

Bellevue Redmond Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS)
Focus Group Discussion
August 27, 2008
5:30pm – 7:30pm

The BROTS interlocal agreement between the City of Bellevue and the City of Redmond addresses transportation consequences of land use within an area that overlaps both jurisdictions. The following comments are from the fourth of four focus groups conducted for public participation in order to help determine what the problems are, what the solutions are, and what is important to members of the east Bellevue community. This third focus group consisted of community members that reside within the east Bellevue area.

The comments listed are a summary of group and individual observations and ideas (not verbatim) that are the result of asking the focus group three questions (the questions are found above each comment section). A short PowerPoint presentation was given at the beginning of the BROTS Focus Group Discussion that provided background of the 1999 BROTS agreement and the 2008 BROTS issues, objectives, and options.

1. What's it like out there?

Tell us your experience with existing traffic conditions in east Bellevue that the City could address with transportation improvements and strategies. What is it like to travel around east Bellevue – by any means – for your job, to do errands, for recreation or other activities?

During the am and pm rush hours traffic is at a standstill but at other times traffic is fairly good.

- in the mornings it is mostly school traffic that gets in the way
- in the afternoons traffic is at a standstill
 - going south on 148th, 156th, 164th, W. Lk Sammamish

156th looks like a freeway sometimes during the day in the area between NE 8th and Main St.

- The two-way left turn lane is helpful
- Sometimes when there is finally a break in traffic a pedestrian walks across the driveway so the opportunity to pull out is lost.
 - This causes a lot of temptation for drivers to cut through the neighborhood.

164th is a good road for bikes

140th is almost completed and 145th is almost completed as well

- the problem is the segment between NE 8th and Bel-Red Rd.
- 140th in that section doesn't truly have a bike lane
 - This keeps potential bike riders in their cars

There aren't very many bike lanes so biking is not a choice

Use different routes – have learned how to adapt

The 5 way stop on 156th is not safe

- sometimes people rush through and don't stop

Boeing and the proposed park development near Eastgate Way will be adding to the area's congestion problem in the near future

A lot of traffic comes off of I-90 and runs through 156th.

- sometimes that traffic is backed up from the east coming off of the exit.

One person said she doesn't see this traffic problem throughout the day

- she avoids the roads two lane roads and takes 148th.

Traffic at the Eastgate Way exit is heavy due to people exiting I-90 and accessing 148th through Eastgate Way.

On Bel-Red road there is a stopping point at a signal by the YMCA that takes care of the crosswalk but doesn't take care of the turns to get in and out of the YMCA.

- why can't the walk signal be moved to accommodate both pedestrians and traffic

Avoid the peak am and pm hours

People heading to Overlake from Seattle get off at Richards Rd. and turn right onto Eastgate Wy then turn left onto 139th which eventually takes them to 145th

Noticed that large rental houses can have as many as 5 tenants that each have a car. The cars need to go somewhere so several of them get parked in the street.

- this parking in the street takes away from the bike lanes.
- bike trails (such as W. Lk Sammamish) are in need of repair. It is not safe to ride on a trail when you cannot see the cracks in a puddle.
- Taking a trail does not mean that it continues to a safe location. You take your chances if you don't know how far they go. Then you have to deal with traffic

148th northbound between Bel-Red and 24th during the middle of the day the light turns green and traffic doesn't move. People are tempted to go through the parking lots.

It's too difficult to find parking downtown so people are now going east

- may add to traffic

Concern about the traffic Costco will bring to the area

2. What should we do about it?

We would like your feedback on the transportation improvement concepts that we have developed so far – 1) Transit 2) Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

3) Non-motorized 4) Channelization/Operations 5) Neighborhood Livability. What projects, or combinations of projects, do you think would make the biggest difference?

More bike lanes

More people would take the bus if we had more sidewalks and covered bus stop waiting areas.

- Need to be able to safely get to a bus stop and then be able to wait for it without getting soaked.
- Sidewalks would also help children to walk to school safely then parents would not feel the need to drive their children to school

Need to consider the huge amount of growth that is planned.

Need to make going to a P & R attractive – easier access

- Regional traffic needs to bypass the Eastgate P & R.
 - Start buses in Issaquah and go directly to Overlake.
- Need more areas to have their own P & R that are outside Bellevue.
 - People wouldn't have to transfer at the Eastgate P & R

Need to make the Overlake TC more usable.

- it is not a walkable area
- needs better bus connections

Need signal management

- some left turn signals take too long to get through
- 148th and 20th, the light only lets two cars turn left (west onto 20th)

Need more employers to contribute to the bus system

- more buses like Microsoft
- more shuttles between transit centers

Need more buses in neighborhoods

- some residents can't drive to transit centers
 - may get more bus riders if bus stops were in neighborhoods
- need more regular/frequent routes

If we want to encourage traffic to use 148th then we should make 140th and 156th less attractive to take.

- such as putting in stop signs
 - they also allow for pedestrians to cross the street
 - they would become more like neighborhood roads

The light at 156th and main has made it difficult to turn.

- needs to be reevaluated

- may need to go back to stop signs

There is one through road that takes you to 148th or 140th that is between NE 8th and Bel-Red. For some reason the city put in 2-way stop signs so the residents have to stop. This gives the through traffic the right-of-way.

Need to make all of Bellevue walkable

3. What is important to you?

Since the 2008 BROTS will run through 2030 there is adequate time to program the funding of new projects but we need to identify priorities in the short term. What transportation projects – in any of the categories – would be your top priority?

Transit is #1

- Make the bus user friendly

Complete the sidewalks and bike areas

- need better bike separation from road - safety
 - no traffic buttons – they are too dangerous
 - clearly mark bike path
- focus on main corridors for bikes and pedestrians; 156th, 161st, 164th
 - this would help maintain the neighborhood feel

The solutions should consider Bellevue's greenbelts

BRT

- Better bus service
- Need more buses so passengers don't have to stand
- Bus priority signal

Synchronize lights better

- Need to extend the length of left turn lanes

Need to make Overlake area (Sears, Fred Meyer, Safeway) area more walkable

- maybe have shuttle buses available

Have employers contribute more to alleviate the problem

Enhance what we already have in place