

Comments from Bel-Red Open House, January 31, 2008

Draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan Comments/Questions received as of 2-7-08

Note: The dotted line (- - -) is used to separate comments by individual respondent.

General

Does the draft Subarea Plan appropriately capture the intent of the Steering Committee recommendation? Are there any changes or additions that should be considered?

- Yes. The draft Subarea Plan does a good job of outlining the Committee recommendation.

- The Steering Committee merely endorsed the City's proposed land use scheme, they did not develop any independent ideas or concepts.
- The Steering Committee did not discuss or evaluate the drastic changes to the road/arterial network between 124th Ave NE and 116th Ave NE

- The whole thing looks feasible BUT, what happens to "dirty" shops now in the area? Like body shops, the concrete plant, the top soil facility, the bus base? Where do they go? We need all this, but they don't seem to fit in with housing, parks, etc.

- I own the property at 1917 120th Ave NE, next to the South Pella Bldg (Legacy Properties) and west of the metro base. It seems to me that my property should be zoned mixed office & housing like the Weyerhauser property. I would like to have the option of mixed office or retail and housing to keep options open. I don't think that it is in my best interest or my neighbors to be restricted to only one options. I also think that having the retail or office option would also bring in more revenue for Bellevue than a housing only option. It only seems fair to have same zoning right as my neighbors to the South. Thank you for your consideration –Kevin Kopar, owner of Eastside Staple & Nail.

- Are you losing site of what the Northwest has been? Are you trying to crowd people into smaller and smaller spaces? Do we remember why most of us live in the Northwest? (Because of the land, trees, mountains, lakes & sea) What do you want people in the future to appreciate? (The man made park or the natural forest) Do you want people to only see buildings, stores and roads? Traffic, traffic and more traffic congestion.

Land Use

What do you like or dislike about the proposed land use plan for Bel-Red and the mix of uses planned for individual districts?

- I appreciate the fact that the proposed plan allows for the existing industrial and service business to continue this. This was one of my major concerns regarding the plan. However, the City must exercise care when accessing the cost of redevelopment on the existing business or they will be driven out of the neighborhood.

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- It will force many business to leave the corridor.
 - It is far too intensive and contradicts the City's downtown plan.
 - The proposed land use will generate excessive traffic flows on the Bel-Red road, and will lead to failed intersections around the corridor.
 - There is no rationale for the proposed scheme.
 - There is no rationale for allowing residential developments along the south side of the Bel-Red road.
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- Very promising for Bellevue to be a leader in making the best out of our city. It will bring energy & excitement and encourage leaders to get involved in our community.
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- I like the emphasis on green: parks, trees, allowing the rain water to percolate into the ground, the riparian easements with associated walkways.
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- Keep building heights low. Do not compete with downtown Bellevue. This should feel like neighborhoods. A neighborhood where the neighbors get out to walk to the store or to stand and talk to the local shop owner. Everyone should know each other, support one another, feel a sense of community. The people should be proud of this area and want to maintain it, keep it nice and not let others vandalize.
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Public Amenities

What public amenities are most important for new development in Bel-Red?

- Consider developing space for permanent farmers market with an adjacent community pea patch or small farming plot. This can help tie Bel-Red's future to its past.
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- Of those listed, affordable housing & combining useable open space and trails with stream restoration.
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- None, no public amenities are needed.
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- Arts uses, especially dance education spaces for under served children, transportation to access the arts in the new areas, as well as downtown to performances, affordable housing for our new company dances, affordable "hostel" type lodging for arts visitors.
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- All of these are desirable and need to be included. However, the inclusion of affordable, workforce housing is essential to avoid further clogging of our freeways. Of all the public amenities listed here, most have been created already in or near downtown Bellevue and other locations. Only affordable and workforce housing for those wage earners or below 60% AMI has not. It is of highest priority.
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- Open space, parks, trails, natural drainage features and stream restoration
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- Does affordable mean low quality? Don't build something that will not hold up after 20 years. Build with pride and quality. Keep a sense of Northwest and what makes it unique.

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Urban Design

Are there urban design concepts – such as public spaces, public art, and design styles – that should be emphasized in the Bel-Red plan?

- Loft-like spaces to encourage new media (film, fine art, digital media) businesses to relocate to this area.
 - Mandate that buildings over XX stories be required to [have] rooftop gardens to reduce stormwater run off, improve air quality, aesthetics.
 - Yes, but not to the point that it stifles new development and drives up costs. Even though the emphasis is on transit adequate parking needs to be provided for new offices, businesses housing.
 - No. Let the area develop according to normal market “forces” rather than imposing an irrational land use concept on the area.
 - Great attention needs to be paid to hiring of talented designers so this space is aesthetically pleasing.
 - They should have a Pacific Northwest theme.
 - The gravel pit has been there a long time, could it be a park in the future like Gas Works Park in Seattle, or an amphitheater with a view of the Olympics?
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New NE 16th Street

While more details are still in development on the design for NE 16th Street, are there components of this new street that you feel are most vital?

