

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

June 11, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Robertson, Commissioners, Lai, Mathews, Orrico

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Vice-Chair Bach, Commissioners Ferris, Sheffels

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Mike Kattermann, Mike Bergstrom, Department of Planning and Community Development and Maria Koengeter, Transportation Department

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Robertson who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Bach, Ferris and Sheffels, all of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram reported that the Bellevue Sculpture Exhibit will officially begin on June 14, but noted that several works had already been installed in City Hall.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

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

7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Robertson invited the Commissioners and staff to attend the annual Somerset Fourth of July parade.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Vander Hoek Multifamily CPA 08-103615 AC

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried unanimously.

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz explained that the three proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments for public hearing tonight represent the second half of the Threshold Review public hearings for 2008. The Vander Hoek Multifamily proposal seeks to amend the map designation for a quarter acre site from Multifamily-High to Downtown, and would move the site from the Southwest Bellevue subarea to the Downtown subarea.

Mr. Matz said the recommendation of staff is not to advance the application out of threshold review, and that if it is advanced that the geographic scope not be expanded. Staff do not believe that the application addresses significantly changed circumstances in regard to the strong focus of the Comprehensive Plan to maintaining the downtown boundary. The perimeter design district requirements that have been in place since 1985 do not change the logic of where the downtown boundary exists. While there may be an argument that the proposal could result in a superior site design, that fact does not rise to the level of significantly changed conditions. Nothing is preventing the site from being developed in a manner that was anticipated when the boundary was originally adopted. The proposal is inconsistent with current Comprehensive Plan policies, specifically those of the Southwest Bellevue subarea which call for maintaining the borders of the Downtown subarea as established by the 1979 plan to prevent the spread of the Downtown into adjacent residential neighborhoods. Finally, staff do not have the resources necessary in the annual CPA work program to adequately review the proposal given the major implications involved and the level of community concerns.

In response to a previous study session inquiry by commissioners regarding uses allowed in the R-30 and Downtown zone districts, Mr. Matz noted the Downtown-Old Business (OB) district generally allows a full range of residential densities and other limited commercial uses, along with retail uses and service uses that are only conditionally permitted in the R-30 zone. The OB district also allows a greater range of recreational uses and allows resources uses that the R-30 district does not. Both districts allow for residential uses, but the OB district allows for more intensity through the dimensional standards.

Mr. Stu Vander Hoek, 9 103rd Avenue NE, said he does not agree with the staff report. He noted that when the same request was submitted in 2007 the recommendation of staff was to move the item forward; what has changed is unknown, though the claim is that there is a lack of resources. The lengthy community input has not added any new factual information to the equation. The political issue appears to be predicated on the position that the request would break a promise made year ago, but the fact is the request simply seeks to correct an oversight. The Commission has not been given the opportunity to review what little information there is in the records to follow the decision making between 1979 and 1985. In fact, the only promise that has been broken was one made to the original property owners when the perimeter design district was put in place; at that time, no consideration was given to the parcel in question.

Continuing, Mr. Vander Hoek said the parcel is surrounded by taller and more intense buildings that accommodate uses other than residential. What is being sought is an additional 15 feet in height and the ability to create a better separation between Wildwood Park and the subject property. The R-30 zoning will yield a far different building character directly across the street from a more urban environment. The request represents the right thing to do for Old Bellevue.

The decision will impact the use of the site for the next 50 years and the way it will impact the street. There are 18 Comprehensive Plan policies the project proposed for the subject property would accomplish.

Mr. Vander Hoek said it takes a very thick skin to have to read the public comments that have to do with what his family will get out of the request. He said he has spent over 30 years working to build up the city. He said his family has been in Bellevue for over 60 years and strongly believes that the city owes the family nothing. What would be appreciated, however, is a little respect for the efforts put in to making the city a better place. In the end the focus should be on the facts. The family will benefit only if the Commission agrees to study the issues, sends a recommendation to Council, and Council agrees that the request should be granted. If that happens, Old Bellevue will in fact benefit in a variety of ways.

