TO: Eastgate/I-90 Citizen Advisory Committee
FROM: Mike Bergstrom, Planning & Community Development
       Franz Loewenherz, Transportation Department
SUBJECT: April 7, 2011 CAC Meeting
DATE: March 31, 2011

At the April 7 CAC meeting, Bellevue staff will provide the CAC with a better appreciation of how the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation project (a long-range 2030 vision) is an important step in the City’s multi-phased approach to delivering transportation improvements in the corridor. At this briefing, staff will make sure the CAC is well informed on the transportation issues and constraints in the area. It is important for the CAC to understand this issue as you start thinking about future land use alternatives, and a potentially new land use vision for the area. Staff will also share ideas on where and how we might address the needs of motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians to address some of the existing transportation deficiencies in the area, and help accommodate future growth and implement a new vision for the area.

The Eastgate Preliminary Screening Analysis (December 2009) serves as an important reference document to the April 7 CAC discussion. This work was done prior to launching the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project so that we would have a better sense of what some of the transportation constraints in the area were, and how the transportation system might be impacted (in 2030) by future development. The study also identified some potential transportation solutions that could help accommodate future development, which provides a starting point for thinking about solutions, as do some of the earlier transportation studies that have been previously done in the area (these were done in 1992, 2002, and 2005, but unlike the current effort did not look as much at future land use). Building on this information, Bellevue staff is working closely with WSDOT, Sound Transit, and King County Transit in starting to develop a range of transportation strategies that we can advance through our alternatives development and analysis phase. One purpose of the briefing on April 7 will be to acquaint the CAC with some of these strategies, which will all be vetted further as we go through the process.

At the April 7 CAC meeting, staff will also familiarize the CAC with the evaluative measures that we often use in transportation planning and will inform the analysis phase of the project (level of service, volume/capacity ratios, delay, etc.). At the conclusion of this planning process, as part of the overall vision the CAC will recommend a set of transportation strategies that are consistent with and help to implement the land use vision and that add new capacity to choke
point locations, improve roadway operations, and manage demand by providing the public with more travel choices.

In May, early alternatives will be developed by the CAC (with staff and consultant assistance), leading to more refined alternatives which can be evaluated through transportation modeling and other environmental screening. The work of the CAC will increasingly be informed by consultant assistance. Makers Architecture & Urban Design is under contract to help the CAC develop alternatives for the corridor, and several transportation consultants have been retained to assist with discreet transportation elements. In addition, SEPA analysis and compliance will be integrated with the planning process to ensure that the development and evaluation of alternatives is informed by environmental considerations and public engagement. Consultant contracts have been structured in a way that is mindful of budget limitations while providing the CAC with the support necessary to fulfill its charge.
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, April 7, 2011
5:30 P.M. – Room 1E-108
Bellevue City Hall – 450 110th Avenue NE

1. Call to order (5:30)

2. Approval of March 3, 2011 minutes * (5:30)

3. Transportation Issues, Constraints, & Opportunities (5:35)

4. Public comment (7:15)

5. Adjourn (7:30)

* related materials included in packet

Visit our website:  www.bellevuewa.gov/eastgate-corridor.htm
1. **Call to Order**

Co-chair Larrivee called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m.

2. **Approval of February 3, 2011 Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Ms. Welti. Second was by Mr. Elliott and the motion carried unanimously.

3. **Finalize Evaluation Criteria**

Senior Planner Mike Bergstrom presented the Committee with revisions to the evaluation criteria for consideration, noting that the revisions flowed from the Committee’s discussion at the previous meeting. He noted that the number of themes had increased from eight to nine by breaking out the parks, open space and recreation theme on its own; some of the other themes had been re-titled. One substantive change was the addition of a criterion under economic development that addresses the role of Bellevue College.

Mr. Ludtka referred to the theme of Compatibility with Adjacent Neighborhoods and suggested it be revised to read “…for nearby residential and commercial neighborhoods.” He clarified that the term “neighborhood” can be applied to more than just residential uses. Appropriate services need to be offered for both types of neighborhoods to create a better overall environment.