- The West terminus looks problematic with all these roads coming together in one location. I also doubt that Light Rail as planned by Sound Transit will be a reality between now and 2030 – however, this corridor could be a vital link between Redmond (Microsoft) and downtown Bellevue with a local trolley or electric bus line.
 - None. Light Rail has been rejected by voters. There is no need for expanding NE 16th.
 - What about big trucks?
 - It is important to have businesses especially 24-hour establishments to provide services for people using the transportation and especially to prevent the opportunity for build up of crime in the after-hours.
 - Not sold on the idea yet.
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Environment

How do you see environmental sustainability being integrated into new development in Bel-Red? What areas do you see as priorities for stream enhancement and open space?

- I would want to see stream enhancement combined with useable open space and trails.
- First, identify the benefits to Bellevue citizens for stream enhancements; then propose changes that are cost effective through normal City procedures.
- The arts should be a great partner in stewarding the environmental respect/value of spreading the issues to many audiences who might not otherwise pay attention to the issues.
- Preserving our streams as a green amenity is very important to us.
- This should be a top priority. All streams should be revived. Open space should be created in a variety of locations and not concentrated in one place.
- I like the idea of opening up the streams and bringing them back to their natural state, with trails & bridges next to the streams.

Parks and Open Spaces

Do the park and open space policies plan for an appropriate parks system in Bel-Red? What park ideas are most important for Bel-Red? Is there anything missing from the Bel-Red plan for parks and open space?

- Strongly in favor of much needed parks and sustainable turf sports fields that can support the area's growing sports teams and encourage youth to lead a healthy lifestyle. Provide some covered areas with walls where youth are encouraged to play lacrosse, one of the fastest growing youth programs in the area.
- Ensure alignment with Bellevue Boys + Girls Club as they plan to build a new facility in the next years.
- Open space and trails along stream corridors – pocket parks in residential neighborhoods.
- No, no parks are required.
- We already have a great tradition of beautiful parks.
- Looks good
- As far as I can tell, the overall plan is good

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- Natural parks, areas where you can't see buildings so that you feel like you are away from the City.
 - Useful parks, for team sports, soccer fields, skate park, rapids for kayake practice, outdoor theater
 - Farming- like the blueberry farm at Larson Lake.
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Housing

What priorities do you see in providing housing in Bel-Red that is affordable?

- It's a fact that Bellevue needs affordable and workforce housing. It's also a fact that in this market it can't be provided without incentives, tax breaks and some form of development funding. If the City wants to succeed in this goal it should establish a dollar/sq. ft fee on all new commercial space constructed in the Bel-Red area that exceeds the base FAR and height limits. This money would be used in public/private partnerships to develop the infrastructure and subsidize the housing cost.
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- None. Land rent values based on the City's rezone scheme will ensure that there will be no "affordable" housing. And since the City's rezone scheme will eliminate most of the areas employment, there will be no "market" demand for such housing.
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- Artists of every type will be more likely to have a presence in Bellevue if they don't have to live in Seattle or farther North or South.
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- Affordable housing is a very high priority. Presently our teachers, police, fire and food service workers cannot afford to live in Bellevue. Please provide a significant addition to affordable housing units.
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- Tax breaks and incentives if voluntary, or as one choice among mandatory contribution to amenities, historically have not worked. Mandatory or inclusionary zoning does work. Kirkland, for instance, has a package of incentives that no one has used. The only way to insure workforce housing or affordable housing is to require it. Think how high density housing near transportation nodes, coupling housing with parking etc. and keeping parking requirements low. Make sure housing below 80% AMI is included, most wage earners are below 80% AMI
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- Perhaps to keep costs down, affordable housing could be provided with only limited or no parking – except for visitors or service providers.
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- What schools will the people in these homes use? What grocery store will they shop at? We already have an overload of people in this area. What will keep this area looking nice in 20 years? Will the people be able to maintain there homes? Will the people be able to pay their taxes in 20 years? Are we providing housing for the foreign worker or for U.S. citizens?
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Arts and Culture

What kinds of arts and cultural activity do you see happening throughout the Bel-Red area? What kinds of additional arts and cultural uses make sense to locate near the PNB school in an arts district?

- Eastside Children's Museum
 - Consumer generated arts program installation
 - Independent film making
 - Involve the community in juried public art
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- No. Arts and "cultural" activity should be located in the downtown core, not in a remote location like the Bel-Red Corridor.
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- Great to have affordable rehearsal space, performance space suitable for dance and affordable for non-profits, especially for student performance - needs to have either good parking or good public transportation. Out ballet studio (Ballet Arts Center) is specially important for the immediate residential area as there are now more and more *** children to benefit from a nearby facility. The Bel-Red area would draw adults and older students from downtown who could use public transportation.
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- Large windowed art studios, so people walking by could watch the artist working or classes.
 - Fountains around the area.
 - Coffee shops with seating inside & out. Outside areas that could be used for entertainers while people watched while they were out shopping, etc.
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Transportation

What transportation improvements – roads, transit, pedestrians, bicycles – in Bel-Red do you see as priorities?

