

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
ARTS COMMISSION
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 15, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-108

PLANNING

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Robertson, Commissioners Ferris, Lai,
Mathews, Sheffels

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Rogers

TRANSPORTATION

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Yuen, Commissioners Glass, Larrivee,
Tanaka, Van Valkenburgh

PARKS & COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD PRESENT: Chair Keeney, Vice Chair Bennett, Commissioner
Roland

ARTS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Shepherd, Vice-Chair Finley, Commissioners
Holder, Tremblay, Donkin

HUMAN SERVICES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Beighle, Hoople, Seltzer, Stout

STAFF PRESENT:

Matthew Terry, Dan Stroh, Paul Inghram, Emil
King, Department of Planning and Community
Development; Goran Sparrman, Kevin O'Neill,
Kevin McDonald, Department of Transportation;
Patrick Foran, Parks and Community Services;
Navo Otal, Department of Utilities

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

Planning Commission Chair Robertson called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. and asked those present to introduce themselves.

Chair Robertson said no public comment would be taken during the meeting. She announced that the Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on May 28.

2. STAFF PRESENTATION OF BEL-RED DRAFTS

Planning Director Dan Stroh said the purpose of the meeting was to share information with all of the boards and commissions with an interest in the Bel-Red subarea plan. He noted that the joint boards and commissions met in October 2007 and this meeting has the purpose of beginning to close the loop. The packet of plan and code amendments that is currently out for public review represents a major milestone in the Bel-Red process that began with the steering committee. Since October there has been a great deal of heavy lifting, with each commission doing some significant work.

Mr. Stroh noted that the packet remains a draft, adding that the Planning Commission is still in the review phase. The Commission expects a lot of additional refinements before getting to a package of final recommendations for the City Council to review and act on.

Department of Planning and Community Development Director Matt Terry thanked everyone for their participation in the process. He explained that there are four basic parts to the implementation strategy: the Comprehensive Plan vision and project list; the Land Use Code revisions that provide the regulatory framework and incentives for development; an interlocal agreement being worked on between Bellevue and Redmond to deal with growth impacts; and the finance plan that will provide a strategy for making it all happen.

Mr. Terry said the capital investments identified as needing to happen to fully implement plan total in the neighborhood of \$450 million. That total includes transportation investment, stream corridor restoration, and the parks elements. The project has been a very ambitious challenge, in many ways more ambitious than what the city tried to do with the downtown plan when it was first initiated 25 years ago. While there were capital investments needed in the downtown, at least the basics were in place when the plan was implemented. In Bel-Red there is an immature street system, essentially no parks infrastructure, and the stream corridors are either paved over or in pipes or badly degraded, all of which brings with it significant upfront capital investment challenges.

From the start staff has believed that the challenges would need to be met in a couple of distinct ways. First, growth must pay a significant part of the cost of providing the infrastructure necessary to support the growth that will take place in the area. The incentive package being worked on by the Planning Commission, and the parallel work being done on impact fees, is designed to have growth pay its fair share.

At the same time, there has been recognition of the fact that there will need to be significant public investment in the area. That will occur in a couple of ways. First, as new development occurs it will generate tax revenue, a portion of which can be dedicated towards capital investment. Over the next 20 years or so, if the development program contemplated is fully realized, it will generate about \$112 million in additional tax revenue in 2008 dollars; under the current policy, about 40 percent of that would be dedicated to capital investment. That would be a significant down payment but would

not accomplish the needed overall investment, so it will need to be enhanced in significant ways. The traditional way the city has paid for capital investment is through dedicated tax revenues, and that approach will certainly play a role in the Bel-Red corridor. Part of the proposal under consideration involves possible increases in storm drainage rates in order to pay for some of the stream corridor improvements. There may also be general bond issue support for other capital investments with citywide benefit.

Staff expects to be interacting with the City Council in June or July about the framework for the financial plan. That should yield better insight into the relative contribution that new growth will pay.

Mr. Terry said the Planning Commission will be looking forward to receiving feedback from the Council on the financial plan so they can finish tuning up the incentive program and some of the other parts of the overall plan.

