

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

April 3, 2008
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christina Coulter, Lynne Robinson, Jim Messner, Eileen Rasnack, Eve Stern, Berta Seltzer, Catherine Brallier, Dwayne Dilley, Diana Thompson, Gary Dickerman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Valentina Kiselev, Stephen Lam, Howard Katz, Marjorie Todd

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services; Kevin McDonald, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: David Joel, Tom Kennedy, Harriett Weiss, Mercer Island Senior Commission

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chair Robinson who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Valentina Kiselev, Stephen Lam, Howard Katz and Marjorie Todd.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 6, 2008

Chair Robinson referred to page 6 of the pages and noted that the elder abuse video shown to the Network was produced by the Kirkland Senior Council, not the city of Kirkland.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Seltzer. Second was by Ms. Rasnack and the motion carried unanimously.

3. DISCUSSION

A. Bel-Red Corridor Project Update

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald explained that the Bel-Red corridor project is focused on updating the Bel-Red subarea plan relative to land use, zoning, transportation, environmental enhancements, park and open space, recreation development, stream corridors, and arts. A steering committee appointed by the City Council met for two years to review existing conditions and to look at opportunities for redevelopment in the Bel-Red corridor. The corridor is home to a number of light industrial uses, many of which are choosing to leave the area based on market forces. The city concluded that the time was ripe for reexamining the land use pattern of the corridor. The final report of the steering committee was forwarded to the City Council in September.

Mr. McDonald said the 900-acre Bel-Red corridor is unique. It is sandwiched between the downtown core and the Overlake/Microsoft employment area yet is largely underdeveloped. The zoning pattern includes Light Industrial, General Commercial, and Office.

The steering committee developed and analyzed a series of four alternatives based on land use and transportation patterns. The preferred alternative they developed and included in the final report has a number of key components around the main organizing principle of the potential future light rail corridor and the three potential stations, which are near Overlake Hospital, near the current Safeway warehouse distribution facility, and near 130th Avenue NE. A station is also anticipated on the Redmond side of the line at the Overlake transit center.

Based on the eventual availability of transit service and the characteristics of the land, the steering committee recommended that a higher density mixed use land use pattern be developed around the station locations. For the node near the Safeway site, the primary land use focus will be Office, though it includes a significant housing component. For the node near 130th Avenue NE, the primary focus is on housing, with some retail and office included to support it.

In the interim years before light rail comes to the corridor, mass transit services will be handled by buses. As the area redevelops, more and more transit service will be provided. The current focus does not include park and ride lots because those tend to serve more of a regional function than a local function. Of primary importance will be the establishment of a link between the downtown, the new office developments in Bel-Red, and the Overlake/Microsoft campus areas.

Tom Kennedy, Mercer Island Senior Commission Chair, asked what form the housing in the corridor will take. Mr. McDonald said there will not be any single family detached housing units constructed. The focus will be on higher density land uses similar to what is occurring currently in downtown Mercer Island with several stories of residential above a retail base. At the planning level, the focus is not on whether the units will be apartments or condominiums but rather on the overall density of development. The buildings could be anywhere from three or four stories to eight or nine stories.

Commissioner Seltzer asked who will determine the mix of housing costs from low-income to what is available in downtown Bellevue and what incentives will be offered. Mr. McDonald said the Planning Commission will be providing a recommendation on the range of housing affordability and the bonuses or incentives that should be made available to the private sector to construct affordable housing. Ultimately the decision will be up to the City Council. The steering committee expressed a strong interest in incorporating affordable housing but felt it was beyond their level of expertise to devise formulas or bonuses. The Planning Commission is currently working on the issue and has been taking comments and recommendations from the public and from other boards and commissions.

