

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

March 12, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Robertson, Vice-Chair Bach, Commissioners Ferris, Lai, Mathews, Sheffels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Orrico

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Lacey Madche, Michael Paine, Heidi Bedwell, Emil King, Carol Helland, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Orrico who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS – None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Gary Prince, King County Department of Transportation, explained that the county transit-oriented development program has been around since 1999. He said there is a project in Overlake, another in Renton, and most recently Northgate where 350 parking spaces are included in a shared mixed use project. A property in downtown Redmond was recently sold and a mixed use project was created there as well. The objective is to take existing park and ride lots owned by King County and incorporating other uses at those locations, such as housing, incidental retail, and shared parking. The proposal for the south Kirkland/north Bellevue park and ride lot is to transform the seven-acre parcel into a mixed use project including housing, incidental retail, and office. The site potentially could have a connection to the BNSF corridor. The proposed zoning is transit-oriented development; it would allow up to 60 units per acre and have a height limit of around 65 feet. The property is half in Kirkland and half in Bellevue. The Kirkland City Council is initially supportive of including housing at the site. The project is related to the rebuild of the SR-520 bridge which, if all goes well, will begin in 2009. Potential federal funding has been received to add 250 stalls at the lot; the state legislature will have to act to accept the funds. The request is to add the proposed rezone to the 2008 Bellevue work plan.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if other cities have the transit-oriented development zoning designation. Mr. Prince said Kirkland has a variety of designations that are similar, but no city in the Puget Sound area has a transit-oriented development designation yet. Commissioner Sheffels suggested that it would be good to have a common description for a transit-oriented development zoning.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ferris, Mr. Prince said one of the key components of the program is to use King County land to promote affordable housing. The general policy is to include between 20 and 30 percent of the units affordable at 80 percent of median income. In Redmond the policy was altered to allow 20 percent of the units affordable at 125 percent of median income for owner-occupied units. ARCH is a partner in that project.

Mr. Jack McCullough, address not given, spoke on behalf of KG Investments. He said when the work was completed on the 2007 docket there were a number of issues everyone agreed to leave to the 2008 docket. They included affordable housing and how it relates to height. The city was not able to focus much on road planning until the Comprehensive Plan was amended to allow the NE 4th Street extension. Over the winter months the design team has been focused on embracing the village concept.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None
7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS – None
8. STUDY SESSION
 - A. Shoreline Master Program

Environmental Planning Manager Michael Paine introduced Joe Burcar with the state Department of Ecology who assisted the city in getting a grant approved and who will work with the city throughout the process to help ensure that the effort will result in a Shoreline Master Program that will be adopted by the Department of Ecology.

Mr. Paine said in 1971 there was an outpouring of interest in environmental issues. The first Earth Day took place in 1970 and at the federal level there were a number of major environmental initiatives, many of which were duplicated in Washington state, including the Shoreline Management Act which was originally adopted by the legislature in 1971 and adopted by public vote in 1972. The Act reacted to the perceived problem of uncoordinated, unplanned, and often insensitive development along shorelines.

Both local government and the state government were given integral roles to play in the Shoreline Master Programs. The programs were implemented at the local level but had to be approved by the state. The approval process is aimed primarily at showing consistency with the Act.

The focus of the Shoreline Master Program is to protect and restore the shoreline while fostering reasonable and appropriate uses. Uses judged to be dependent on proximity to the waterfront were given preference; all other uses were required to stay back away from the shoreline. Public access and use of the shoreline received a great deal of attention, and recreational opportunities in the form of marinas, public beaches and parks were encouraged. There was also a priority given to single family residences, ports, and any business where a location near the shoreline

was integral to operations.

Mr. Paine said Bellevue adopted a master program in 1974. The original Planning Commission discussion focused on the ordinance makes for both interesting and illuminating reading. Many of the issues they were dealing with then will again be on the table for discussion during the update process.

The components of the master program are enshrined in the Comprehensive Plan and in the Land Use Code. The critical areas ordinance is housed in the Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan along with the master program component; that ordinance covers many of the same shoreline issues, including docks, bulkheads and appropriate setbacks. Staff is hoping that most of the heavy lifting work has already been addressed and will not need to be reopened regarding these topics.

Mr. Paine explained that in 1995 the state initiated some regulatory reforms that included the integration of environmental regulations and an updating of the state guidelines. The Department of Ecology developed a two-path approach. Their approach was appealed and the state lost with regard to part of the appeal. The mediation between development interests, environmental interests, shoreline use interests, and other interests resulted in the updated guidelines. The net effect of the guidelines is that they focus on a process by which jurisdictions must inventory their shorelines and figure out a meaningful understanding of the ecological functions. The state was clear in calling for no net loss of ecological function from development on the shoreline, which is a very difficult standard. The new guidelines also require jurisdictions to look at the cumulative impacts of shoreline development.

Commissioner Ferris asked if the no net loss requirement is tied to existing ecological functions or the functions in place at some point in time in the past. Mr. Paine said the regulations focus on existing conditions looking forward only.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lai, Mr. Paine the restoration of degraded standards involves a different standard from no net loss. Restoration focuses on the processes and functions that have been interrupted by development, and what might be done by jurisdictions to encourage restoration where there has been degradation. Restoration is not tied to the cumulative impact analysis.

