needed to select a target lake elevation for Phantom Lake; much of the problem could be solved with such a policy. In the original weir design, the outlet opening below the peak capacity for the lake was very small, and now the mud has filled in to about the same level. The Shoreline Master Program should not carryover the critical areas ordinance floodplain setback buffers, which are typically 110 feet from the floodplain elevation of 265. The proposed buffer starts from the FEMA level of 265 that is already known to be two feet too high. It is likely that the weir-forced

lake levels might qualify Phantom Lake as a MS4 detention facility, which is exempt from both the critical areas ordinance and the Shoreline Master Program as per the WAC. To improve Phantom Lake water quality and flooding issues, the Commission should recommend piping all or at least some of the polluted Pond A water into the sewer.

Mr. David Plummer, 14414 NE 14<sup>th</sup> Place, said there is no need for a light rail station in the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE area. The station should be eliminated from Segment D of the East Link system. That would improve travel in Segment D and reduce the overall cost. Land use planning and zoning for the area should make it possible and economically feasible for the current eclectic mix of business activities to continue and expand. The businesses could then continue to provide a broad range of service and employment opportunities for Bellevue citizens. Implementing the city's scheme will eliminate those advantages. There is no need for a major residential development where the light rail station is planned. The city's housing unit estimate for the Bel-Red area was just an arbitrary guess put forth by the staff during discussions with King County Metro in December 2005; it was never confirmed by any independent evaluations by competent consultants. The city's own buildable lands report submitted to King County in mid-2007 clearly showed ample capacity in the existing land use plans without rezoning the Bel-Red area to absorb the anticipated housing growth through 2022. The proposed station is too close to the station proposed for approximately 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The two locations are only 900 meters apart, which is 20 percent less than the average station spacing for a wide variety of light rail systems in the United States. There has been no opportunity for citizens in nearby neighborhoods to participate in the so-called community involvement efforts related to planning for the station. There has been no city outreach to his neighborhood or other nearby residential neighborhoods. The city's limited plans for streams and water course improvements can be implemented for much less money and more effectively without the proposed station and residential developments. None of the city departments nor the city-sponsored stream team have ever initiated any significant stream or water course improvements for any of the streams or water courses in the Bel-Red area. The very compressed and waffle-iron street grid proposed by the staff would be exceedingly costly to implement and would be totally unnecessary.

Mr. Mike McCorkle, executive director of the Sambica Camp and Conference Center, reminded the Commission that in the summer of 2010 he indicated his appreciation for the staff work on the proposed camp and conference center Land Use Code amendment and requested an extension of time to continue working through the details. The additional time provided has been productive. The principle and subordinate uses in the proposed code amendment will allow Sambica to respond over time to the changing needs and economics of a religious camp and conference center. The proposed implementation tools will provide Sambica with the flexibility and predictability needed to fulfill its religious mission as provided by the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000. The proposal will also provide stability and predictability for the nearby neighborhoods. The work, however, is not quite finished and another month is needed to finish working out all of the details. He thanked the Commission for its patience and continued support.

Mr. Warren Halvorson, 13701 NE 32<sup>nd</sup> Place, asked the Commission to review its staff procedures and methodologies for conducting research and to completely disregard any information derived from the recent detached accessory dwelling unit survey. The survey is totally flawed and its results should not be used to represent public opinion or to make public policy decisions. The survey was very general and broad; it does not explain what is being measured or validated. Phrases such as "backyard cottages" and "mother-in-law apartments" are biased given that accessory dwelling units are in fact rentable units that can be rented to any person. The population surveyed was open to anyone wanting to fill it out, including individuals,

organizations, community groups, and residents of Bellevue, Seattle, North Bend, and homeowners, business owners, renters and the homeless. Persons could even respond more than once. Those factors totally invalidate the results. In addition, the survey is biased toward positive responses. The purpose of the survey is never defined, and the survey does not ask if a change should be made at all. The questions not asked are even more important; none were asked about the possible impacts on schools, infrastructure, safety, crime and the like.