Nav Otal, Assistant Director, Utilities, thanked the Environmental Services Commission for the hours spent in reviewing policies and stream corridor improvement proposals. She said it has been very exciting to think about what is possible in the Bel-Red area. The Commission appreciates that the vision will not be implemented overnight; improvements will occur as the opportunities arise.

Ms. Otal said the vision created by the steering committee for the Bel-Red area will require utility infrastructure improvements to support the increase in population, the details of which are yet to be fully worked out. The focus to date has been on stream corridor improvements. The hard part will be determining how the various improvements will be funded, but that exercise awaits additional Council direction.

Department of Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran said he is very excited about the plan for a couple of specific reasons. The area has unique aspects, and from a parks perspective it presents the opportunity for organizing principles around corridors with connections both locally and regionally. With the exception of the Lake to Lake Trail, that kind of a park system does not exist in Bellevue. The transportation, recreation, environmental, streams and socialization aspects are all organized along linear and corridor relationships.

The organizing principle and the main feature of the park system in Bel-Red will be the stream and transportation corridors. That will permit the integration of a series of other components to feed off of and play into public spaces and parks. Strategic placement of parks, corridors and trails will integrate with land use, transportation, storm drainage systems, and will create opportunities for pedestrian movement up, down, and through the corridor in a park-like setting. Linear systems have tremendous opportunities for multiple benefits that the more traditional park systems cannot offer.

The Park Board has spent a lot of time defining what the city's park system will be in the future given the urbanization of the city. The Board understands that park elements in urban settings cannot stand alone; they must be integrated into the overall development

whole.

Department of Transportation Director Goran Sparrman reminded the group that the transportation system that has been identified for the Bel-Red corridor is truly multimodal. It is being incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and will eventually need to be incorporated into the city's Capital Investment Program.

Mr. Sparrman noted that a fundamental principle of the land use planning effort has been the notion of having light rail or some form of high-capacity transit operating through the heart of the area. No one can yet say what decisions will be made by Sound Transit, but everyone knows an effective transit system will be needed to serve the corridor. There are great opportunities to connect the area to other parts of the city. The synergy between the non-motorized projects, what is needed with regard to general capacity improvements, and the system of parks and storm drainage facilities is something the four departments have been working very closely on.

Mr. Sparrman said a big part of the \$450 million price tag is tied to key arterial projects. The corridor currently has a very immature transportation system. The arterial projects will be very costly because of the need to purchase right-of-way, the costs of which have gone through the roof in the past few years. Ten years ago, the cost of right-of-way ranged from 25 to 35 percent of the total project cost; for the Bel-Red corridor, the typical right-of-way costs are projected to exceed 50 percent of the total project cost.

The phasing strategy will be absolutely key because it will not be possible to construct such a wide array of expensive projects overnight. It will take between 20 and 30 years to build out the whole system. Staff assisted by the Transportation Commission have been working hard to determine the right phasing strategy for the projects. The 120th Avenue NE project from NE 4th Street across NE 8th Street to Northup Way is a key arterial project. The NE 4th Street extension project from 116th Avenue NE across the railroad tracks to 120th Avenue NE is a key project. The project to add better access to SR-520 at 124th Avenue NE is a key project. And of course the NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street project through the heart of the corridor is key.

The Transportation Commission has been very helpful in developing a phasing strategy. Staff have been working on the design concepts for the various projects, which has yielded more accurate cost estimates. There have been a lot of discussions about cross sections and the tradeoffs between the different objectives. Ultimately the transportation projects will get implemented through the TFP and the CIP. In the coming months there will be more work to define the projects. The Transportation Commission will have the job of prioritizing the projects against other needs in the city.

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram reminded the group that the Bel-Red corridor is 912 acres of largely light industrial and some commercial land. It holds a key geographic position between the downtown and the Overlake area of Redmond. There is no question that the corridor offers a number of opportunities. The vision for redevelopment of the area was established by the steering committee and handed to the

City Council in September 2007. The vision is for multiple neighborhoods and mixed use nodes, all served by transit and having greater sustainability and environmental restoration.

The various boards and commissions have been working through various drafts in an attempt to convert the steering committee vision into a subarea plan and regulations. There are still revisions to be made to the drafts now out for public comment. In addition to working with the boards and commissions, staff have been meeting with a variety of stakeholders. Information has been posted to the web and kept updated. On May 13 a series of discussions with business and property owners was held to gain feedback on the drafts. A public hearing before the Planning Commission is slated for May 28.