Mr. Ludtka called attention to the Environmental Quality/Sustainability theme and proposed adding a bullet aimed at promoting sustainable design solutions throughout the study area.
Mr. Stanton said the term “sustainable” to him includes LEED standards and other specific things. He suggested that if used, the term should be bracketed in some way. Mr. Ludtka agreed and proposed including Built Green, LEED and Energy Smart as examples. He offered “Promote sustainable design solutions throughout the overall study area, such as LEED, Built Green and Energy Smart.”

With regard to the third bullet item under the theme Integration Between Transportation and Land Use, Mr. Ludtka suggested that it should be revised to read “Addresses the potential for mixed use housing and transit-oriented development to improve the land use/transportation mix.”

Mr. Ludtka proposed striking “…only modest local public…” from the first bullet under the Fiscal Feasibility theme in favor of having the focus be on both public and private investments in transportation and other infrastructure. He suggested the paragraph should read “Can be accomplished with both public and private investments in transportation and other infrastructure.”

Asked to comment on the suggestion, Councilmember Robertson said it was her read that the reference to modest local public investment referred to the city only, not the Washington State Department of Transportation or Sound Transit.

Motion to accept the evaluation criteria as amended was made by Mr. Stokes. Second was by Mr. Ludtka and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Relationship of Eastgate to Bellevue and the Region

Planning Director Dan Stroh said the Comprehensive Plan recognizes Eastgate as one of the city’s five major employment centers. There are some 140,000 jobs in the city, and the downtown accounts for about 45,000 of them. About 24,000 of the total number of jobs, or 17 percent, are in Eastgate, and the area is a significant economic engine for the city.

Eastgate’s attributes make it unique. It is a gateway to Bellevue but also to the entire metro area and lies within the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway.

At 5.7 million square feet, office is the predominant land use in the area. That is more than a quarter of the total square footage of office in the city and about a tenth of all of the office development on the Eastside. Most of the office developments were constructed post 1980 and have a lot of useful life left. The office intensity as measured by the floor/area ratio (FAR) is lower than in the downtown, and in fact much lower than what is being planned for the Bel-Red area. In the downtown the FARs run to a high of 8.0-plus, whereas in Eastgate they are generally around 0.5, though the T-Mobile buildings inherited by the city when annexation occurred are higher, but still only about 1.0.

The office developments in Eastgate have attracted some major corporate users, including Boeing, T-Mobile, and Microsoft. The area has also attracted regional administrative offices because of its location in the area.

One of the questions raised in the original economic report prepared for this project was whether or not the corridor has the services and amenities needed to continue to attract the next generation of the talent pool. Eastgate office does offer a different niche from
what is offered in the downtown and in the Bel-Red corridor.

There are some major community business clusters in the area, including Factoria and Factoria Plaza. Overall, there is a lower level of retail employment in the study area than in the city as a whole. Only about four percent of the overall employment in Eastgate is retail; citywide the number is nine percent.

The study area is home to some light industrial uses. The Bel-Red corridor was light industrial when it came into the city, and at one time the use accounted for 60 percent of the zoning in the corridor. The new vision for the area, however, is based on a very different model, namely transit-oriented development focused around light rail, and in time the light industrial zoning will become a thing of the past. The last major reservoir of light industrial zoning in the city is in Richards Valley in the Eastgate corridor. There are questions about whether or not it should be retained as an important element of the city’s overall economic diversification. Sixteen percent of the jobs in Eastgate are manufacturing, which compares to only four percent citywide.

Mr. Stroh pointed out that the number of residential units in the Eastgate corridor is very low. Additionally, the concept of mixed use does not spring to mind when talking about current conditions in Eastgate. Overall, there are limited opportunities for new residential uses in the city as a whole; most of the residential capacity is in the downtown, though some has been added in Bel-Red. The need for additional housing units should be part of the Eastgate discussion.