There are very specific rules to where the Shoreline Master Program applies. Mr. Paine said they apply to all major lakes, Mercer Slough, lower Kelsey Creek up to the point where there is a flow of less than 20 cubic feet per second, and Phantom Lake. Both Phantom Lake and Larson Lake have wetlands associated with them that fall under the shoreline jurisdiction. The hundred year flood plain is also part of the shoreline jurisdiction. Lake Bellevue is less than 20 acres in size, so it does not fall under the jurisdiction.

The Commissioners were shown photo examples of developed shorelines.

Mr. Paine said there are a couple of key components to the planning process. The first is the inventory and subsequent analysis of the inventory. Inventories typically compile all reasonable and available data around a host of things such as land use, utility outfalls, critical areas, historic resources, priority habitats, existing and potential public access points, and public use areas. The analysis of the inventory will effectively result in a description of all ecosystem processes that affect the shoreline, first from a broad scale and then narrower to particular reaches along the shoreline, along with their ecological functions and an outline of what is impeding those functions.

The analysis will also determine the likely way in which the shorelines can be split up into reasonable regulatory sections or shoreline environments. Part of that process will be aimed at effectively using the biological and physical goals and aspirations of the community and the ecological criteria developed by the community and the Department of Ecology. Shorelines will be deemed suitable for certain uses because of their designations in much the same way zoning is used. The anticipation is that in most instances the designations will fit within the Department of Ecology shoreline categories, but in some cases it may be necessary to define special environmental designation more adapted to Bellevue circumstances.

Mr. Paine said part of the city's interest in the process, beyond just complying with state regulations, is to use the opportunity to gain a better sense of what the community thinks about the shorelines and how they should be used, and to make sure that likely shoreline uses get spotlighted. There will also be focus on shoreline restoration planning and identifying specific restoration sites, details regarding how to effectively accomplish restoration, and possibly a financing plan.

Attention will be given to improving public access to the extent possible. Some of those efforts are already under way; the Meydenbauer planning process is a good example.

Specific implementation tools will be one outcome of the study. They will take the form of guide books and public information that will help people live on the shoreline while limiting their impacts. A portfolio of ecologically sensitive treatments will be put together as well.

Associate Planner Heidi Bedwell explained that the Department of Ecology requires cities to submit to them a generalized plan for public involvement in approaching the project. She said the plan included in the Commission binders goes above and beyond and suggests several different strategies for informing the public and encouraging participation, both with regard to specific property owners along the shoreline and Bellevue citizens in general. One part of the project will include a scientifically accurate telephone survey to gain an understanding of the issues and concerns related to the shoreline environment.

Chair Robertson asked if the survey will be offered in languages other than English. Ms. Bedwell said that issue will be raised with the independent research group. Mr. Paine explained that the survey will randomly target some 400 citizens at large and another 200 shoreline property owners. It will be possible to contrast their views.

Ms. Bedwell said in the short term staff will be meeting with specific neighborhood associations and neighborhood groups to have an informal discussion regarding issues and insights. The meetings will also serve to inform people about the process generally. A web site has been set up already.

A series of open house events will begin in late fall or early November after the consultant has compiled the inventory and characterization information. That will give the people something meaningful to respond to. Staff will also be back before the Commission with that information and the results of the telephone survey.

A shoreline boat tour will be scheduled for late summer or early fall. The city of Kirkland did something similar and had a great response. The tour is aimed at helping people see firsthand what the issues are and getting them interested in the topic. As the process moves forward, there will be more formal public hearings before the Commission.

Mr. Paine said there will not be a citizens advisory committee appointed as part of the process. The Planning Commission will serve instead as the sounding board for the community outside of the specific public outreach efforts.

Ms. Bedwell shared with the Commission a graphic illustration of the overall timeline for the process. She noted that the consultant has already prepared a preliminary shoreline jurisdiction report and passed it on to the Department of Ecology along with an outline of the public participation plan. The consultant is in the process of doing the shoreline inventory. That will be followed by the analysis and characterization and the environment designations in late spring 2009. Local approval through the Planning Commission and City Council processes will occur in 2010. The final document will be transmitted to the Department of Ecology in June 2010.

Commissioner Ferris suggested that as part of the public survey process it will be necessary to very clearly communicate in layman's terms what is meant by terms such as no net loss and what the impact of the guidelines might be. He added that those who are working on the Meydenbauer Bay park will want to know as soon as possible what the implications for the new park might be. Mr. Paine assured him that staff from both projects are talking to each other in an attempt to understand the implications.

Chair Robertson suggested that at the appropriate time it would be very helpful for staff to provide the Commission with a briefing regarding the critical areas ordinance and a synopsis of the difficult issues addressed in the development of that document. She also suggested it would be helpful to have a briefing regarding the Washington Tribal lawsuit about daylighting creeks and the like that is wending its way through the courts. Mr. Paine said the city is following that case very closely because of the impacts it could have.

B. 2008 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Mr. Inghram noted that copies of the Comprehensive Plan amendment applications for 2008 were provided to the Commissioners at a previous meeting. He said the first few proposals likely will not require geographic scoping review.