Ms. Cindy Ludwig, 12336 NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, said she had the same concerns with regard to the accessory dwelling unit survey. Allowing accessory dwelling units will have a large impact on the Bridle Trails subarea. The Bridle Trails Community Club has formed a subcommittee to address the issue. She questioned why the current city ordinance, which allows for attached accessory dwelling units, should be expanded to allow for detached accessory dwelling units in residential areas. A detached unit would be far more attractive to non-family renters, and real estate agents would undoubtedly point out the advantages of having income potential when listing properties for sale. Bridle Trails residents are overwhelmingly opposed to allowing detached units. The goal of the Bridle Trails subarea is to protect and preserve the rural, equestrian and residential character of Bridle Trails. The housing mix in the subarea is already diverse, including about 60 percent multifamily. What could be deemed de facto multifamily will not result in lower-cost housing; properties will sell for even more where there is income potential. Bridle Trails has fairly large lots; that makes the area unique but also makes it a target for detached accessory dwelling units.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda as submitted was approved by consensus.

#### 5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

#### 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commissioner Hamlin reported that the Eastgate/I-90 CAC met on April 7 and focused on transportation issues. A lot of material was covered, including transportation issues, constraints and opportunities. The group will be receiving a report from the consultants with regard to some alternatives being developed.

#### 7. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram assured the Commission that the affordable housing work program has only just gotten started. He said the issue is not being fast tracked and no specific proposal has been developed. The work done to date has been very preliminary. There will be a great deal of interaction with the public as the process moves ahead; their concerns will be gathered and addressed.

Mr. Inghram noted that the Shoreline Master Program update open house has been scheduled for April 20, and the public hearing for May 25.

#### 8. STUDY SESSION

##### A. 2011 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz informed the Commission that only one application had been received during the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment application period. He said the Commission was charged with reviewing the application, directing questions about it to staff, reaching consensus as to whether or not expansion of the geographic scope of the application should occur, and establishing a date for the threshold review public hearing. A staff recommendation will be published in advance of the public hearing.

Mr. Matz said the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process has two elements. The first is the threshold review during which the Commission determines if applications should be moved forward. The Commission's recommendation, developed following the public hearing, will be forwarded to the Council which will make the final determination with regard to the work program. In the second part the Commission will conduct study sessions and a public hearing to consider the proposal, then will make a recommendation to the Council. Council action on the Commission's recommendation to adopt or not adopt the amendment will occur in the fall of the year.

The application received involves three properties under two ownerships. The proposal is to amend the map designation on the nearly half acre site from Single Family High to Multifamily Medium. There are houses on two of the three lots currently. If approved, the amendment could allow for redeveloping the site with up to 20 units per acre; the current zoning allows for up to four units per acre.

The site is within the Southwest Bellevue subarea whose plan guides redevelopment in the corridor by specifying the location of land uses along the Bellevue Way SE corridor in order to provide for stability and development expectations. The area to the south of the Triangle Pool site is single family, while multifamily exists to the north of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to Main Street. In between the subarea plan identifies a mix of Single Family Medium, multifamily, Professional Office and Neighborhood Business, primarily in recognition of long-time uses in the area. The east side of Bellevue way is primarily multifamily with the exception of some commercial uses. To the west of the subject property is the Kinoshita site which has a planned unit development under review for six attached townhouses on the multifamily portion and three detached single family houses on the single family portion of the property. To the north of the Kinoshita site is a Single Family-Urban Residential development. The non-residential uses in the area include some professional office uses and Chase's Pancake House. The west side of Bellevue Way in the vicinity of the Ren-Fu site is zoned for single family, but the uses primarily are three different churches and the Bellevue Nursery.

Mr. Matz said the Ren-Fu properties gain access from Bellevue Way via a driveway shared with another property. The properties between the Ren-Fu site and Bellevue Way are designated Multifamily Medium and Multifamily Low; the properties to the east are developed with fourplexes built in 1959, while the property to the south is occupied by a single house. The Ren-Fu properties are bordered to the west by the 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE neighborhood which is Single Family High and which gains its access from 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if the access drive is sufficient to accommodate traffic associated with a multifamily development. Mr. Matz said one might expect to see the adjoining sites assembled into a larger development. However it is developed, however, the transportation department will want to weigh in on what the driveway requirements will be. At the least the driveway would need to accommodate two-way traffic.