Eastgate offers some very special opportunities. Bellevue College is a very large presence in the corridor and will continue to be a major and unique opportunity for the area. Another unique feature is the park and ride, which is the largest such facility in the region and one of the largest in the country. The transit hub suggests opportunities for integration of land uses.

Mr. Stanton said he questioned why the Eastgate area has not been designated an urban center given the metrics just described. Mr. Stroh responded by saying that the City Council asked essentially the same question at its meeting on February 28. The original model for an urban center was built around the notion of a compact, mixed use, walkable core area. An elongated area like Eastgate that stretches out along the freeway presents a number of problems in that regard, especially with respect to being walkable and the lack of mixed use. The metric most problematic to Eastgate is the residential population. To get an urban center status would necessitate long and hard discussions about integrating more residential uses to meet that part of the threshold.

Mr. Stokes suggested that there are opportunities for increasing residential in the designated area. The fact is there is a lot of residential in the vicinity, and the corridor boundary has in a sense been drawn somewhat arbitrarily. There are a lot of people living in the area that are in need of services just as in urban areas.

Mr. Stroh said the urban center criteria include 15 dwelling units per acre, which is far above single family densities. A significant increase in multifamily dwelling units would be required to meet the threshold. Simply expanding the boundaries to include the existing single family neighborhoods would not work.

Mr. Elliott commented that regardless of the fact that the federal government has said the recession is over, the commercial industry is still going down. He said when times were better and he promoted commercial space in the Eastgate/I-90 corridor the selling points
were lower per-square-foot costs and better access than in the downtown, and ample and free parking. All of those factors gave the corridor a high value and still do.

Mr. Bohman said he does office leasing in the I-90 corridor and added that it has been recovering much faster than all of the corridors in the Bellevue area over the past year. The driving factor appears to be the technology sector.

Co-chair Hamlin asked if office offers the city a higher tax base than light industrial does. Mr. Stroh said the issue is complicated by the fact that light industrial is a synergistic and complimentary use to office and other uses. The light industrial area is home to the county’s transfer station, a United States Post Office facility that sorts mail, both of which could be considered important enough to transcend the tax base question. The implications of losing the manufacturing areas should be considered in determining what the zoning should be. In 2001 during the dot-com bust, the city lost 10,000 high tech jobs nearly overnight, and it was the manufacturing sector that helped to keep the city afloat.

Mr. Stanton suggested caution in considering doing away with the light industrial. There are a variety of uses that spin off of manufacturing uses, and having land zoned for such uses is very important. Returning to the issue of urban center, he claimed that jurisdictions too often become fixated on boundaries and questioned whether the multifamily surrounding the mall in Factoria should be excluded. Redrawing the boundary could potentially make the numbers work in favor of an urban center designation. Mr. Stroh responded by saying the Committee is tasked with focusing within the boundary, but agreed it would be appropriate relative to the urban center topic to expand the line to pick up more of the Factoria commercial area and its potential mixed use.

Co-chair Larrivee suggested amending the agenda to allow next for public comments. There was consensus to do so.

5. Public Comment

Mr. Pat Callahan, CEO of Urban Renaissance Group, said he currently manages one million square feet in the corridor for Beacon Capital, including Sunset North and Lincoln Executive Center.

Mr. Callahan floated the idea of a transit overlay zone centered around the Eastgate park and ride, and the notion of considering the Eastgate park and ride as a transit center. What is keeping it from being designated a transit center currently is the level of walkability around the facility. The level of public investment made in the transit direct access ramps to I-90 and the park and ride facility itself totals close to $66 million, yet the surrounding zoning prevents the facility from being anything other than what it is. Lincoln Executive Center is on the north side of I-90. It has a sea of parking and cannot be considered to be pedestrian friendly. When the development suffers on the leasing side, it is because of a lack of amenities. The project is too small and spread out to even support a deli. Sunset North at 400,000 square feet can support a deli. There is a relationship between the density of activities and the retail that can go along with it. The area is ripe for becoming an urban center.