Mr. Inghram said the Newport Covenant Church application would amend the map designation on the 5.5-acre site from Single Family High to Neighborhood Business. He located the site on a map and reviewed the surrounding designations. In the opinion of staff, there is no need for geographic scoping because the application is specific to the church site. It is not clear what the church intends to do with the site if the application is approved; a meeting with church representatives and staff will be called to gain a clearer picture of their intentions.

A comment letter was received from a property owner immediately to the north of the site asking to be included.

Commissioner Lai asked about the triangular parcel across Coal Creek Parkway from the subject property. Mr. Inghram said the site is largely vacant and has recently been used either for construction staging or temporary parking. The site is not very large and some research will need to be done to determine if it is developable.

Commissioner Ferris asked about the property to the north that the owner wants included. He suggested that if geographic scoping is to be considered at all it would logically be parallel to Factoria Boulevard and continuing to the north. The area there is all single family, so it is understandable that some property owners to the north might seek the same treatment for their sites given the higher uses to the south and north and the fact that the area is adjacent to Factoria

Boulevard. Mr. Inghram said to the north there are one or two additional parcels, then there is a street that comes off of Factoria Boulevard going to the east into the residential neighborhood; they are all single family parcels. Traditionally the city has been apprehensive about including single family parcels in a geographic scoping, unless the property owners have shown that they want to be included.

Mr. Inghram stressed that the Commission will not be asked to make a decision relative to geographic scoping until a later meeting.

Mr. Inghram said the application regarding the South Kirkland TOD or park and ride site is unique in that the site is half in Kirkland and half in Bellevue. He located the site on the map and explained that the proposal is to amend the map for the 3.64-acre Bellevue portion of the site from multifamily-medium to the newly proposed Transit Oriented Development designation. The TOD designation does not currently exist in the city. He agreed to research models in use by other cities that could be mirrored.

Chair Robertson asked if the Comprehensive Plan amendment request for the Bellevue portion of the site is on the same track as the Comprehensive Plan amendment request for the Kirkland portion. Mr. Inghram said they are not on exactly the same schedule; the Kirkland amendment is actually running just a little bit ahead in review, especially with regard to opportunities for affordable housing on the site. Their Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle, however, is quite close to Bellevue's.

Commissioner Sheffels suggested that if Kirkland has a specification for affordable housing that does not mesh completely with Bellevue there could be some problems. She urged having the two cities work very closely together. Mr. Inghram said ideally the two Comprehensive Plan amendments will create a designations which are virtually identical between the two cities.

Commissioner Lai asked if the TOD designation, or whatever it ends up being called, will be applicable to any other site in the city. Mr. Inghram said that is one of the issues being pondered by staff. Certainly that is one question that will have to be answered.

Commissioner Ferris pointed out that there is wide range of possibilities associated with the term transit-oriented development. Commissioner Sheffels agreed and said that fact may argue in favor of addressing the South Kirkland park and ride lot as a site-specific amendment rather than develop a new designation.

Mr. Inghram said the Sambica amendment is for a 6.5-acre property in the Newcastle subarea. The site is home to the Sambica camp and conference center, and the current designations, which are Single Family High, Neighborhood Business and Multifamily Medium, do not allow for the range of uses currently on the property. The proposal seeks the most appropriate zoning to allow current and future uses.

Commissioner Lai asked if the applicant has indicated what they see as the future use for the site. Mr. Inghram said there is no designation or code provision that deals with camps, especially in single family neighborhoods. He said the property owner has talked with staff about potential redevelopment of the site to create more conference and meeting room space, allowing for expansion of their current uses.

Commissioner Ferris pointed out that the Sambica camp predates Bellevue as a city. He suggested that it seems odd they should have to go to such lengths just to keep doing what they have been doing all along. Some of the buildings on the site are in real need of repair.

Mr. Inghram said the two Wilburton proposals involve both map changes and policy amendments. The intent is to create the potential opportunity to allow additional height and density through an overlay district.

Commissioner Ferris noted that the Commission only just finished working on the Wilburton subarea and asked if there is supposed to be a waiting period before additional amendments can be made. Mr. Inghram explained that the code requires a three-year interval for privately initiated applications for a particular site. In this case, the amendment just approved by the Commission was initiated by the city, so the three-year clock has not been triggered. Of course, the Commission will have to consider the significantly changed conditions criteria requirement.

C. Coal Creek UGB CPA

Mr. Inghram said staff is recommending inclusion of the Coal Creek Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) CPA in the work program. If the Commission concurs, the issue will be noticed and made part of the threshold review process.

Mr. Inghram explained that the city acquired Coal Creek Park from King County. At that time the park, along with Cougar Mountain Park, were designated rural areas by the county. The city would like to annex the park so it can have permit authority over the park. The proposed amendment would change the park area from rural to urban and redraw the UGB line accordingly. King County would have to take a similar action and in fact has the issue on its 2008 docket.

Commissioner Sheffels asked how the city of Newcastle will be impacted by the proposed action, if at all. Mr. Inghram allowed that a portion of the park is in the city of Newcastle. The amendment will only deal with the part of the park that is within King County and that is owned by Bellevue.