Mr. Matz said the Land Use Code states that expanding the geographic scope of Comprehensive Plan amendment proposals is recommended if nearby similarly-situated properties share the same characteristics. He said staff was not recommending expansion, however. The properties that sit between the Ren-Fu site and Bellevue Way all gain access from Bellevue Way and are already designed Multifamily Medium and Multifamily Low. The single family properties to the east have the cohesive characteristics of a single family neighborhood, and none of them have access from Bellevue Way.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Himebaugh, Mr. Matz said there is a topographic break between the properties along Bellevue Way and the single family properties to the west. The topography serves to physically distinguish the areas, which also argues against expanding the geographic scope.

Noting that one of the three Ren-Fu properties is a long and narrow lot, Commissioner Sheffels asked how that came to be. Mr. Matz said it does not appear that an organized plat effort produced the properties. One could speculate that the narrow lot could have at one time served as an access tract to other properties and that it subsequently was re-platted in a way that could never be developed. The property is an actual tract and does not serve any access function.

Commissioner Hamlin asked if the access drive is owned by the Ren-Fu property owners. Mr. Matz said he would have to research the ownership before answering the question; he said he would provide the answer in the staff recommendation.

There was consensus not to expand the geographic scope of the Ren-Fu Comprehensive Plan amendment, and staff was directed to schedule a public hearing for May 11, 2011, on the threshold review recommendation.

## B. Camp and Conference Center LUCA

Commissioner Hamlin noted that he is married to Carol Hamlin, the staff person working on the Camp and Conference Center (CCC) Land Use Code amendment. He said he has no specific interest in the affected property or the application of the zoning. He added that the property owner has been informed of his relationship and has indicated no objection to having him participate in the discussions and deliberations of the code amendment, and that he would evaluate the proposed amendment fairly and openly.

Mr. Matz reminded the Commission that the CCC designation was adopted in 2009. The issue was before the Commission on July 28, 2010, for an initial discussion, and the conversations

since then with Sambica have been productive. The proposed code framework is consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan amendment (CPA) for a Camp and Conference Center.

The existing designations of the Sambica property, which are a combination of single family, multifamily and neighborhood business, do not align with the physical facilities or with the potential master planning efforts. The long-established use is historically valued in both the neighborhood and the city. Sambica desires to upgrade over time in order to maintain its functions and to provide relevant services to its users. The community in turn wants to manage redevelopment to minimize the impacts to the surrounding residential areas. The CPA process was chosen to address the adjoining objectives and the result is a unique CCC Comprehensive Plan designation which applies to Sambica and other future potential camp and conference center sites that would accomplish the designation through the CPA process. With the Land Use Code effort, the focus shifts from a desired policy outcome to practical implementation and regulations. The final step to realizing redevelopment will be a rezone.

Mr. Matz said the proposed code proposal is shaped around four backbone principles, namely distinguishing the mix of existing and anticipated future land uses; assuring the predominant non-commercial character of a camp and conference center; providing predictability in development processes; and maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. In consideration a CCC district, the Commission should consider the potential for different owners of the Sambica site as well as the potential for other camp and conference center sites citywide. Such sites have a unique set of characteristics in that they consist of multiple uses, structures and facilities, are planned for connected multiple parcels of land, and may develop or redevelop over an extended period of time.

Mr. Matz said key elements of the CCC district and the rules are intended to limit the overall intensity of a CCC site and maintain compatibility with a surrounding neighborhood by defining the types of uses in a camp and conference center and their connections to each other; adapting existing LUC processes including the Master Development Plan and Design Review; setting new standards for reviewing master planning over time through a physical site plan; establishing specific dimensional, landscape, other site development standards as a measure of overall site intensity; and providing site, building and street design guidelines for qualitative design solutions.

Senior Planner Carol Hamlin said the city's development review processes will be used to look at the entire site of potential camp and conference center properties, all potential uses, and development over time. For each building outlined in the master plan, design review will be conducted; the review will include the design of the building, site design, and street frontage. The review process will include looking at phasing plans as well as single site agreements, which will allow for the maintenance of the underlying lot lines as well as vesting for the proposal.

The proposed code amendment will result in a unique CCC use chart with principle and subordinate uses as well as general land uses.

Ms. Hamlin said the specific development review tools will include a standard dimensional chart, similar to what was done for Bel-Red, with requirements for setbacks, height, lot coverage, and impervious surfaces. A landscaped buffer will be required along the perimeter adjacent to single family to provide more of a transition.