Ms. Anita Skoog-Neil, 9302 SE Shoreline Drive, spoke on behalf of the Meydenbauer Bay Neighbors Association. She said the organization has reviewed the Vander Hoek request and has concluded that Wildwood Park deserves to have a buffer from the CBD. In 2007 the staff seemed to think that the R-30 buffer around the park had no purpose, but the zone buffer was and remains a well-thought-out strategy to buffer the park from the more intense development allowed in the OB zone. The R-30 zoning allows for less height, far less lot coverage, and no retail. Speculation about whether the city should have revisited the issue when it instituted the perimeter design district is a moot point; the 20-foot setback buffer introduced under the designation does not compensate or mitigate the ramifications of the more intense development allowed under OB as the applicant contends. In 2007 there was a historic reference to split zoning; at that time the owner made references to the split zoning and highlighted other split zone properties in his rezone efforts. The subject property in fact stands alone and only because the owner desires to co-develop with the owner to the north does the concept of split zoning come about. In cases of split zoning, it appears the city clearly originated the practice to protect residential areas from the intensity allowed under CBD zoning. When the city instituted the perimeter design districts, it was simply adding another layer to the so-called wedding cake effect. Bringing up the issue in 2007 caused staff to consider rezoning other non-split zone properties. That kind of expansive thinking is exactly what causes community concern and is an illogical conclusion of the threshold review designs criteria concept of unintended consequences of an adopted policy. The applicant has acknowledged that the bigger issue is neighborhood reaction and the perceived precedence setting for moving the CBD line. In 2007 the Planning Commission recommended not to increase the geographic scoping. The applicant then informally appealed to get geographic scoping encouraged, all to allow for maximizing lot coverage. The major differences between the 2007 and 2008 requests by the applicant are the third site change and the introduction of legislative changes. The third site change is actually a downzone of the nearby Belwood property to R-30. The applicant has raised historic information on the 1981 and 1985 design guideline changes and has referenced the current Meydenbauer Bay planning efforts. The contention is that no one reconsidered the design parameters for adjacent R-30 zoning when the 1985 CBD perimeter district was adopted. The fact is that was done intentionally, there was no need for it, and there was no public support for it. The claim by the applicant that Wildwood Park would function as a new buffer from an extended perimeter design district would also not meet with community support. The Meydenbauer Bay planning efforts have not yet yielded any specific recommendations regarding zoning changes. The proposed amendment does not raise policy or land use issues that are more appropriately addressed by some other ongoing work program. Former Councilmember and Mayor Nan Campbell said the promises made to citizens in 1981 when the CBD plan was approved was that the boundaries of the area would remain the same. The fact that many years have passed since then does not mean that it is time to reevaluate the boundaries and their appropriateness. The changed circumstances

are the very ones that were envisioned when the CBD plan was affirmed.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Lai and the motion carried unanimously.

B. South Kirkland TOD CPA 08-103700 AC

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried unanimously.

Senior Planner Mike Bergstrom allowed that the proposal is somewhat unique in that it relates to a site located partially in Bellevue and partially in Kirkland. The two adjoining parcels are owned by King County Metro and currently house a park and ride facility. The proposal is to amend the Comprehensive Plan designation from Multifamily-Medium to a new designation that is preliminarily called TOD for transit-oriented development. If the change in designation is approved, a subsequent zoning map change will be effected to change from the current R-15 to a new zone, possibly also called TOD. The change would allow for a mixed use development on the property and expansion of the park and ride facility by approximately 250 stalls.

Mr. Bergstrom explained that a similar land use change is pending for the parcel located in the city of Kirkland. That request, however, was initiated by Kirkland. The request for the Bellevue side was initiated by the property owner, King County Metro, which is why the threshold review is necessary.