Mr. Jack McCullough said he is a land use attorney who has done a lot of work in the corridor over the years. He said the planning efforts under way really are nothing more than an effort to deal with the Office-Limited Business and Light Industrial zoning that is a relic of the 1980s, a time when the city was focused on making sure any office
development in the city occurred in the downtown. That plan has proved to be a regional success and the downtown has indeed developed as envisioned. The hope is that the focus will be widened and that the Committee will be bold in considering the possibilities.

Mr. Callahan said he is on his third lease-up of Sunset North. The development came online around 2000 and was initially leased to several tech companies, all of whom have since vanished. In the second round of leasing Expedia signed on. The current phase represents a third lease-up and involves such tenants as Intellectual Ventures, T-Mobile, and others. The I-90 corridor has in some respects always been the premier submarket in the entire Northwest. It is always the first to recover and it carries the highest rents. Given the lack of amenities, however, it is questionable whether or not the corridor can hold on to that distinction. Amenities matter to office users and they have become prime factors for companies seeking space. To achieve the desired pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and to bring about the other needed amenities, building height and increased densities will need to be permitted. A zoning uplift would serve to change the uses immediately surrounding the park and ride.

Mr. Brian Parks with the Phantom Lake Homeowners Association said he was glad to see the evaluation criteria include “produces measureable environmental benefits compared to no action” and “protects or improves sensitive natural features.” He said he is not opposed to development, but pointed out that increased surface water runoff into Phantom Lake will aggravate the algae and flooding problems. The flooding problems began to occur following development of the original I-90 Business Park in the 1980s. To date the Committee has not discussed the downstream bottleneck limitation of a very limited and overloaded sensitive area that is affected severely by development in the drainage basin, a large portion of which is within the Eastgate/I-90 study area. He said following meetings with the City Manager and the Utilities Department he had reached the conclusion that the city does not want to take responsibility for the drainage system; the upshot is there is no solution in sight. He urged the Committee to consider the drainage issues when considering additional development in the area.

6. Alternatives Work Session

Co-chair Larrivee explained that the outcome of the work session, together with the evaluation criteria, will provide the design team with input that will allow them to begin the task of developing corridor alternatives.

Mr. Bergstrom shared with the Committee a map of the study area showing nine separate sub-districts. He proposed dividing the Committee into two groups to meet informally at separate tables to focus on questions and observations raised by the CAC and during the public outreach. He said the purpose of the exercise was for the group to identify ideas that are worth exploring in terms of land use. The Committee members were asked to discuss the existing use types along with uses that might be appropriate in the corridor.

Mr. Bergstrom asked the members to also identify the challenges associated with bringing new uses to the corridor, including compatibility and environmental issues. They were asked to also keep in mind the relationship with the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, the planning principles, and the evaluation criteria.

A. Table 1 Discussion

The participants at Table 1 were: Mike Bergstrom, Bob Bengford, Co-chair Jay Hamlin,
Tom Bohman, Jim Stanton, Tom Perea, Lindy Bruce, Dave Elliott, Carrie Courter Blanton and Councilmember Jennifer Robertson.

Mr. Bergstrom asked the group to focus on areas six through nine. He said the areas were based on zoning and were defined as follows: Area Six, the Bellevue College campus, the Lincoln Executive Center, the park and ride, and the south half of the Sunset corporate campus; Area Seven, the north part of the Sunset corporate campus and the residential area to the north; Area Eight, most of the light industrial area in Richards Valley; and Area Nine, the frontage on both sides of Richards Road, including a portion of the industrial area.

It was noted that the Bellevue College site is zoned R-5, but it was also stated that the college is not constrained by the zoning.

Mr. Stanton suggested Area Six is in many respects the linchpin area for the corridor. The college is buying up properties in the area adjacent to its campus and they clearly have a strategy focused on using the area to the north of the current campus in a more expansive way. Accordingly, consideration should be given to that area and how it might work with what the college is wanting to do. The office area could have more of a relationship to the college relative to entrepreneurial space. Those synergies are not currently occurring in the area.