Motion to recommend including the Coal Creek UGB CPA as part of the 2008 annual Comprehensive Plan threshold review process was made by Chair Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Bel-Red Subarea Plan Review

Mr. Inghram noted that a question about the use of light rail in the plan was previously raised by the Commission. The Council raised the same question on March 10 when they were given a briefing on the subarea plan. Mr. Inghram said staff agrees that the language used should not close the door to forms of transit other than light rail.

With regard to the comment made by Chair Robertson about being consistent with the buildable lands report, Mr. Inghram explains that the report has a time horizon of 2022. The Bel-Red plan is not being developed in response to a perceived lack of current capacity for housing, office or commercial development. Rather, the focus is on the vision for the area. The final report of the steering committee documents the changing nature of the uses within the corridor and in the downtown and the Overlake areas which have created the opportunity. Staff anticipates that there will be a future time when capacity will become more restricted, and that when that happens it will be necessary to be creative in bringing about additional capacity. The Bel-Red subarea plan creates the opportunity for future capacity outside of the existing single family neighborhoods.

Commissioner Mathews said the Bel-Red steering committee studied a range of alternatives with densities ranging from low to middle to high for a variety of uses in different formats. The focus was on coming up with a vision that is different from what currently exists. The committee saw the corridor as a transitional area between the highly developed downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. The opportunity to bring light rail through the corridor also served as a spark and triggered the transit-oriented development discussions.

Mr. Inghram said staff is continuing to research the issues raised by the public at the last Commission meeting. He said the Commission will want to respond to some of the issues as well. The current focus is on developing a draft subarea plan that can be released to the public and made the subject of a public hearing. As comments are received, they will be recorded and tracked.

Mr. Inghram reminded the Commission that Children's Hospital has expressed an interest in locating a branch on the Eastside and has its eye on a property north of NE 12th Street. He said in the initial thinking of staff the area in question should be designated medical office, a designation that would not allow for a hospital use. Accommodating Children's Hospital would require a designation similar to the one applied to Overlake Hospital and Group Health. Staff believes it would also be appropriate to add an additional policy that would create an overall area in which the medical office designation could be applied for other institutions.

Chair Robertson asked if there is any assurance that Children's Hospital will be coming to Bellevue. Land Use Director Carol Helland said Children's Hospital has an option on the property to purchase it. They are keenly interested in the zoning discussions and their option will be exercised accordingly.

Commissioner Ferris asked if there could be negative consequences to non-Medical Institution uses that may want to locate within the confines of the box suggested to be created by policy. Mr. Inghram said the policy would limit where true Medical Institution uses can locate, but would not discourage non-hospital uses, such as medical offices.

Chair Robertson suggested that clustering that many Medical Institution uses so close together could have significant traffic and infrastructure impacts. She added that she favors the Medical Institution designation for the Children's Hospital site, but said she would prefer to see the conditional use permit process required. Mr. Inghram said it would require a CPA to change the designation for the other parts of the area.

Commissioner Sheffels pointed out that it is advantageous for hospitals to be located within a single area. Mr. Inghram said doctors certainly prefer that because they often have privileges at more than one hospital. There is also a commercial reality that makes clustering a preferred business practice. The city has the ability to control the overall intensity of an area. With the new NE 10th Street interchange and revisions to NE 8th Street and NE 12th Street, along with redevelopment of 116th Avenue NE, the area becomes a relatively good location for hospital uses to have access to the arterial network.

Mr. Inghram said there is a subarea boundary issue to consider. He explained that the area to the north of NE 8th Street, including Lake Bellevue, is in the Wilburton/NE 8th subarea. The current Bel-Red/Northup subarea boundary runs along NE 12th Street and Bel-Red Road. The Wilburton study several years ago included some of the area, and about three years ago the area on the north side of NE 8th Street was pulled from the Wilburton/NE 8th study and included in the Bel-Red study.

Commissioner Sheffels said one of the reasons the decision was made to include the area north of NE 8th Street in the Bel-Red subarea was because the proposed light rail might go through it, making it logical to include it with Bel-Red.

Chair Robertson pointed out that one of the recommendations of the Wilburton/NE 8th study package was to square up the intersection of NE 8th Street and 120th Avenue NE. She said if the decision is made to remove the area north of NE 8th Street from the Wilburton/NE 8th subarea, half the intersection will be in one subarea and half in another, and it will be necessary to include the squaring recommendation in both subarea plans. Mr. Inghram agreed and suggested that on the map the boundaries of the two subareas should be drawn to match what the intersection will look like once the squaring work is completed.

Commissioner Bach observed that the driving factor behind the Bel-Red study was that there are so many outdated uses in that corridor. The area north of NE 8th Street has brand new and thriving retail and office spaces. He questioned making the boundary change. He said he had the same concerns with the triangle area near 156th Avenue NE. Mr. Inghram said some of the property owners are interested in being included in the Bel-Red subarea. There has also been interest expressed in the redevelopment potential of some of the sites that currently have single story retail.

Senior Planner Emil King said the Wilburton/NE 8th analysis really ended at NE 8th Street, leaving the northern part in limbo. At that time it was determined it would make sense to include it in the Bel-Red planning effort.

Chair Robertson added that if part of the area in question is to be included in the potential Medical Institution district overlay, it should be included in the Bel-Red subarea.