The current Comprehensive Plan designation and zoning does not allow for a mixed use development. The proposal envisions a density of roughly 60 units per acre, along with a mixed use component allowing some level of retail and office ancillary to the multifamily development as well as the transit operations. In order to accommodate the additional density, heights of up to 65 feet are envisioned.

The threshold review criteria are outlined in the staff report. Staff believes the request meets most of the substantive criteria, but it may not fit into the current year work program. The request raises a variety of complex issues that will require in-depth review. A new Comprehensive Plan designation and zoning district would have to be created to allow densities that is double the maximum residential density allowed anywhere else in the city outside of the downtown. There are land use compatibility issues involved, and a questions of how the new land use categories could be applied to other existing or future park and ride facilities in the city.

Mr. Bergstrom said the recommendation of staff is not to include the proposal in the 2008 work program, and that the geographic scope not be expanded. The caveat is that if the proposal is moved forward, it will be necessary to consider its implication for other park and ride lot facilities in the city.

Mr. Bergstrom provided the Commissioners with copies of a June 3, 2008 letter from the Mayor of the city of Kirkland written in support of the proposal. He noted that Kirkland also wrote a letter of support on March 14, 2008, and apart from those two letters there has been no written response from the public.

Noting from the letters from Kirkland that the \$6.25 million in federal funding for the construction of additional parking spaces could be lost if Bellevue chooses not to act on the proposal, Chair Robertson asked if the additional parking spaces could be constructed without

the requested change in Bellevue. Mr. Bergstrom said the current zoning allows a park and ride facility as a conditional use, so an amendment to the conditional use permit would be required. Whether or not the additional parking spaces could physically fit on the site is a function of lot size and other physical considerations.

Mr. Gary Prince with King County Metro said the subject property is located at the intersection of two major freeways, near a major bridge, the BNSF right-of-way, and the transit corridor. In Europe the proposal would be a no brainer. With gas prices now over \$4.00 per gallon, it makes sense in Bellevue as well. Metro ridership has increased substantially and more facilities are desperately needed. The federal funding earmarked for additional parking stalls is contingent on legislative action in the spring of 2009, but if the project does not move forward the funds could be reallocated. A freestanding parking garage could be built on the site, but that is not the kind of project the communities are in favor of. Residential units need to be located near transit facilities, which is what the proposal would do, including affordable housing units. The future of the BNSF corridor remains unclear, but it could be a major transit corridor; if that happens, having a housing project adjacent to the corridor makes sense. The proposal meets all conditions for consideration; the only hang-up is the issue of staff resources. Photos of recent projects by King County Metro were shared with the Commissioners. King County Metro currently has no interest in redeveloping any of the other park and ride facilities located in the city of Bellevue.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Lai and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Coal Creek UGB CPA 08-109518 AC

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Lai and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz reminded the Commission that staff requested the Commission to initiate the application for 2008 in order to accomplish ratification of a King County Comprehensive Plan amendment that amends the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to include all of Bellevue's unincorporated portions of the Coal Creek Park natural area entirely within the urban area; relocate the area into a Potential Annexation Area (PAA) for the purpose of future annexation; and establish an Public/Single Family-Medium (P/SF-M) Comprehensive Plan designation for the site, matching the designation shared with all other park and open lands in the Newcastle and Factoria subareas.

Mr. Matz noted that the Commission desk packets included a letter received from Jim Loring after the packet materials were completed.

The recommendation of staff is to include the proposal in the 2008 work program. The transfer of ownership which resulted in Bellevue owning the park serves as the significantly changed condition that warrants the review. The natural area plays a key role for Bellevue locally and regionally. It is a key restorative link in the Mountains to Sound Greenway.

Commissioner Lai asked about the timing of the proposal. Mr. Matz noted that after the city was sued by Newport Shores and the marina there because of years of sedimentation issues related to Coal Creek, a part of the legal outcome was the transfer of the park facility to the city from the county in 2005. That date and timing did not align with King County's Comprehensive Plan amendment process which allows for such changes only every four years, with the next opportunity to move the UGB occurring now in 2008. If the proposal is moved forward and

ultimately adopted by the City Council, annexation of the area could occur in 2009.