Harriet Weiss, Mercer Island Senior Commission, asked how receptive Sound Transit and King County Metro have been to addressing the needs of regional transportation. Mr. McDonald said Sound Transit participated in every meeting of the steering committee and is very interested in the regional East Link rail service. Getting people to and from the light rail stations will primarily be the function of King County Metro. There will need to be some cooperation between the two agencies in terms of service, facilities and schedule coordination. There is policy direction for the city to take the lead in coordinating that work; it is in the best interest of Bellevue to have both the regional and local service providers working together.

Mr. Kennedy commented that the apartment and condominium buildings in downtown Mercer Island are limited to five stories. He suggested that they should be taller. Mr. McDonald said the Bel-Red steering committee wrestled with that issue as well. He explained that buildings above five or six stories require a different construction type that is more expensive and which must be able to be supported by the fire department. Bellevue fire has that capability, but Mercer Island may not.

Mr. McDonald shared with the Network images of the types of land use envisioned for the Bel-Red corridor, including townhouses fronting sidewalks; mixed use developments with retail on the ground level and housing units above; plazas with open courtyards, fountains and retail surrounding them; various neighborhood-scale services; and an active retail vibrancy. Wright Runstad, which purchased 37 acres of the Safeway distribution site, has developed a land use plan for the site that includes 1.5 million square feet of office and 600 residential units. Most of the parking will be underground, and the grid layout will be more like a downtown than a suburban office park and is very transit supportive.

Mr. McDonald allowed that the existing roadway network in the corridor was designed primarily to serve the light industrial uses; it does not provide for a lot of connectivity. A new and improved transportation network has been developed around the proposed new land uses. The system includes new and expanded roads, new and expanded transit facilities, and a significant investment in pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The infrastructure investments will be phased over time, beginning with those areas where land use is most likely to change first.

The major new street envisioned to run along NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street through the middle of the Bel-Red corridor coincides with the light rail corridor. He shared with the Network a drawing of what the roadway might look like with the light rail station platform in the middle, two lanes of traffic in each direction, on-street parking, street trees, a ped-bike pathway, and a westbound frontage road with more on-street parking and street trees. The estimate is that 197 feet of right-of-way will be needed, and the city and Sound Transit will need to work together to acquire the property; that will be expensive because the land is not vacant.

The land use vision is not dependent on having light rail; it can all be supported by bus transit. However, at some point the light rail will come to the corridor so planning for it and preserving the necessary right-of-way is necessary.

The natural environment is a key component of the redevelopment strategy. The intent is to improve the existing natural environment. The plan includes habitat enhancement for fish and wildlife, a lot of open space and trails, green infrastructure, and using natural features as an amenity for people who will live and work in the area.

The parks department has been in on the work developing a vision for facilities that will serve both the Bel-Red neighborhood and the city as a whole. The vision includes expanding on the existing parks, such as Highland, and taking advantage of the streamside opportunities to provide access and environmental enhancements.

The steering committee did not overlook opportunities to include an arts component. In fact, their preferred alternative includes an arts district. While not clearly defined, the vision was for an area in which artists could produce and sell art and where there would be cultural facilities. The Planning Commission is working on policies and zoning that would enable the arts district to happen.

Mr. McDonald said the Planning Commission has the reigns of the Bel-Red corridor project and has been receiving input from a variety of sources, including the Transportation

Commission, the Environmental Services Commission, the Human Services Commission, the Arts Commission and the Parks and Community Services Board. A joint Commission meeting has tentatively been slated for May 15. An open house is planned for that same evening so the public can see what the product is. The Planning Commission has also tentatively scheduled a public hearing for May 28. It is hoped that the Planning Commission will be able to transmit its recommendation to the City Council by the end of July.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly noted that early in the process the Human Services Commission provided the steering committee with a GIS map showing the location of human service providers in the corridor. She asked if that issue came up in any of the discussions. Mr. McDonald said it did come up and there was a lot of interest on the part of the steering committee toward preserving both general service uses and human service uses within the corridor. He said it is his understanding that human service providers will not be prohibited from remaining where they are or expanding as the corridor redevelops.