Ms. Bruce pointed out that the college has been noncommittal relative to adding residential, at least not dormitory facilities. Mr. Bergstrom said the college is thinking residential to some extent, primarily for their international students. They are engaged in buying up properties for what they call their residential program. They are also open to the notion of including housing, some retail, and a welcome center as anchors to the entrance to the campus.

Co-chair Hamlin said he pictures the area near SE 13th Street and SE 16th Street as being the heart. It is the perfect place for retail next to all the transportation uses, and is a great place for residential to support the college. Additionally, it is a good area in which to build up.

Mr. Stanton said there is a lot of synergy that could be happening in the area that is not currently happening. There is infrastructure in place around mobility and transportation; there is a major educational institution; and there is office space which is relatively cost effective, has abundant parking and good access. The opportunities those elements bring to bear are not being realized for one reason or another.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Bohman, Mr. Bergstrom said this area (indicating the 80-acre site that includes the Sunset Corporate Campus and condominiums to the north) was developed by Wright Runstad under a master plan. It was subject to a concomitant agreement which limited the residential density and the total square footage of office. The road going uphill to the condominiums curves to follow the edge of a wetland. To do anything with the site would require dealing with the environmental constraints such
as those imposed by the wetlands.

Mr. Stanton asked if there are any programmatic spinoffs from what the college does, noting that the University of Washington has a robust research and development program that has frequent spinoffs. Mr. Bergstrom said it was his understanding that the college is very interested in the possibilities but does not currently have much in that arena.

Ms. Bruce asked what zoning would be required to help bring about research and development uses. Mr. Bergstrom said the specific zoning is less important than figuring out what the Committee would like to see there.

Ms. Bruce asked if this area (indicating the land on the north side of NE 32nd St across from the park-and-ride) is buildable, and Mr. Bergstrom replied that it probably is physically. However, from a regulation standpoint the land was kept clear in order to allow for congregating the office buildings. Changing the regulations and underlying agreement would be needed to increase development potential in this area.

Co-chair Hamlin said it the area is interesting in that it has hotels on either end, has a great transit center, and has the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway running through it. He said those elements could all work together to make the area into something magnificent.

Councilmember Robertson said during the deliberations concerning the Bel-Red corridor, the Planning Commission felt it important to have some light industrial in the city. She asked how full the light industrial uses in the Eastgate corridor are and how they serve the neighborhoods. Mr. Bohman said the area is relatively leased up and their rents far exceed what LI-type zoning typically brings in. Anyone with an LI use wanting to be close to Bellevue has only the one option. If the area were to be restrained to LI uses only, the number of uses wanting in likely would exceed what the zoning would allow. There currently are several uses that serve the neighborhood, including gymnastics and martial arts studios, but those uses typically do not pay market rates. At the same time, those uses do not fit well in other areas.

Mr. Elliott commented that once the Bel-Red area redevelops, there will be a lot of displacement and the call for LI space will increase. The location with access to both I-90 and I-405 will make the space more valuable still.

Ms. Bruce pointed out that King County has said it will not grant any easements through its transfer station property. That fact will limit options for improving vehicle circulation. Mr. Bergstrom agreed and commented that the county is considering creating its own loop through their site to allow the separation of commercial and general user traffic.

Mr. Stanton commented that the problems have risen as a result of the decision not to locate certain uses that require big spaces in or near neighborhoods. As a result, the gymnastics and martial arts uses have been forced into marginally zoned LI areas; even then there are arguments about whether or not the uses are appropriate there, even though
they are not wanted anywhere else and even though they would probably be best located near schools and where people live. They serve to keep out uses that actually want to be in LI, including manufacturing and assembly uses. Part of the process of addressing the area should involve looking back through the chain of other uses elsewhere and determining if there are areas they could move to, clearing the way for true LI uses.