There were no members of the public wishing to address the proposed amendment.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Lai. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried unanimously.

9. STUDY SESSION

A. Vander Hoek Multifamily CPA 08-103615 AC

Mr. Inghram explained that in 2007 the recommendation of staff was to approve the issue for Threshold Review, and staff believed then that there were opportunities to look at the merits of the site. A significant number of public comments were received at that time and it became apparent that the issue goes runs deeper with regard to the Downtown boundary.

Commissioner Orrico noted that the proponent references promises made to prior property owners. Mr. Matz said these issues have been researched to the full extent that the record supports such research. It is necessary to rely on the record. He said he cannot say there were no promises made, but the record is clear with regard to the policies implemented, when they were implemented, and to some degree why they were implemented, all of which reinforces the argument that the issue is much larger than a site-specific request.

Chair Robertson asked if prior to the purchase of the property by the applicant the property had a split zone. Mr. Matz deferred to Mr. Vander Hoek to answer that question, noting that the fact is the legally described properties are separate; they may at one time have been a single property with a split zoning, and that may have affected the decision making in the past.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Orrico, Mr. Matz said the Commission in 2007 recommended that the issue be advanced but without any expansion to the geographic scope. The staff proposal at that time had been to include the Forum condominiums which have a legitimate modern day zone split between Downtown and Southwest Bellevue. However, the Commission elected not to expand the scope because it did not want to apply the Downtown retail requirements to what is entirely a residential property.

Commissioner Orrico said the thing that resonated most with her in 2007 was that the issue was not raised when the Downtown Implementation Plan was being deliberated and then when it was adopted. Since the time of that adoption, there do not appear to have been any changes in circumstances.

Chair Robertson said she visited the site on June 9 and reached the conclusion that the proposal should be moved forward so it can be studied further. That is the position taken by the Commission in 2007 and nothing has changed since then. The allegations of a promise never to move the boundary is a policy decision that lies outside the realm of the Planning Commission. The proposal meets the criteria, and there are sufficient staff resources to study the site if the focus is on the merits of the application alone and do not extend to the boundary issues.

Commissioner Mathews asked if the Downtown boundary will be part of the next Comprehensive Plan update in 2011. Mr. Inghram said the anticipation is that staff will be scoping the issues for the next major Comprehensive Plan update beginning toward the end of 2008 and into 2009. Whether or not the boundary issue will be included is something that has

yet to be determined. The fact is there is existing policy that talks about not changing the Downtown boundary, and the proposal would modify that direction the city has held for a period of time. If a change is contemplated for the site, opportunity is increased to look beyond the subject site to the rest of the boundary, which in turn raises questions about whether the city should review the issue as a boundary issue rather than a site-specific issue. A recommendation from the Commission to the Council proposing a review of the Downtown boundary could be drafted and forwarded.

Commissioner Lai said he would favor seeking the advice of the Council with regard to whether the issue should be tackled for the specific site or as part of a larger review of the downtown boundary. Mr. Inghram said staff was seeking from the Commission a recommendation one way or the other to the Council. He added that with the recommendation the Commission is welcome to frame the recommendation in whatever way it decides.

Commissioner Orrico suggested the matter before the Commission must be addressed based on the established criteria. She said she could see no change in circumstances since the downtown boundaries and policies were adopted. The issue was not raised when those boundaries were established. She said she would vote against moving the issue forward.

Commissioner Mathews said he could see very little by way of changed conditions and was leaning toward not moving the issue forward.

Motion not to consider the Vander Hoek CPA further, and that geographic scoping not be expanded, was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Mathews. The motion failed 2-2 with Commissioners Orrico and Mathews voting for, and Chair Robertson and Commissioner Lai voting against.

Mr. Inghram said the tie vote would seem to indicate the Planning Commission will have no recommendation to forward to the City Council. He said he would check with the legal planner to determine if the issue will need an affirmative vote one way or another before being forwarded to the City Council.