Commissioner Ferris suggested the point made by Commissioner Bach is a good one. Having the Medical Institution overlay may by its very nature make the land more expensive because of the increased height allowance. How it gets applied and what it gets applied to will need to be very carefully considered to avoid unintended consequences. Mr. Inghram answered that the idea of having an outer boundary is to set a limit and avoid further dispersion of the Medical Institution designation. The proposal acknowledges the area as appropriate for Medical Institution uses; there is no intent to encourage the uses to locate there. To truly encourage the city would need to change the designation to Medical Institution, which is the idea for the Children's Hospital site.

There was consensus to add the area to the north of NE 8th Street to the study area.

Turning next to the issue of the area along the south edge of Bel-Red Road, Mr. Inghram noted that there are a few single family parcels and some Professional Office. The rest of the south edge has been contemplated for changing from Office to Office/Housing Transition, which would be consistent with the existing office and multifamily uses. The steering committee was not, however, focused on upzoning the single family parcels and encouraging intensification. He proposed moving the edge on the map to maintain those areas as they are.

Commissioner Mathews said the steering committee was trying to keep things more or less consistent with what currently exists. There was no intent to see the area change. The original study area boundary was drawn to incorporate a minimum of one parcel to the south of Bel-Red Road, which is why the four single family parcels were inadvertently captured in the effort. Upon further review, it makes sense to pull them and the small Professional Office sites.

There was consensus to remove the parcels from the Bel-Red subarea and include them in the Wilburton/SE 8th subarea.

Mr. Inghram said there have been questions raised about including the area between Bel-Red Road and 156th Avenue NE to the north of NE 20th Street. He explained that the area has a strong relationship to the nearby commercial area and the planned transit station in the Redmond area of Overlake. In the opinion of staff, the site should be included in the Bel-Red subarea. The contemplation is that the area would have an FAR of 2.5, which is a higher intensity than what exists currently and is consistent with the other nodes except for a lower height limit.

Commissioner Sheffels said the committee talked about the area at length and suggested it should be kept in the Bel-Red subarea. There is a large project proposed for the area that is in need of some definition of what can be allowed in the area.

Commissioner Ferris agreed. He suggested that the Commission could benefit from having more information about what is planned for the Redmond side of the line. Mr. Inghram said Redmond has adopted its plan for Overlake and agreed to provide the Commission with a briefing regarding it at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Bach asked how something on 156th Avenue NE and NE 20th Street is related to the area around 156th Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road given that there is ten blocks between them. He said he associates the triangle area with Crossroads, and there has been public comment aimed at keeping the area in the Crossroads subarea. Mr. Inghram said he has talked with the owners of property in the area who do not have specific development proposals but who are interested in the development potential. Of course the Bel-Green development with a proposal for a senior housing development is in the middle of the area. The relationship with the Bel-Red subarea stems from having shared circumstances more than anything.

Mr. King noted that at the February 27 meeting several Commissioners expressed an interest in gaining a better understanding of how the steering committee analyzed heights in the corridor. He explained that the committee analyzed five different areas of the corridor. For some of the areas, such as the area around Overlake Hospital, were recommended to have heights of up to 150 feet. As part of the committee analysis, the staff were directed to conduct a five-pronged analysis for the FEIS that included a series of view and visual photosimulations. The analysis included a review of how putting pockets of taller buildings across a corridor can affect the urban form of a city, and an attempt to understand how height and the FARs envisioned for the corridor relate to the downtown core from a competition standpoint. The conclusion reached was that there would not be much of an overlap with the downtown even with heights of up to 150 feet.

Mr. King noted that during the steering committee process there was some confusion on the part of the public between the analysis of taller buildings with more square footage in the buildings. The underlying premise of the study was a matter of urban form and that total square footage would not change.

Mr. King indicated for the Commission the five areas studied.

Commissioner Sheffels observed that there has been testimony from Crossroads residents who want to keep the height limits unchanged. She said near the end of the steering committee process she proposed keeping the height limits as they exist in the Crossroads area, primarily because the committee was not afforded enough time to delve into what the height limits ought to be. The area slopes considerably from east to west. She said after seeing several different

renditions for how the properties in the area could be developed she was of the opinion that height up to 75 feet should be allowed.

Chair Robertson asked if there would be time and resources to do a view analysis for the area like the one done for the Wilburton/NE 8th study. Mr. King suggested that the resources necessary could be found to do that.

With regard to the how the local street grid was developed, Mr. Inghram said 200-foot blocks would be great from a pedestrian standpoint. The problem is the Bel-Red corridor is not completely undeveloped. Applying an arbitrary rectangular street grid would have to take into account existing uses and parcel line in recognition of the fact that the properties will develop one-by-one over time. The street grid must also take into account the riparian corridors and open space systems without unnecessarily creating new stream crossings. The current pattern of light industrial uses served by a superblock pattern and a few arterials is adequate, but as the area switches to a mixed use office and residential pattern, a finer grid pattern will be needed. Staff intends to create a detailed GIS map showing all of the parcels and all of the streets.