Mr. Bohman said he did not necessarily agree. He commented that some of the uses located in the area have been where they are for many years. Many of the uses are located on land that have been owned by the same people for a very long time, who are comfortable with what they have, and whose economic base places them in the situation of not caring if they sell the land or not.

Mr. Bohman stated that the transfer station is not going to go anywhere. It will continue to have trucks coming in and out and it will somewhat define the area. There is, however, a natural break between this (indicating the property fronting on Eastgate Way) and this (indicating the balance of the Richards Valley area); the latter is raised up somewhat and feels like it wants to be developed into a much higher use, such as office or mixed use. Over here (indicating the interior of the Richards Valley industrial area) there are a number of issues with the industrial uses happening there, but it also has wetlands and creeks which make it a less-than-ideal environment for redevelopment.

Mr. Stanton asked if it makes sense to allow the LI zoning to continue given that its redevelopment would be problematic. Ms. Bruce suggested that it does. Mr. Bohman expressed the view that if an upzoning were to occur to allow for higher density uses, the change over time would be away from industrial uses.

The group agreed that the old temporary park and ride site represents a good opportunity for redevelopment with office.

With regard to Area 8, Mr. Bohman said his suggestion would be to upzone it to allow for higher uses, but said the goal should be to retain light industry and industrial-type uses.

Councilmember Robertson said her question was whether or not the current zoning is something that serves the surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Bohman suggested it does given the martial arts and gymnastics uses currently located there. Mr. Stanton said those uses cannot go anywhere else.

Mr. Perea asked if commercial or residential could be made to work in Area 9. Mr. Stanton said the comment made earlier about having large office blocks without any amenities is a valid one, so some local retail in and around the office should be allowed, especially near the college and where it is visible from the freeway. Mr. Bohman added that the areas that are lower in elevation and more hidden are more appropriate for office.

Ms. Bruce said if the city expects people to take the bus, it should allow for some amenities near the transit hub. That will be especially true when light rail comes through
the corridor.

Mr. Bengford said he lived for a time in the area and said it was great to be able to walk to the transportation hub. He said the only thing that would have made it better would have been having more services; it is necessary to drive to get to any local services. Mr. Stanton commented that encouraging bus rapid transit connecting with the hub would made sense.

Mr. Perea pointed out that the Lincoln Executive Center site is very deep. It could have one use on one side and another use on the other side. Mr. Stanton said he was not convinced that a large residential use in that vicinity so close to the freeway would be as successful as commercial or office.

Mr. Bergstrom noted that the market study questioned the viability of residential too close to the freeway, yet realtors claimed that if they had the zoning they would be building the units.

B. Table 2 Discussion

The participants at Table 2 were: Franz Loewenherz, Rachel Miller, Francois Larrivee, John Stokes, Rob Pucher, Cynthia Welti and Mark Ludtka.

Mr. Ludtka urged the group to think broadly in terms of development scale, density and total jobs. He said if the projections for potential growth in the study area are accurate, the status quo will prove to be woefully inadequate by the time 2030 rolls around.

Co-chair Larrivee and the other groups members agreed the point was well taken. They agreed that in some areas a much larger office building concept would be appropriate.

Co-chair Larrivee suggested Area 1 might be appropriate for higher scale density.

Mr. Ludtka commented that a few years back when Seattle put their cap initiative in place, the building that normally would have been accomplished in the downtown area all moved to suburbia. What could have been accomplished on a single acre in the downtown took up sixteen acres in suburbia. Sprawl and the waste of valuable resources resulted.

Ms. Welti commented on the importance of providing for scale and breaking down mass when allowing for more height and density. Mr. Ludtka agreed and suggested that Area 1 offers excellent opportunities for making the transition to mixed use. Developments could be incented to provide additional amenities and residential units in exchange for more height. All development is predicated on economics, which in turn flows from the zoning.