Cities in the state that operate under the Growth Management Act framework use their Comprehensive Plans as the basis for making regulatory and capital spending decisions. Accordingly, three major documents are being developed: a subarea plan, Land Use Code regulations, and design guidelines. A few Comprehensive Plan amendments in addition to the subarea plan are being contemplated, including changes to the MMA boundaries, changes to the level of service standards, and changes to the boundaries of the Crossroads and Wilburton subareas adjacent to the Bel-Red subarea in order to make the subarea boundaries match the study area. The Land Use Code includes a number of key implementation regulations, including phasing, the permitted uses, regulations addressing existing uses, dimensional requirements, and the incentive system. The design guidelines provide guidance for the character of development within the area.

Mr. Inghram said the subarea plan includes a land use vision that supports environmental sustainability, economic vibrance, and which creates new and distinct residential and commercial neighborhoods. The urban design aspect has a very strong sense of place. The environmental element recognizes the opportunities the stream corridors present for the area. The parks and open space element outlines a system that serves the area and connects to the city and the regional system. The section on housing outlines the potential for 5000 new housing units over the next 20 years; it establishes a vision for a range of different housing types and encourages greater affordability. The arts and culture section recognizes the importance of those aspects in the corridor; to some extent it plays off the location of the Pacific Northwest Ballet School at 136th Avenue NE and NE 16th Street, but it also anticipates the opportunities the light rail stations and other major investments will bring with them. The transportation section looks at everything from new bicycle paths to new arterial street capacity and high-capacity transit services. There is also a connection with BROTS, the interlocal agreement with Redmond that works to manage the combination of transportation solutions and land use in the Bel-Red and Overlake areas.

Mr. Inghram said the transportation network plan aims to connect within the corridor and through the area in a way that will benefit the city. It provides greater east/west connectivity and improves connectivity with the downtown. The transportation is certainly not centric to the subarea. The key element is the new multimodal arterial street NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street running through the middle of the corridor that includes

light rail. The group was shown artist concept drawings of what the new arterial could look like at full buildout, including the opportunities for park and open space between the nodes. The vision seeks to avoid homogenous development across the Bel-Red area in favor of a concentration of urban neighborhoods with an interspersing of parks and open space and stream corridors. The plan calls for park facilities at all levels from trailheads to mini parks, neighborhood parks, and new community parks.

Mr. Inghram shared with the group the overall zoning map. He noted that a phasing program has been discussed which seeks to coordinate the land use development with the provision of infrastructure. It limits the level of new commercial development capacity to something close to current levels until there is a mechanism in place for funding an initial set of infrastructure improvements.

The land use focus for the western portion of the subarea is on medical office development, the Medical Institution zone, including the site identified by Children's Hospital as the place they want to locate. The 122nd Avenue NE node is called the Spring District by Wright Runstad. In the center of the node the focus is on office/residential uses, with the primary focus on office. The 130th Avenue NE node has a residential focus but allows for retail and commercial activity along with a small amount of office. In the eastern portion of the corridor adjacent to Redmond's Overlake Village area the focus is on a development pattern having a residential focus.

Outside of the nodes a variety of commercial uses are anticipated. On the north side of Bel-Red Road the zoning is focused on commercial/residential, which is similar to the Community Business zone. Along NE 20th Street the proposal is for General Commercial, which allows for auto dealerships and various types of other commercial uses. Between the nodes and in some of the fringe areas the zoning is predominantly residential, though allowance is made for some small commercial uses. On the south side of Bel-Red Road the zoning is office/residential transition with a lower intensity and lower height profile providing a buffer between the more intense uses on the north side of the roadway and the single family neighborhoods to the south.

Mr. Inghram said one strong aspect of the vision of the steering committee addressed existing uses. Though some of the light industrial uses have left the area, there are still a number of healthy and stable businesses in existence. The code provisions allow those businesses to continue operating while supporting and encouraging new types of uses. A specific set of code conditions relating to existing conditions has been drafted to address both uses and sites. The use charts include a new "E" designation to address existing uses. A number of uses will continue to be permitted outright and those will be shown with a "P" on the use charts:

The proposed incentive system allows for the upzoning to be gained through participation in providing parks and open space, affordable housing, or other amenities. The base level of zoning is similar to what currently exists, and going above would involve tiers of incentives. On the commercial side, the first tier would be participation in parks and stream restoration projects; in the second tier there would be a range of other incentives,

including child care, non-profit space, public restrooms, public art, public plazas, LEED certification, active recreation, and natural drainage features. On the residential side, the first increment of the tier system applies to affordable housing at moderate-income levels; in the second tier development could select from other items on the list.