Commissioner Ferris noted that some jurisdictions honor the street grid because that is what often brings light and air to the streets. Little jagged streets and intersections simply do not work well, so following property lines does not always work. There are some underlying urban planning issues to be addressed, like designated retail streets. In most of the node areas, the streets really do not go anywhere, which could tend to isolate them from the rest of the grid. Mr. Inghram allowed that to some degree the focus is on trying to achieve more of a neighborhood scale block pattern, except for the areas where the new NE 16th Street and 130th Avenue NE will run. Interior streets will be needed to provide residents access to the transit stations and arterials. Modified grid patterns can work very well in urbanized and higher density areas; they provide good orientation north/south and east/west. They do not, however, have to always be firm and rigid.

Commissioner Lai said the street grid system will be only one part of the transportation network for the area. Until the Commission is also shown the plans for the bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the transportation picture will remain incomplete. It will be the bicycle and pedestrian facilities that will connect the areas within the corridor in a more intimate way. He asked how many of the blocks, particularly the larger ones, will end up having interior alleyways and easements for access, and how that might affect the urban character of the neighborhoods. Mr. Inghram said there are quite a few alleyways and shared driveways between parcels, and the proposed approach will to some extent serve to resolve that situation by giving most of the parcels direct street access.

Returning to the issue of height, Commissioner Ferris commented that development works well where everything is not the same height along a street or in a neighborhood. In writing the policy and code language, there should be encouragement or incentive for incorporating a diversity of heights. The code should allow up to 75 feet, but only with significant public benefit, including varied height of adjacent buildings. Mr. King noted that the steering committee in fact settled on heights of up to 60 feet for most of the nodes. Commissioner Ferris commented that 60 feet does not work well; developers will build to something less than that or want more, but 60 feet is awkward. If the intent is to maintain a lower scale look and feel, the height limit should be set at 40 feet at the edge of the street and allow for buildings to wedding cake up back from the street.

With regard to the Overlake transit node, Commissioner Ferris said he likes the medical institution center concept but would want to see an approach adopted that will discourage higher

market uses from locating there.

Commissioner Mathews commented that the steering committee settled on 150 feet as the height for the medical institution district because that is approximately how tall the existing hospital campus buildings are. Mr. Inghram said the current code allows structures up to just over 200 feet on the Overlake campus.

Chair Robertson called attention next to the subarea plan itself. She highlighted the fact that there are numerous references to light rail in the language of the plan and pointed out that the future of light rail in Bellevue is less than certain. There is language about the nodes being designed around light rail stations, but in fact there are other reasons for having the nodes.

Chair Robertson suggested each goal statement in the plan should be formatted to look the same.

Chair Robertson noted that the land use goal talks about creating a new distinctive commercial and residential neighborhood for the Eastside; she suggested that while the area may ultimately affect the Eastside, the plan is focused on Bellevue and should say so.

Mr. Inghram called attention to the addition of a new subarea vision bullet proposed by the Arts Commission. He also noted commented that staff is continuing to work on coming up with a term to replace "new economy."

Commissioner Ferris observed that the Arts Commission believes some of the existing buildings in which light industrial uses are currently located would be a good fit for artists in need of places to create art. The problem is that the process of creating art can often have the look and feel of light industrial uses. The language of S-BR-B5 specifically allows existing light industrial uses to continue, but may not allow for converting space to artistic light industrial uses. He also commented that the Bel-Red corridor is a big area with a lot of tenants, and if an light industrial tenant leaves and a building cannot be adapted to accommodate a new tenant, the result could be a lot of empty buildings and upset landowners. The market will see to it that higher and better uses are ushered in at the right time and the sites will redevelop, but precluding new light industrial uses from being established out of sync with the market could be problematic. Mr. Inghram said staff will take another look at the language of the policy. He said the thing that should be avoided is the establishment of new uses that will be incompatible with new mixed use developments.

Chair Robertson said she would like to see the last word of the discussion section of S-BR-B5 from "future" to "land use and development pattern."

With regard to S-BR-B8, Chair Robertson proposed changing "...where appropriate and feasible..." to read "... where both appropriate and feasible...."

Chair Robertson called attention to the second paragraph under the goal statement for the urban design section and proposed revising the last sentence to read "...with attention to quality and permanence."

With regard to S-BR-C1, Chair Robertson asked why the reference to design review does not include commercial uses. Mr. Inghram said most of the area to which the policy refers would be designated mixed use,. The proposal is to retain a designation similar to what is on the ground currently, so design review would not be required. Design review will be required to the balance of the subarea.

Chair Robertson called attention to S-BR-C9 and the language requiring structured parking rather than encouraging it. She suggested that the developers should be able to decide which approach to take for their developments. Mr. King noted that Commissioner Sheffels had previously raised concerns about the policy language. He suggested the policy should be discussed more fully when the issue of parking is on the table. He said that could happen as soon as the next Commission meeting.

Chair Robertson asked if the standards for the streets in Bel-Red will be consistent with the standards under the Great Streets program. Mr. King noted that many of the staff who are working on Bel-Red are also working on Great Streets. As a result, many of the urban design planning concepts associated with the Great Streets program are informing the Bel-Red process.

Chair Robertson pointed out that nothing has been said about tree retention in the Bel-Red corridor and said she did not want to lose track of that issue. Some language should be included in the plan about retaining trees, particularly mature street trees along the arterials.