Chair Robertson asked if there was consensus on the part of the Commission to forward to Council a recommendation to entertain the boundary issue as part of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan update.

Commissioner Orrico said she would not favor taking that approach. Commissioner Mathews suggested the boundary issue should be part of the review.

There was no consensus to forward a recommendation to the Council regarding the downtown boundaries.

B. South Kirkland TOD CPA 08-103700 AC

Commissioner Lai suggested that the proposal represents an opportunity that will benefit the entire community. He asked if the issue could be studied as a site-specific matter rather than as something that will affect other park and ride facilities in the city. Mr. Inghram said the concern of staff is that the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan designation and zoning category will create a new level of opportunity for application to other sites in the future. To create a new designation and zoning category for a single property could raise issues of spot zoning.

Mr. Bergstrom allowed that for the long term it might in fact be desirable to apply a new zoning to one or more of the other park and ride facilities in the city. However, it will not be possible to know that without examining every site.

Commissioner Lai countered that each of the current park and ride lots have different characteristics. They share a transit orientation, but they all have individual environmental conditions that might to some extent dictate heights, view impacts, or any number of factors. A TOD designation might be very difficult to apply to other areas without a complicated set of rules. In that case, and in light of the benefits that can be achieved by the South Kirkland site, it might make sense to move forward with a study of the parcel and its specific conditions.

Chair Robertson observed from the application materials that other projects in the vicinity have accommodated multi-story housing projects and asked if those projects are in Kirkland or Bellevue. Mr. Matz in response said the most dense non-Downtown residential zoning category in Bellevue is R-30. He also noted that one of the hallmarks of the stability of the Comprehensive Plan is that each zoning category is predictable; each can be translated into a known density regardless of where a particular site is located in the city and regardless of the unique characteristics of specific sites. That is the issue staff is struggling with in considering the South Kirkland TOD proposal.

Commissioner Mathews suggested the South Kirkland TOD issue is timely given that the city is currently looking at transit-oriented development in the Bel-Red corridor. He held that the issue should be moved forward for study.

Commissioner Orrico asked if the South Kirkland site could be treated as a TOD pilot project. Mr. Inghram said that could be a possibility. Mr. Bergstrom added that there are features to the proposal that are certainly worthwhile to study. Even in the case of pilot projects, it is always necessary to keep an eye out for how a particular zoning category could be applied to other sites. It all comes down to a staff resource issue.

Chair Robertson said there are clearly benefits to transit-oriented developments, and added that the city is in need of more affordable opportunities. That being said, however, in the case of the South Kirkland proposal the issue involves creating a whole new land use designation and zoning category, and that will necessitate looking at much more than just the one site. The staff and Commission plates are simply too full at the present time to do the study justice. She added that some of the changed circumstances highlighted in the application have not yet come to pass. The Commission should add the issue to its work program as soon as practicable, however.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Mathews, Mr. Inghram said the work being done on the Bel-Red corridor relative to transit-oriented development could certainly be borrowed from. The end result for the South Kirkland site, however, would still likely require a new Comprehensive Plan designation and zoning category. The current anticipation is that Bel-Red will have Bel-Red specific zoning.

Motion to recommend inclusion of the South Kirkland TOD in the 2008 work program, without any expansion of the geographic scoping, was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Orrico and the motion carried 3-1 with Commissioners Mathews, Orrico and Lai voting yes, and Chair Robertson voting no.

C. Coal Creek UGB CPA 08-109518 AC

Mr. Matz clarified that the city does not currently have a parks zone. The established policy approach is to incorporate the use of a P or PF prefix to indicate Public and Public Facilities uses. The specific intent was to not create a specific designation for things such as parks and schools while permitting the underlying zoning to be consistent across the boundaries.