Commissioner Himebaugh asked if the setbacks refer to distances between buildings or setbacks from interior lot lines given that the proposal is to allow the owners to maintain the lot lines. Ms. Hamlin said the setbacks will be measured from the outer boundary of the entire property established by the master development plan. If there is no master development plan, the setbacks would apply to the individual parcel boundaries.

Ms. Hamlin said any signs associated with CCC developments will need to comply with the Neighborhood Business regulations. Neighborhood Business areas are typically adjacent to single family and the sign regulations are more sensitive to residential neighborhoods. The CCC parking requirements will be the same as those used for churches and schools.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lai, Ms. Hamlin explained that building height is measured from the building pad and based on average existing grade. Mr. Matz added that the base height of 30 feet and additional height is earned through bonus provisions which tend to keep buildings removed from the exterior of the property. The idea is to concentrate the larger buildings toward the middle of the property.

Commissioner Sheffels commented that light and noise are concerns often highlighted by those in residential areas. She noted that the proposal would allow gymnasiums and outdoor sports fields which could produce both spillover light and noise. Mr. Inghram said the city's noise ordinance regulations noise at the property edge. Even though a new zone is being proposed, all adjoining residential properties will still enjoy their noise protections for both nighttime and daytime activities. The issue of light spillover will also be addressed.

Ms. Hamlin said the design guidelines call for a visual and functional connection between different uses on a CCC site. Building materials and colors must be complementary. Buildings with blank facades facing streets will be discouraged by the guidelines.

Mr. Matz said the city is continuing to work with Sambica on a model for the CCC district, on the understanding that the code amendment will apply anywhere in the city where a camp and conference center might be sited, including Vasa Park and the Sisters of St. Joseph Peace sites. Still under discussion is the topic of floor area ratio. He said on May 11 the Commission will be presented with the code language.

Commissioner Turner said the camp and conference center proposal is a good idea but said he hoped the regulations will not be too restrictive.

### C. Enatai Tree Preservation Study

Mediation Program Manager Andrew Kidde commented that in February 2010 some residents of Enatai approached the Council with a request for the city to adopt additional measures to protect and preserve trees in their neighborhood. The Council directed the Commission to study the issue in line with a set of guiding principles, which were included in the packet memo.

Community Outreach Coordinator Patricia Knight said staff assisted the neighborhood in conducting public outreach, in accord with the Council principles. A survey was made of every property owner in both the Enatai and Killarney Circle areas; of the 958 owners, 338 responded, which at 35 percent was far more than the city's typical survey response rate of around 12 percent. The respondents overwhelmingly highlighted the importance of trees as a neighborhood asset. Of interest was the fact that the respondents were evenly split over being concerned about the number of trees being cut down, and on the question of whether or not the existing tree preservation regulations are sufficient.

The Council principles state that the Commission is not obligated to recommend further City action if it does not believe there is sufficient neighborhood support. Ms. Knight suggested the survey does not appear to indicate general support for additional regulations, and accordingly stated that staff recommended against taking action to enhance the tree preservation standards.

An additional step was taken on June 30, 2010, in the form of a community meeting in which the results of the survey were presented. Parks staff presented information regarding tree canopy coverage and changes over time, and Development Services staff outlined the current existing regulations. The input was not overwhelmingly in support of additional preservation regulations.

Commissioner Turner asked why the issue of tree preservation was raised by the Enatai neighborhood in the first place. Ms. Knight said the neighborhood believes its trees are one of the greatest assets. Two of the residents who spearheaded the effort for enhanced preservation regulations were saddened to see old growth trees being cut down to accommodate development. They wanted the city to investigate the possibility of establishing special regulations for the Enatai neighborhood that would either prohibit or limit the cutting of such trees. At the very least, they wanted some guidelines established.

Mr. Kidde said Bridle Trails is the only neighborhood that has its own set of tree preservation regulations that exceed the citywide standard. The issue brought forward was whether or not a similar neighborhood-specific set of regulations should be developed for Enatai. The message of the community outreach effort clearly is that overwhelming support for additional regulations does not exist. By comparison, the outreach effort in Bridle Trails indicated support by 69 percent of the property owners.