The development standards and guidelines address the character and feel of the development that will occur over time. The standards are specific to requirements, while the guidelines are more about outcomes and providing flexibility for how to achieve the outcomes.

Several maps are included in the packet, including one that shows the build-to lines. Mr. Inghram explained that the standards include specific build-to lines for certain streets under which buildings must be constructed close to the street instead of behind a large parking lot. There is also an active edges map indicating where buildings should have an appropriate frontage and entrance on the major streets.

Mr. Inghram allowed that there is a great deal more work to be done and noted that the boards and commissions would be involved. The City Council is working on a financing plan. The BNSF corridor has officially been sold to the Port of Seattle, and the Port has agreed to a trail easement with King County. Outreach to a variety of entities and organizations is under way and will continue, including Sound Transit, WSDOT and others.

Mr. Inghram noted that the Planning Commission has driven home the point that while the plans being made are solid, there is no way of knowing how it will all work until everything is adopted and implemented. Accordingly, there needs to be a monitoring process and a commitment on the part of the city to reviewing everything in five years and making adjustments as needed.

Commissioner Ferris reminded the staff that from the start the various boards and commissions have been directed to focus on the vision and not the costs, yet clearly cost is a critical element. There have been updates given to the Planning Commission regarding costs, but the Commission is clearly not prepared to weigh the complex incentives from a cost standpoint that is critical to the implementation of the plan. More information is needed. The \$450 million figure has been tossed out along with a few sources of revenue, but the dots have never really been connected. Except for the node areas, the density capacity of the corridor will remain quite low. Either the scope of the infrastructure needs to be reduced to serving just the nodes, or the capacity of the corridor may need to be increased for the longer term vision. An FAR of 0.5 with a maximum of 1.0 is not much different from what the corridor currently allows, and the node areas are being asked to shoulder the burden for the entire Bel-Red corridor.

Mr. Terry said staff has reached many of those same conclusions. He allowed that time is an ally. Staff does not believe the full plan can be financed in 20 years; it is too aggressive a timeframe to accomplish the full buildout. While it may take much longer to accomplish the vision, many of the identified facilities are needed to directly support the

growth that will take place. Staff are reexamining the phasing requirements to see what the basic requirements are to support the contemplated levels of growth. Staff believes headway needs to be made with regard to amenities in the area; the parks and the stream corridor improvements will be fundamentally necessary to encourage and support residential development. Staff is hoping to get direction from the City Council soon, and that direction will inform the Planning Commission's decisions. The Council could discuss the topic as soon as early June. Staff have developed three different financial scenarios for the corridor based on different assumptions, each of which weights variables in different ways.

Mr. Sparman said the bigger projects on the transportation side will have tremendous benefit for the corridor, but many of them have citywide benefits as well. Those with wider benefits should draw funding from bases outside the corridor. Mr. Terry explained that about 60 percent of the trips that will be using the new Bel-Red transportation facilities will be generated by growth occurring in Bel-Red or elsewhere in the city. That means that 40 percent of the trips will benefit existing development or those who already live or work in the area. A diversified financial strategy will have to be developed, one that recognizes the different inputs that create the impacts that need to be addressed.

Transportation Commissioner Larrivee observed that much of the development under consideration combines transportation, parks and environmental interests in the same elements. He asked if the process used of bringing the different boards and commissions together to inform the staff has worked well and if it will be used again further down the road. Mr. Inghram said there is always a logistical challenge involved with working with six different appointed bodies at the same time. It has been worth it, but there have been tradeoffs involved. By and large the boards and commissions have been in the same place with regard to the overall vision. There is still much to do, not the least of which is the design of NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street; each body may look at that project from a different perspective.

Parks and Community Services Board Chair Keeney said staff did an excellent job of communicating throughout the process, but the Board believes it would have benefited from having the opportunity to have more direct dialog with the other commissions.