Commissioner Orrico asked if there is anything to keep the park from developing in accord with the underlying zoning. Mr. Matz said that the interlocal agreement transferring the park to Bellevue from King County specifically prohibits development of the park for anything other than a natural area, and also said the site is part of the Parks and Open Space System Plan and as such there is specific policy language to prevent urban development. The Parks Department sees the area as a natural wild area and they work they are doing respects that.

Motion to include the Coal Creek UGB in the 2008 work program, without geographic scoping, was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Lai and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Light Rail Best Practices

Transportation Planner Maria Koengeter said the final report of the Light Rail Best Practices Committee will be available after June 17; when it is ready, it will be made available to the Planning Commission. She noted that the policy language included in the Commission packet represented the most recent revisions made by the committee, adding that the amendments will serve as the basis for the public hearing before the Commission on July 9.

Ms. Koengeter said the introduction section describes the charge of the committee which frames the boundaries for what the amendments include. The project methodology provides an orientation to the origin of the topics and the scope of the research questions, and the catalog, which is the bulk of the report, provides the why behind the amendments. The appendices house background information and the resources used by the committee.

The proposed housekeeping amendments fall into three categories: updating figures, updating existing policies to reflect the new references, and to update some terminology.

Planner Mike Kattermann said the bulk of the new Comprehensive Plan amendments are contained in 35 new policies specific to light rail transit. He noted that the light rail policies will be treated as a subsection of the high-capacity transit section of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The general policies that will lead off the section deal with making sure that any light rail system designed and built by Sound Transit complies with all local plans; call for the city to develop a partnership with Sound Transit to go through the process; and call for the public to be involved throughout the project.

Mr. Kattermann said the committee was specifically charged with not addressing the particular alignments under consideration by Sound Transit in the DEIS, but was directed to look at the issue of best practices as they related to alignments generally. The policies have to do with connecting major activity centers, and recognizing and supporting the different land use objectives for each of the distinct areas of the city through the various alignments would traverse.

There are policies aimed at community integration and making sure that Sound Transit utilizes context sensitive design, quality materials, quality processes, and protects both commercial and residential neighborhoods from the impacts of any light rail system. The system access policies include facilitating access by pedestrians, bicyclists, users of park and ride lots, and bus riders,

and designing to make sure that the physical access to the stations and other facilities are available to the widest range of ages and abilities. The policies related to construction and mitigation call for partnering with Sound Transit throughout the process to make sure the decisions made are in the best interest of the city, making sure the public is involved throughout the process, making sure there is ongoing communication from start to finish, minimizing disruption and inconvenience for those along the construction area, and locating staging areas in non-residential areas.

Mr. Kattermann said the next big event will be the July 9 public hearing before the Planning Commission, following which the Commission will be asked to make a recommendation to the Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan amendments, not the full report. The Council has indicated it would like to adopt the amendments by August 4, which means the Commission will need to have its recommendation by the last meeting in July.

The best practices process has been driven by the DEIS Sound Transit is expected to release in the fall. In anticipation of the document, Sound Transit is preparing to release early the portions that are completed; they will be giving the City Council an update on June 23 on certain aspects of the different alignments being analyzed. Letters from Sound Transit will be going out shortly to individual property owners along the various alignments alerting them to the fact that the information is to be released and that they may be impacted by the information.

Chair Robertson asked if staff anticipates any of the information to be released by Sound Transit will affect the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. Mr. Kattermann said no one has that expectation, but the information will certainly be given close scrutiny.

E. Bel-Red

Mr. Inghram said staff has read through all of the written comments, have reviewed all notes concerning the oral testimony, and have reviewed the transcripts from the business and property owner panel meetings. All of the individual discrete comments have been identified and categorized, though some additional work is needed in formatting to make sure all like comments are placed together. Some of the comments will not require a direct response. Others may trigger additional revisions to code language. The larger and more significant issues, such as the calibration of the incentive system and the level of FAR intensities to be allowed will trigger additional work.