Mr. Kidde suggested that there are some steps the city could take to highlight the importance of trees environmentally, aesthetically, and in terms of increasing property values. Ideas developed by staff include posting materials that were presented at the follow-up workshop on the city's website; creating a separate page on the city's website devoted to information about the city's tree canopy with links to the available citywide and neighborhood-specific information; GIS

monitoring to track tree canopy by neighborhood; and developing a BTV segment about Bellevue's tree canopy and the importance of trees for the urban ecosystem.

The Commissioners were asked if there are other things that should be considered in terms of promoting voluntary tree preservation and supporting the values that were identified by the citizens who were seeking enhanced regulations.

Commissioner Turner suggested that anyone seeking a permit for an action on their property should be given a flyer regarding the need to preserve trees.

Commissioner Mathews proposed that property owners looking to tear down an old house and put in a new one are more likely to want to cut down trees; in many if not most cases those property owners will be relatively new to the neighborhood. Those who have lived in the neighborhood for the longest period of time are more likely to have an attachment to the treed look of the neighborhood. Ms. Knight said that fact was brought out clearly in the survey results.

Commissioner Lai asked if the survey or the discussion at the community meeting talked about preserving specific kinds of trees. Mr. Kidde said the survey did not include questions specific to that issue. **There were, however, discussions at the community meeting about the possibility of adopting some kind of landmark tree ordinance, something the city of Seattle recently did to confer some protections.** What the supporters were seeking, though, was more of a neighborhood-wide look, not a focus on specific trees.

Commissioner Sheffels concurred that the lack of overwhelming support on the part of the neighborhood supported the suggestion of staff not to move forward with developing enhanced tree preservation regulations for the Enatai neighborhood. She commented that in her planned unit development neighborhood a perimeter tree was removed by a tree cutting service, who indicated they had received permission from the property owner. One concern is that tree cutting services are not being overly careful about checking out what they are allowed to do and what they are prohibited from doing; permission from a property owner is not always sufficient. Some of the city's outreach should be targeted toward the tree cutting services to make sure they understand the rules.

There was consensus not to proceed with developing tree regulations applicable to the Enatai neighborhood.

Mr. Inghram said a report will be prepared and forwarded to the Council.

#### D. Affordable Housing Work Program

Associate Planner Janet Lewine reminded the Commissioners that their discussion on January 12 highlighted a desire to move ahead with the affordable housing work program. That discussion was relayed to the Council by Chair Ferris on January 18, following which the Council directed staff to return with an update on the affordable housing work program. That update was

provided to the Council by Planning Director Dan Stroh on March 21 and concerned four specific issues.

Ms. Lewine said the work the city does with ARCH to fund affordable housing was the first item addressed. The city has taken on an expanded role relative to ARCH and now serves as the administrator of the centralized Housing Trust Fund and all contracting. ARCH has grown since its inception and the number of cities that put money into individual contracts has multiplied. That has resulted in an expanded number of contracts for each project. Having the city handle all multi-city contracts is beneficial both to ARCH and the organizations that seek to provide affordable housing.

The second topic addressed was the accessory dwelling unit code, which is an item still being worked on from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan update. One item yet to be reviewed involves code changes that might enable detached ADUs, subject to certain conditions. Staff provided the Commission with an update on the subject on December 1, 2010. The Commission is expected to continue its review of the topic following completion of the Shoreline Master Program update. The Council directed staff to continue seeking input from the community but to make sure there is more clarity in the survey.

The third topic covered was the multifamily tax exemption program. The program has been identified as a tool that might be used to bring about affordable housing in new residential developments in the Bel-Red corridor. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan update include policy language relative to the multifamily tax exemption program. The item will not, however, be on the Commission's plate given that it will involve only an update to a funding policy rather than the Land Use Code.

The fourth item was the Bel-Red catalyst housing project. The topic arose from the Bel-Red subarea planning and is being addressed as part of the station area planning work. Affordable housing projects could be among the pioneer projects to come online in the new neighborhoods, which may act as a catalyst for other housing projects. The Council discussed, and staff is looking into, the possibility of reducing the parking ratios in transit-rich areas as an affordable housing tool. That also is being addressed in the station area planning work.

The staff were directed to return to the Council in May to present housing principles that will direct the work program. Staff will at that time seek from the Council direction on moving forward with the overall work program.