Commissioner Larrivee pointed out that the comments could be applied to Areas 1 through 5. He asked if there are unique aspects that relate to Area 1. Mr. Pucher suggested that the proximity to the mall and the retail uses there, Area 1 is uniquely
situated to accept more density in a mixed use format that includes residential, office and retail. Higher density brings with it fewer surface parking lots and more structured parking; that brings with it opportunities for additional open space.

Mr. Loewenherz observed that one of the obvious constraints Area 1 faces is congestion; he noted that it is the most congested arterial in the study area. That is a challenge that increasing density in the area will have to contend with.

Mr. Stokes said he would not support allowing building height and density to go too far. He said there are examples in some of the neighboring jurisdictions of mixed use developments with greater density and height that simply are not attractive. Area 1 could be improved, but it should be accomplished with some caution. Lower density multifamily might be more appropriate for the area. It is all about scale.

Turning to Area 2, Mr. Ludtka suggested the area is appropriate as a transition zone between single family residential and more intense uses. If bordered with even five-story buildings, the effect could be a wall around the residential area, which would not be aesthetically pleasing. Area 2 has limited opportunity for redevelopment primarily due to its natural configuration. He said it is the perfect place for the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail to pass through.

Ms. Welti agreed with the comment about the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail. She said with sufficient landscaping Area 2 could become a linear park with a few buildings, which could be appropriate stopping places for people using the trail.

Mr. Pucher suggested that Area 3 is ripe for a mixed use development, though on a lesser scale than in Area 1.

Mr. Loewenherz noted that Area 3 is a combination of a lot of different kinds of uses presently, from grocery store to emissions testing, an RV park and a church. The question is whether or not the current mix is the appropriate mix of uses for the area.

Ms. Welti suggested the area could do better in terms of the use mix.

Mr. Pucher said the property is simply too valuable for some of the uses that are currently located in the area.

Mr. Stokes commented that for a gateway area, the current development pattern presents a fairly tired portrait. There is clearly the potential to bring in mixed use developments and yield a much better neighborhood.

Mr. Loewenherz said some of the feedback received during the outreach effort was that Area 3 does not relate particularly well with the surrounding residential uses. He asked if that might make the area appropriate for a village-type development. Mr. Pucher said the area could play that role very well.
Mr. Ludtka said that a scale transition should border the residential uses and crescendo toward the north from a vertical scale perspective. At the same time, it will be important to provide reasonable connections, both pedestrian and vehicular, to relate Area 3 to the residential uses; the two areas should feel like they flow together.

Mr. Ludtka said he would like to see the area welcome service-related office uses, such as doctors, dentists, travel agents and stock brokers. Retail uses can exist in the same venues, with residential uses sitting on top of it all.

Everyone agreed that the biggest challenge to redevelopment would be traffic and congestion. Mr. Loewenherz pointed out that after Factoria Boulevard, 150th Avenue SE is the next most congested corridor in the study area.

With respect to Area 4, Mr. Stokes suggested it has more potential for higher density.

Mr. Ludtka expressed the view that the density to the north is appropriate given the adjacency to single family, but the area south of the future park is underdeveloped. Mixed use would be appropriate in that area.

Mr. Loewenherz said some of the feedback received during the outreach effort was that the amount of commercial activity should be enhanced on both sides of 156th Avenue SE; he asked if that concept resonated with the group.

Co-chair Larrivee noted that it had earlier been pointed out that the workforce in the area does not have good access. He said he could support redeveloping the area in a way that would add services to those folks and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Ludtka said he would divide Area 4 into two parts, with the northern portion accommodating more height and massing, and the southern part accommodating additional density through mixed use developments that include commercial, retail and residential, with more structured parking as opposed to surface parking. That would create less impervious area.

Mr. Loewenherz commented that Area 5 has some interesting challenges and opportunities given the history associated with the Toyota dealership, the loss of the grocery store, and the resentment on the part of the community on the lack of a neighborhood function.

Mr. Ludtka suggested that the only way to support neighborhood retail in the area will be to create mixed use.

Mr. Pucher said having an auto dealership in the area is out of place.