Mr. Inghram stressed the need to craft the incentive system and determine the right FAR intensities is aimed at making it all work on two levels, for development and as a tool to help build the infrastructure components in the corridor. Over the last couple of weeks staff have been talking with the Urban Land Institute toward setting up an expert review panel to look at the overall process, the economic modeling and analysis done by the consultant, and to suggest revisions. Their review may trigger additional revisions. That process is expected to take three to four weeks.

A couple of specific comments were received about making Bel-Red a receiving site for regional TDRs; King County offered comment in support of taking that approach. Several comments from groups and individuals were offered in support of housing affordability; some suggested affordable housing should be a mandatory requirement and commented that an incentive-only system will not yield the desired outcome. Many of the business and property owners voiced concerns about the cost of the infrastructure and how it could prove to be a burden on them, depending on how the costs are allocated. There were also comments offered about stream

restoration and how daylighting streams might trigger new critical areas requirements. Sound Transit asked for specific code provisions related to transit facilities, use and the preservation of right-of-way. There were comments made about parking; some wanted the parking minimums near transit stations lowered, while others wanted to see park and ride facilities allowed near the transit stations. Comments from the residents of nearby neighborhoods offered comments voicing concerns about the potential height limits in the area on the far eastern edge of the corridor. There were comments made about the vision for the NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street corridor, and some opposed the proposal to change the level of service standard for the area.

Mr. Inghram said one of the key questions for staff is how to address all of the issues and bring the responses to the Commission in a timely manner. Given the list of significant issues, it is likely the Commission will not wrap up its Bel-Red discussions by the August break. He said staff is going to ask the Commission to consider moving the Medical Institution regulations along on a separate track independent from the rest of Bel-Red. That approach will be discussed with the City Council on June 16. If the Commission can take action on that issue by July 9, the Council will be free to either take final action on the Medical Institution issue as part of the Bel-Red package or separately.

There was general agreement in favor of streamlining the Medical Institution issue.

Chair Robertson said one of the driving principles behind the Bel-Red steering committee work was that the corridor is not to compete with the downtown. The maximum FAR as proposed is less than the minimum FAR in downtown. However, the parts of the downtown that have redeveloped after the current plan was put into place have much higher FARs on average than the minimum. She asked where the city can go with Bel-Red if there is general agreement that there should be a higher FAR floor or ceiling, in light of the principle not to compete with the downtown. Mr. Inghram clarified that what is being referenced with regard to the downtown are the low maximum FARs as opposed to the minimums. The FAR maximums in the downtown range from 3.0 to 8.0. The principle not to compete largely informed the proposal for a maximum FAR of 2.5 in the Bel-Red nodes. The expert review panel will hopefully have constructive comments to make relative to how reasonable the 1.0 and 2.5 FAR limits are for the corridor.

Chair Robertson commented that as the plan currently sits, the city will need to make it easier to get to the maximum limit, expect to get less of the infrastructure paid for by development, scale back the infrastructure, or allow more intensity. She asked if the Council has given any policy direction with regard to that issue. Mr. Inghram said the Council conducted a retreat on June 10 and focused on the overall long-range capital funding for the city. There was some direction that came out of those discussions, including talking more with the Planning Commission about a draft financing strategy. It is hoped that an expert panel being formed by ULI will be able to provide some light on the incentive system and how much of the infrastructure can be supported by development.

Chair Robertson said she would like the Commission to delve into the issue of increasing the FAR limits in the Bel-Red area, allowing that that will require additional staff briefings first.

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of New Officers

Chair Robertson noted that the resignation of Commissioner Bach means the Commission needs

to select a new chair and vice chair.

Motion to elect Commissioner Orrico to serve as chair, and Commissioner Sheffels to serve as vice chair, was made by Chair Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Robertson handed the gavel to Commissioner Orrico.

11. OLD BUSINESS None

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES None

13. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Greg Johnson with Wright Runstad pointed out that the comment booklet provided by the company to staff was intended to be part of the official record.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Orrico adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.


Staff to the Planning Commission

7-9-2008
Date


Chair of the Planning Commission

7/9/08
Date