Mr. Inghram explained that there are a variety of paths that will need to be taken to assure housing affordability. Some of the paths will involve regulations that are subject to review by the Commission, such as parking ratios. The upcoming focus will be work on regulations regarding accessory dwelling units and guest cottages.

Continuing, Mr. Inghram noted that the 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE light rail stations were pretty well defined, and the zoning and various land use regulations were applied to those

two areas. At the time, however, the hospital station location had not been determined; one option was near the I-405 crossing of NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and the other was near Whole Foods. When the determination was made to locate near the Whole Foods site, there still were four different sub-options between Lake Bellevue and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The final selection for the station location occurred well after the Bel-Red subarea work was completed. The chosen site will need to be reviewed by Commission with an eye on determining if there is more that needs to be done from a planning perspective.

Commissioner Mathews noted that when the housing catalyst project idea was first discussed the Commission pointed out that most of the affordable housing incentives on the books have not worked well if at all. The issue of requiring a certain percentage of low-cost units in each development was skirted at the time. He asked if the topic will be included in future discussions. Ms. Lewine commented that for the Bel-Red subarea the adopted FAR density incentives include an affordable housing first tier incentive. Mr. Inghram added that affordable housing in Bel-Red is not counted toward the FAR limit. While not an outright requirement, the incentive will encourage affordable housing in the Bel-Red area. There is not much of an incentive program applicable to the rest of the city; what little is included in the code does not provide much incentive to include affordable units. The incentives apply primarily to multifamily zones, and one concern is that increasing the incentive sufficient to make affordable housing attractive in the multifamily zones will result in significantly increased densities in those zones.

Having been assured that there will be another survey with regard to accessory dwelling units, and that it will have more clarity, Commissioner Himebaugh asked if there will be any tracking of the results by neighborhood. Ms. Lewine said there could be some tracking work done. The initial survey was sent out to neighborhood contacts throughout the city, and it was largely distributed by those organizations. Several communities have indicated they would like to have staff come and discuss the issue directly with them.

#### E. 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Station Area Planning

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald said some of the components of the station area planning project fit under the umbrellas of both land use and transportation. Accordingly, the two departments – Planning and Community Development and Transportation - are co-managing the effort. The Commission will not be making a recommendation on a final report on the station area plan, nor will any commission. The station area plan is unique in that it will be the first in the city. It is intended to help inform decision makers in implementing already established policy direction in the Bel-Red Subarea Plan.

Mr. Inghram said the station area plan will give property owners in the vicinity of the station a clearer picture about potential redevelopment scenarios. The subarea plan has the policy framework, and the zoning code has the regulations. The station planning will, however, communicate the particulars in a far more focused manner for the immediate area around the station.

Mr. McDonald said there is no planned formal public hearings before the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission or even the City Council, primarily because the outcome of the study will not involve policies or the force of regulations. The final document will provide guidance for potential developers and the public sector in furthering the vision of the Bel-Red subarea plan. The Planning Commission and Transportation Commission will be asked to review, advise and comment on the work in progress, but neither will be asked to make a recommendation on the final product. The public involvement aspect of the study is focusing primarily on the property and business owners in the immediate vicinity of the station, though the ideas developed will be shared with the surrounding neighborhoods and their feedback will be sought. The broader community will not be left out, however. Whenever other projects, such as NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street, are set to conduct a major open house or community event, the station area planning element will be included.

Commissioner Turner asked if any special zoning or permitting is required to locate and construct a transit station. Mr. Inghram said there is a long answer to that question having to do with state law, essential public facilities, and Sound Transit being a separate agency. The station area planning is focused on how property owners, developers and to some extent the city should respond to the station. The effort will ask no questions about alignment or the station itself; those discussions are being carried out directly between the City Council and Sound Transit. The station location is assumed in the study, and attention is being given to how to facilitate and coordinate development activities in the vicinity of the station.

Mr. McDonald said the Council approved the scope of work in August 2010 and directed the planning and transportation departments to jointly manage the study. They established a budget which is primarily funded with federal stimulus dollars. A team of consultants led by VIA Architecture has been assembled to help develop the station area plan. The work is distinct and separate from the work being done by Sound Transit to design, permit and construct the light rail system of which the station will be a part.