- This area has substandard roads. As it redevelops it should be brought up to standard with curbs, sidewalks and bike lanes where needed. New roads in the residential areas should be as narrow as possible to reduce speeds and limit pavement.
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- None. The roads/arterial concept is far too costly, is not needed, and will only increase peak-hour traffic congestion and lead to failed intersections.
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- Are park & ride facilities planned near the transit stations?
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- Transit
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- We would like to see a greater emphasis on public transit. The proposed light rail stations are a good start. Increased use of buses is also highly desirable.
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- Focus on high occupancy transit and limit it to affordable workforce housing near parking or transit nodes that are not as desirable to market rate developers. This will allow the workforce who works in the commercial spaces or elsewhere in Bellevue to walk or ride transit to their jobs and will eliminate car trips and parking needs.

- Priority should be to pedestrians, bicycles and transit. The area should not be broken up by new roadways for more vehicle traffic.

- I'm concerned with the amount of traffic this area will have and that there were no added on and off ramps to the freeways. All the cars/vehicles will feed out onto our existing roads to enter the freeways.
- I like the idea of more bike paths. I think you will get more people on bikes if they do not have to ride next to cars/vehicles. A 5 foot path next to a car lane is still very scary. I suggest separating bikes and cars.
- Make a bike trail that connects East with West. The whole length of the corridor.
- I like the idea of linking Bellevue and Redmond by light rail as well as by foot and bike paths.

Other

- The name "Bel-Red conjures up towns such as "Sea-Tac" and other less than desirable areas. Before the name "Bel-Red Corridor" becomes part of the community's vernacular, I would strongly [ask] the committee to revisit and consider changing the name of this project and subarea to something that more closely aligns with the committee's goals and intentions. This may be an opportunity to get community involvement and build energy around the project. For example, ask residents/businesses to vote on or come up with their own suggestions.

- Will the intersection of NE 16th and the Bel-Red Road be a signalized intersection?
- Will the intersection of NE 16th and 136th Ave. NE be a signalized intersection?
- When will cost estimates for public infrastructure be available for public review? Will cost estimates be life cycle costs, and will they include costs of condemning private property for roads, parks, stream improvements, etc?
- Since Bellevue's most recent Buildable-Lands-Report submittal to King County shows that the City has ample land with the proper zoning to support the City's growth targets, why does the City need to rezone the Bel-Red Corridor?
- Part of the City's original rationale for rezoning the Bel-Red Corridor was a very small, temporary decline in the area's employment. Since employment in the area has since recovered, why does the City need to rezone the Bel-Red Corridor?
- Since voters have rejected the extension of light rail transit (LRT) to the Eastside, doesn't the City need to re-examine their transportation and land-use analyses to evaluate traffic flows without LRT in the Bel-Red corridor?
- In the comments submitted to the City by WSDoT on the draft EIS for the Bel-Red Corridor, WSDoT noted that the State has no plans, schedule, or funding to support the revisions to the intersection of 124th Ave. NE and SR-520; they suggested that the City should re-evaluate their traffic analyses without the changes to this intersection as proposed by the City. Shouldn't the City perform new traffic and land-use analyses for

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the Bel-red corridor as suggested by WSDoT to show the impact of not having is intersection improved?

- Why is the draft plan for the Bel-Red area being developed/distributed before a new BROTS agreement is executed with the City of Redmond?
- Why isn't the draft plan for the Bel-Red area being developed and distributed after the City receives important information from several contractors assisting the City on the Bel-Red rezone (Inca Engineers, SNW Securities, Perteet, and perhaps others)?
- The City's "Downtown Plan Update" (June 2003) identifies the downtown core of the City, and it's immediately surrounding neighborhoods (Ashwood, city-center north and south, Bellevue Square, etc.) as the primary focus of future City growth, both in jobs and housing. The City's proposed rezone of the Bel-Red area is in direct conflict with this (Downtown) Plan; thus, why is it (the Bel-Red rezone) being pursued?
- What changes will be required to other subarea plans and transportation annexes to accommodate the City's proposed rezone for the Bel-Red area?

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- It may not be practical, but there should be no more development allowed at Lake Bellevue, with the idea that some or all of it may be returned to a natural state sometime in the future..

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- Don't build just to provide more housing. We already have too many people in this area.
 - At one point liked the concept of the Bel-Red corridor, but after listening to the different people at the open house, I'm not sold on the idea yet.
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