Moving on to the environment section of the plan, Chair Robertson called attention to S-BR-D1 and suggested that pronouns should not be used to describe inanimate things. She also proposed changing "potentially" in S-BR-D2 to read "and possibly."

With regard to S-BR-D6, Chair Robertson pointed out the need to have consistent tense in the second sentence of the discussion paragraph.

Chair Robertson pointed out that S-BR-E4 in the parks and open space section talks about the long-term future trail use of the BNSF corridor even though that issue is not yet resolved. She did not call for a change of the language but suggested the topic should be earmarked so that if things do not turn out as anticipated someone will remember to go back and tweak the language. Mr. Inghram informed the Commissioners that the City Council highlighted the need to remain open with regard to options for the rail corridor.

Chair Robertson said she would like to have added to the housing section a policy calling for a periodic review of the overall development patterns of the corridor to determine whether or not the incentives offered are effective. Mr. Inghram said that is the intent of S-BR-F3.

Commissioner Ferris suggested the policy should read "Monitor the supply and affordability of housing in Bel-Red...." It is the supply the city should be concerned about, not just the production.

Chair Robertson agreed with that wording change but suggested the focus should be on the bigger picture, not just on affordable housing. If all developers opt for office because it is the most lucrative approach, the city will not realize the vision for the Bel-Red corridor. There should be policy language specifically aimed at a general review. Mr. King agreed to determine where it would make the most sense to include such a policy, suggesting that it might be in either the neighborhood district or general land use section.

Turning to the arts and culture section, Chair Robertson suggested that the first sentence of the first paragraph under the goal is a gross overstatement. She proposed rewriting it to read "Arts and culture contribute to healthy individuals, neighborhoods, communities and society."

Chair Robertson voiced concern that policies S-BR-G1 and S-BR-G2 could conflict with Meydenbauer Center and the new Performing Arts Center Eastside facility in the downtown. With regard to the last sentence of S-BR-G1, she suggested that because major arts education

institutions are privately funded, it would be difficult for the city to follow up on the policy language.

Commissioner Sheffels proposed eliminating the last sentence altogether.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that the Arts Commission specifically wanted that policy direction included in the plan. He said they spent a lot of time exploring how arts and culture uses can be integrated into Bel-Red while keeping a distinction between downtown facilities or retail art galleries. They highlighted the potential for adaptive reuse of existing buildings in the corridor, especially in and around the existing Pacific Northwest Ballet school. If the arts and culture uses in Bel-Red were focused more on making and producing art, as well as on educating about the arts, the area could act as a counterbalance to the downtown where there is more of a focus on performance art and the retail sales of art.

Chair Robertson said she would not object to including language such as "Bel-Red may be an appropriate location for a major arts institution." Commissioner Ferris said the same effect could result from changing the proposed "Explore Bel-Red as a location..." to "Encourage Bel-Red as a location...."

Chair Robertson suggested that policy S-BR-G3.b is an example of where the reference to light rail needs to be expanded.

Chair Robertson called attention to the second sentence of the first paragraph under the goal in the transportation section and suggested that "...so lack connected sidewalks..." should read "...and therefore lack connected sidewalks...." She also proposed adding to the next sentence "of the subarea" following "Arterials in the eastern portion...."

Chair Robertson asked why S-BR-H4 in the transportation section talks only about serving travel demand generated by the Bel-Red land use plan and does not include regional growth. Mr. Inghram agreed to explore the issue. He noted that the roadway network being planned is intended to handle more than just Bel-Red. The existing arterials in the corridor are planned to continue serving the area and the region, and the new NE 16th Street will add capacity to the overall system.

With regard to SBR-H20.3, Chair Robertson said she would not be in favor of telling developers they cannot add additional parking capacity to their properties, especially if provided underground. Mr. Inghram said the issue will be more fully discussed when the parking policies are on the table. He allowed that the policy may not even be necessary.

Commissioner Sheffels commented that the new fully electric and hybrid electric cars on the market are totally silent when they stop of a traffic signal. Hearing impaired persons are having trouble knowing when a car is present and there have been incidents where they stepped out in front of a car. She suggested that there should be a warning system of some sort required. Mr. Inghram agreed to look at that issue and bring it back for discussion.

Answering a question asked by Chair Robertson regarding S-BR-I1 in the section on interjurisdictional coordination, Mr. King said the discussion section is specifically focused on the areas to the eastern portion of the Bel-Red corridor. The language talks about coordinating with Redmond in developing projects that will serve both Bel-Red and Redmond Overlake growth. He agreed the language could be little clearer.

Chair Robertson called attention to S-BR-J6 in the implementation section and noted the need to

insert the word "rather" between "objectives" and "than" in the first sentence.

Chair Robertson pointed out that the neighborhoods/districts section is the only section of the plan without an overall goal. Mr. Inghram explained that the section can be thought of as a subset of the land use section in that it gives more detail about the land use patterns within the subarea. As such, it does not really need an overall goal statement.

Commissioner Ferris commented that the nodes are intended to be where the city is looking to have a mix of primary uses that will create energy and pedestrian activity. He suggested it might be a good idea to draft a goal for the section that introduces the idea of having all the primary uses represented in each node.