Mr. Inghram said a budget has been established to conduct station area planning throughout the city to accommodate the alternatives being considered. Each station area plan will likely have a different approach given that each station will be unique. Adoption of the Bel-Red plan establishing the zoning for the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station area. The 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station area will involve Wright Runstad and the Spring District which will flavor that process differently; planning for that area may begin as early as the summer of 2011. Wright Runstad anticipates having its master development plan ready for their Spring District site sometime during the year, and the station area planning efforts will coordinate with the master plan review process. There are still some ambiguities with regard to the hospital station. It may prove to be the largest station area planning project and might trigger the need for some zoning changes. The downtown station area planning work will likely focus primarily on interconnectedness and opportunities for creating leverage for the station. For the South Bellevue park and ride or the potential A-2 park and ride lot next to the Enatai neighborhood, there is no anticipation that any rezoning will be necessary; the focus will be on providing good pedestrian access and impact mitigation strategies.

Mr. McDonald said the transition from the current light industrial layout of the Bel-Red area to the envisioned mixed use housing and retail focus will take a long time. Looking at opportunities that come up, making sure they are integrated with each other and with all of the infrastructure, will be very important. The transitions and phasing should all be thought out ahead of time. There will be opportunities for environmental restoration as redevelopment occurs, and those improvements will become amenities for the adjacent properties as well as for the general environment and the public. There will be opportunities to integrate open space with both private and public investments. The area is intended to serve primarily as a residential area, though there will be commercial development along arterial streets. One of the arterial streets, 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, is intended to serve as a walkable retail “main street”. Opportunities to influence the neighborhood character, whether they take the form of affordable housing projects, investments in creek restoration or open space, should be taken into account.

Mr. McDonald said assuring the integration of the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station with the design of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street will be important. The light rail line is intended to run down the middle of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street; the station itself will be in the middle of the street between 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. There are many new streets planned to provide local access to the residential neighborhoods beyond the arterials; the planning work will include implementation, phasing and financing strategies for the local streets to make sure interconnectedness. Pedestrian and bicycle access to high-capacity transit is critical. It is undesirable to have riders driving to the stations, and buses can only accommodate so many. A safe, comfortable and accessible pedestrian system will be required, as will a connected bicycle system.

The Commissioners were told the process is in its early stages. Very few conclusions have been reached. Fact finding and documentation of existing conditions is being done. Once the pieces are gathered, the puzzle will be fitted together in the form of a logical station area plan. The vision will be brought to life as the character of the neighborhood is articulated through the station area plan. Some technical work has been done relative to Goff Creek, including streambank stability, habitat characteristics, sediment management and flood control. As the public and private sectors work within the area of the creek, the technical data will provide a backdrop against which to make design decisions. A consultant team has developed various concepts for daylighting the stream and what the best alignment for the daylighted segment might be. The provision of salmon-passable culverts will be the responsibility of the public sector.

Mr. Inghram said one objective of the planning work is to provide enough detail to show a private developer how restoration of the stream could fit in with their project. The work will not result in a prescriptive approach. Sound Transit is moving ahead with its engineering work and is looking to the city for information about where to place the culvert for the stream where the line will cross it and for information about mitigation.

Mr. Inghram said staff has been directly contacting all property owners that might be impacted by the stream options. No one option will be selected arbitrarily. Information from the property owners will be essential in determining the tradeoffs and making informed decisions.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Sheffels, Mr. McDonald explained that Goff Creek flows year round and has a watershed with a lot of pervious surfaces, primarily in Bridle Trails where there is a lot of forest area. The creek is not immune from stormwater impacts such as flooding and water quality, but compared to other urban streams it is fairly healthy. It flows into Kelsey Creek just to the south of Bel-Red Road in Kelsey Creek Park which in turn flows into Mercer Slough. Restoring the piped section would have a very positive impact on the health of the entire stream watershed.

Turning to some of the transportation components, Mr. McDonald shared with the Commissioners a map indicating the primary bicycle access routes to the station. He pointed out that in some ways the station is relatively inaccessible in that there are only a couple of roads from the north and south that can be used to get to it. There are natural and manmade constraints that limit the access points. To assure bicycle access, it will be critical to identify the primary routes and to make sure they have bicycle facilities with broad connections. Both 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE have been identified as critical bike corridors. Sound Transit is planning to include quite a bit of bike parking at the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station and will also accommodate bicycles on the trains.