Human Services Commissioner Hoople agreed. He noted that initially the Human Services Commission was not involved in the process at all. The Commission from the start held strong views with regard to affordable housing and would like to have been able to share that view directly. The Commission also wants to make sure the non-profit agencies located in the corridor are not pushed out by increased rents as redevelopment occurs.

Transportation Commissioner Van Valkenburgh said the plan offers the city with great and exciting opportunities to create an area with an urban form and to take full advantage of the investment that will be made in light rail. She voiced concern, however, with regard to the parking standards included the plan, which are a carryover from the suburban model. Parking availability is one of the primary determinants in mode choice,

and the Planning Commission should carefully consider a different parking model, one that is more compatible with the urban form the vision outlines.

Transportation Commissioner Glass said he was surprised to hear that the FAR being proposed is not much different from what exists in the area currently. He said throughout the process it has been his understanding that an increase in density would be the carrot that would get redevelopment going in the corridor. Mr. Inghram explained that the upzone in the node areas will be substantial, going from approximately 0.5 to 2.5 FAR through the incentive system. Outside the nodes, the FAR will generally be 1.0, which is approximately double what is allowed currently. The increased density inside the nodes will translate into taller buildings, whereas outside the nodes the heights will not be substantially different. The projections under the recommendation of the steering committee were for four million square feet of office space, 500,000 square feet of additional retail space, and 5000 housing units over 20 years will easily fit into the proposed zoning picture.

Mr. Terry added that one of the principles established at the start of the Bel-Red project by the City Council was that development in the corridor should not be competitive with the downtown area. In the downtown the FAR maximums start at about 3.0. The proposed FARs for the corridor were predicated on that principle.

Department of Transportation Assistant Director Kevin O'Neill said the amount of development the steering committee worked through and which was analyzed in the EIS work was not based on a building envelope size but rather on a market forecast. On the commercial side it was based on historic absorption rates, looking at what will happen in the downtown and Overlake, and the level of economic development the region and the corridor can expect. On the residential side it was based on forecasts for the area and the city, and on the idea that the area would be a magnet for residential given its proximity to employment centers and services. Once the amount of development was determined, the question became how to accommodate it. The FARs embedded in the proposal accommodate the development program quite easily within the nodes.

Parks and Community Services Board member Roland observed that the document includes standalone items on environment and streams and drainage practices, but they do not link together in the way the steering committee envisioned, particularly in their vision for the green streets and placemaking. The Powerpoint presentations continue to show the pictures, but the supporting policy language is not well linked together. She also noted that NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street is not a linear park, it will be a street. It will be a wide transportation corridor with multiple benefits, including trees, but it should not be thought of as a park. It certainly will have importance as a linear connection within the system.

Mr. Sparrman commented that capturing the spirit and vision of the steering committee with regard to green streets in policy language is very complicated. He assured the group that designing the streets to match the vision of the steering committee is still very much a high priority. There will be pressures down the road to find ways of making the

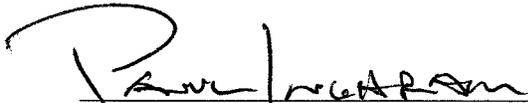
facilities more affordable, especially NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street, and it will be necessary to weigh everything and find the right balance. There is still a lot of work to be done to reconcile the vision with the design.

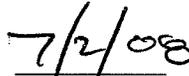
Transportation Commissioner Tanaka noted that the Transportation Commission will shortly be engaged in the process of prioritizing projects throughout the city. He asked if there will be pressure put on the Commission to provide special consideration for projects within the Bel-Red area. Mr. Sparrman said currently there is no intent to give Bel-Red projects special weight. The anticipation is that the TFP and CIP will be based on existing revenue sources and the normal prioritization process. In the coming months, that direction may very well be refined.

Planning Commission Chair Robertson voiced the opinion of the Planning Commission in expressing appreciation for the work and comments of all the boards and commissions working on the Bel-Red project. She said the various recommendations have helped craft the document.

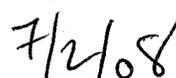
3. ADJOURNMENT

Planning Commission Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.


Staff to the Planning Commission


Date


Chair of the Planning Commission


Date