Mr. Loewenherz observed that the intersection of Eastgate Way and 150th Avenue SE is quite congested and will be a challenge to deal with.
Mr. Ludtka pointed out that in the Middle East and in Europe auto dealerships have storefronts like other retail establishments. A car dealership in Area 5 might be okay if developed in conjunction with the surrounding context.

Mr. Pucher commented that Area 5 would serve well as an urban village look and feel, which would also be appropriate as a gateway.

Mr. Ludtka said the topography would allow more commercially oriented mixed use with somewhat higher buildings along the southern edge and more residentially oriented mixed use along the northern edge.

C. Recap

Mr. Ludtka reported on behalf of Table 2 and said the group concluded that Area 1 afforded the greatest opportunity for additional building height and agreed that mixed use will be critical to the area with combinations of retail, residential and office. Taller buildings allow for more associated open space, which is important. Building facades should, however, be designed to correspond to the human scale.

The group agreed that Area 2 should focus on its connection to the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway. The topography and limited development opportunities, coupled with its proximity to adjacent single family residential, the existing three- or four-story office buildings make the most sense. The area could easily become a linear landscape tying other areas together.

Area 3 is appropriate for mixed use opportunities, provided there is sensitivity to the single family residential uses to the south. Heights could grow in proximity to the freeway. Visual as well as pedestrian and auto connections should be created to invite the neighborhoods into the area.

The group looked at Area 4 as two separate sections and concluded that existing height and massing is appropriate for the northern portion. The area from the park south could accommodate additional density and height through mixed use opportunities. If further development is allowed in the northern section, structured parking and less overall impervious surface should be required.

The group also divided Area 5 into two sections. They concluded that the northern portion relates to Area 4 in terms of scale. Higher density and more commercially oriented mixed use would be appropriate closer to the freeway, and residential mixed use would be appropriate closer to where the Mormon church is.

Area 3 should relate to Area 4 via scaling elements. Coming in on I-90, the area should feel like a gateway to the community. Transitioning toward the other sites, heights should grow heading west and the main part of the city.

Mr. Stanton spoke for Table 1 and said there was general agreement with regard to Area 9, particularly on the west end toward I-405, that change from current conditions is not warranted. The area from Richards Road along the frontage street, however, has quite a lot of redevelopment opportunity converting to higher density office, commercial, and services uses.
There was quite a bit of discussion around Area 8 in terms of it being one of the last areas in the city with light industrial uses. The uses located there generally cannot locate anywhere else. There are impediments to redeveloping the area, particularly environmental. There are limited opportunities to transition some of the smaller offices to higher and better uses with a somewhat increased density. The transfer station area is not under the control of the city and has a life of its own.

Further to the west, particularly in Area 6 and toward the northern end of the Bellevue College campus, the group recognized the opportunity for a variety of uses that would have synergy with the college. The uses could include higher density residential, higher density office, and more service uses.

Area 7 is subject to a concomitant agreement which places certain limitations on it. They may be able to be overcome, however. While there are also environmental concerns in the area, there appears to be some opportunity for redevelopment.

Co-chair Hamlin clarified that the group’s discussion relative to the light industrial area included a recognition of the viability of the use and a recognition that raising the density of the area could push out some of the current businesses. The group concluded that there are valid reasons for retaining land for light industrial and research and development uses.

7. Public Comment

Mr. Matt Cyr spoke representing the Champions Center in Area 6. He said he would like to see the boundary of Area 6 moved further north, and the R-5 residential zoning increased to something denser to create opportunities for partnerships. With a rezone and removal of the transition area overlay, redevelopment of the area would be benefited.

Mr. Jack McCullough volunteered to return to the Committee with ideas for the Lincoln Executive Center property and the surrounding area. He agreed with those who suggested buildings in the area need to be a lot taller, especially if lower height buildings that have significant value are going to torn down and replaced; a large enough delta will need to be created to bring the market forces to bear.

8. Adjourn

Co-chair Larrivee adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.