Pedestrian access is also an important component of the transportation system. One exercise done took into account the existing and planned street network and determined how far a person could walk within five or ten minutes from the station. Mr. McDonald shared a color-coded map indicating the results. He noted that accessibility via the existing street network is very limited but improves substantially with the proposed street grid constructed.

Mr. McDonald said staff has been working constantly with Sound Transit staff to integrate the alignment, the station and the park and ride into the Bel-Red corridor and the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE neighborhood.

The planning work for the NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street will integrate light rail and will accommodate multiple modes of transportation. A consultant has been working with staff on the engineering and visualizations. The light rail line will run up the middle of the street. The station will also be in the middle of the road with side platforms between the road and the light rail tracks. There will be one travel lane in each direction, bicycle facilities adjacent to the travel lane, and further to the east some on-street parking to support the nearby retail. All of the design work remains preliminary.

The public outreach effort has focused on individual outreach to the owners of businesses and properties within the station area and along Goff Creek. The study has tagged onto larger community meetings and open house events to get the word out, and soon the outreach will include venturing into the nearby neighborhoods.

The planning process should wrap up by the end of February 2012. The work is close to shifting to the development of alternatives and resolving some of the questions about land use and

transportation. The grant requires an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions from the station area; the work will seek to document that areas with compact mixed land uses well supported by transit have lower per capita vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions than a land use pattern that separates low density uses.

Commissioner Mathews asked where the park and ride will be located. Mr. McDonald said the plan calls for locating it immediately to the north of and adjacent to the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station. The single-level surface facility will accommodate more than 350 vehicles on three parcels, according to Sound Transit. The city has had some discussions with Sound Transit about the possibility of seeing the parking accommodated within a structure, possibly a joint facility with a private developer with the parking available for commuters during the day and for other uses during the evening hours. Sound Transit is open to all possibilities.

Commissioner Lai said it was his understanding that at one time there was talk about moving the bicycle lanes off of NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street and onto an adjacent street. Mr. Inghram said the bicycle facility will start by the downtown library near McCormick Park. The NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street bridge will include a combination ped-bike path on the north side that will connect into a bridge crossing the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe right-of-way. One proposal for the Spring District area has the bicycle facility peeling off to the north, wrap around the Spring District station, then be an off-street path following the West Tributary. At 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE it would integrate with the station as bicycle lanes on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Cindy Ludwig, 12336 NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, said Ordinance 20-2120 pertaining to the existing regulations for attached accessory dwelling units says the creation of accessory dwelling units shall not satisfy the affordable housing requirements of the Land Use Code 20.20.128. That raises the question of why the issue has been included in the affordable housing work program. The Housing Element talks about maintaining the existing zoning capacity, which allowing accessory dwelling units would do. She said the Bridle Trails residents question spending the money to even study the accessory dwelling unit issue.

Mr. Inghram said the Commission and the Council have both had discussions about wanting to provide flexibility in housing choice through a variety of different kinds of housing types. That will likely be an ongoing discussion in light of what can be done to open the playing field while being compatible with existing neighborhoods. He said Section 20.20.128 is an incentive that allows developers to have an increase of 15 percent in density in a multifamily zone where affordable units are included. The section clarifies that accessory dwelling units are separate entities from the multifamily bonus incentives. Accessory dwelling units are allowed by city code, so the capacity in zones throughout the city also exists. Allowing detached accessory dwelling units would allow for a change in form, not a change in density.

11. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

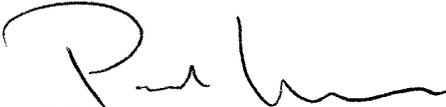
A. April 20, 2011

Mr. Inghram said the Shoreline Master Program update open house on April 20 will include a number of boards with technical information about the program and its different components. As people come in they will be oriented to where they can find information. There will be fact sheets available focused on the key topics, and there will be a comment area where the public can write down their observations and suggestions.

The traditional role for Commissioners is to mingle with the crowds and answer questions. Mr. Inghram suggested that one or two Commissioners could do that, others could greet the public as they come in, and still others could be stationed where the public will be writing down their comments.

12. ADJOURN

Commissioner Lai adjourned the meeting at 9:29 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Inghram  
Staff to the Planning Commission

7/13/2011  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Turner  
Chair of the Planning Commission

7/13/2011  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date