Chair Robertson asked if a citywide study of auto dealership locations is something that will be on the Commission's work plan in the future. Mr. Inghram said that issue was raised during the Wilburton/NE 8th study. At that time staff came forward with information about auto dealership opportunities in the Eastgate area, which will be discussed when that subarea is reviewed, in the downtown, and in Bel-Red. Staff is not looking to do an citywide study because only the three areas are involved.

E. Bel-Red Development Standards and Design Guidelines

Mr. King said staff have highlighted the Commission comments made to date about development standards and design guidelines and will come back at a future meeting to address.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Amy Kosterlitz with Gordon Durr spoke on behalf of the Grenia(?) family, owners of the property at 13120 Bel-Red Road. She explained that the family purchased the site about a year ago with intentions of relocating their small Ferrari dealership in an existing building on the site. They have no plans to expand the building. They have since found that there is city policy against a dealership use in that area and have been advised to get involved in the Bel-Red subarea plan process. The site is proposed for mixed use retail/housing; it is not within a node area. The Grenia(?) family generally supports the draft plan but would like consideration of allowing small auto dealerships if they locate in existing buildings. During the transition period, the city would be wise to allow for some use flexibility. Small low-volume dealerships, such as Ferrari, are more like general retail in impacts and not inconsistent with the stated vision. A requirement to allow dealerships only in existing buildings would pose a significant limitation on most dealerships. Some exceptions to the design guidelines for existing buildings should also be considered. A letter outlining the details of the Grenia(?) request was submitted to the Commission.

Mr. David Plummer, 14414 NE 14th Place, said the schedule for the Bel-Red project implementation phase is too compressed and does not allow time for reasonable and effective public participation. There are currently no lifecycle cost estimates to fully implement the staff's proposed rezoning. Rough estimates of acquisition costs are on the order of \$750 million in 2008 dollars; there are no estimates for ownership costs or retirement costs. There is no information available regarding how the acquisition costs, let alone the life cycle costs, will be allocated, nor is there any plan for how to finance the life cycle costs. The Commission should petition the Council, the staff or both, to extend the implementation schedule for the project for at least a year. There has never been any reason advanced by the Council or anyone else as to why the project is being pushed forward on such a compressed schedule. The staff should be required to prepare and widely distribute a white paper providing a reasonably full disclosure of their

proposed rezone. The Angelo's triangle area should be eliminated from the Bel-Red subarea. The steering committee never considered including the area. The white paper should provide some sort of transportation and land use analysis that does not include light rail. The Commissioners were encouraged to visit the sites where staff is proposing to locate parks within the corridor

Mr. T.J. Woosley 3015 South 124th Street, spoke as an owner of the Briarwood Center property to the east of Lake Bellevue within the area previously discussed for inclusion in the Bel-Red subarea. He said his family has always felt the property they own is in the Bel-Red area. He agreed with the need to allow for flexibility in uses as the area transitions. One of the problems the Bel-Red area has faced over the years has been limits on the allowed uses. Too often vacant spaces have not been filled by legitimate businesses that would fit perfectly with the area but which were not allowed because of language in the Zoning Code. Properties tend to redevelopment as areas thrive, not when they are in decline, so the first work of the city should be to do no harm and keep the area healthy.

Mr. Todd Woosley, 10633 SE 20th Street, complimented the city on the Bel-Red process, which has been very inclusionary. He said the staff have been accessible and helpful throughout the process. He explained that he was speaking on behalf of his family property as well as the McNay property where Trader Joe's is located. It makes perfect sense to include the area to the west and the area at the eastern edge to be included in the Bel-Red corridor. The approach to height limits proposed by staff is the right answer.

Mr. Chris Mooi spoke as the owner of the former Angelo's Nursery on 156th Avenue NE. He said he has been studying the area along with his architects for some time and believes there are strong reasons for including the area within the overall Bel-Red subarea. Through redesignation of the area, the city can maintain a proactive control over redevelopment of the small triangle zone. That will be particularly important as Redmond begins to fill out its side of the line. The area serves as an important boundary between the commercial uses of the corridor and the residential uses immediately to the east of 156th Avenue NE.

Motion to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ferris. Second was by Chair Robertson and the motion carried unanimously.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

10. OLD BUSINESS – None

11. MINUTES

A. December 12, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Bach. Second was by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

B. October 24, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Chair Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioners Bach, Ferris and Sheffels abstained from voting.

C. November 14, 2007

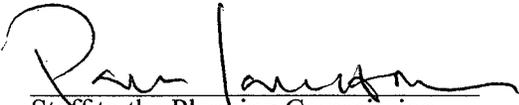
Commissioner Mathews pointed out that the steering committee referred to in the first paragraph under Reports from Commissioners was the Meydenbauer Bay park steering committee.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Sheffels and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Lai abstained from voting.

Commissioner Sheffels took a moment to announce that Paul Inghram is running for president of the AIPC and said voting can occur online. She urged the Commissioners to go to the APA website, register to use the site, and cast a vote.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 10:13 p.m.



Staff to the Planning Commission



Chair of the Planning Commission

5/20/08
Date

7/2/08
Date