Mr. Dickerman asked how existing businesses will survive as the area redevelops. Mr. McDonald said any use currently operating in the area will be allowed to remain in place and in business for as long as they want as redevelopment occurs; the only exception would be along the roadway corridors where property is needed to street rights-of-way. The steering committee was clear about not wanting to see uses moved out so that others could move in.

Mr. Dilley asked how long it will for the area to redevelop. Mr. McDonald said there is no way to predict that. The plan has a horizon of 2030 and will be entirely market driven.

Commissioner Seltzer asked if there has been any talk about needing additional schools as a result of the corridor redevelopment. Mr. McDonald said there have been regular talks with the school district throughout the process. The anticipation is that by 2030 there will be 5000 new housing units in the corridor. The school district believes that housing units of the type envisioned will not add that many children to the school system. They have indicated no need to reserve a place on the map for a new school.

B. BNOA Marketing/Promotional Material

Chair Robinson provided the Network members with copies of promotional materials developed and used by the Kirkland Senior Council. She said she was most impressed with the two-panel poster board that can be displayed at events. The first panel provides a written synopsis of the group, while the second contains graphics.

Ms. VonWald recommended putting together a group to work on the details.

It was agreed to put the item on the agenda for the next Network meeting.

C. Eastside Human Services Forum Delegates

Ms. VonWald noted that the Eastside Human Services Forum has formed an older adult focus group. That group has met once to date, and the second meeting is scheduled for April 22 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Bellevue City Hall.

It was agreed that Chair Robinson, Ms. Seltzer and Ms. Rasnack would serve as delegates and attend the meeting.

4. BREAK

5. STAFF REPORT

Ms. VonWald made available a revised copy of the Network workplan, reformatted and with typos corrected.

Ms. VonWald reported that the Network was represented at the Human Services Commission meeting on April 1 where the annual update was provided. She said the Powerpoint presentation will be shared on April 8 with the Parks and Community Services Board.

The Human Services Commission commented that they would like to receive more regular updates in addition to the annual update. Ms. VonWald said she will be making sure they receive copies of the Network's meeting minutes.

Chair Robinson suggested that quarterly updates would be appropriate.

The Network will be providing the City Council with an annual update on May 5.

Ms. VonWald reported that on April 15 there will be a joint meeting of the human services commissions and advisory boards from Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah and Mercer Island. The meeting will be at City Hall and will include a presentation from ARCH on affordable housing, and a presentation on the East King County Plan to End Homelessness. She said any Network member wanting to attend should let her know as soon as possible.

Ms. Thompson asked to what extent the Human Services Commission has been involved in the affordable housing issue for the Bel-Red corridor. Ms. O'Reilly said the Commission has been contacted but has not played an integral role in the process. The Commission sent its chair to deliver a letter to the Planning Commission with comments on the need for affordable housing at 80 percent and lower. She said she will make the letter available to the Network as well.

Ms. Brallier stressed the need for the Network to be attending the Planning Commission meetings to advocate for affordable housing. She said she has attended several of the meetings when there was no one in the audience but builders. Ms. VonWald said the next meeting of the Planning Commission is April 16 and suggested it would be appropriate for the housing subcommittee to attend present a letter.

6. KIRKLAND SENIOR COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

Ms. Thompson said the first joint meeting with the Kirkland Senior Council was early in March and the second is slated for April 16. The group discussed what projects to be involved in. The conclusion reached was that the body should vote on two projects. The Vial of Life project was started in California. It involves placing a sticker on the door that tells everyone there is a container on top of the refrigerator that contains information that would be extremely useful in a medical emergency. It has since been found out that Overlake Hospital is working on a similar program; they have found that the Vial of Life program is not recognized locally by emergency services providers because the medical data is often out of date. Overlake Hospital is working on how to develop an electronic database that could be kept in the house so the EMT team could have access to accurate information right away.

Ms. Thompson suggested that in any case seniors should have on their refrigerators a document that includes a list of all medications being taken and numbers to call in case of an emergency.

Ms. O'Reilly said she and Ms. VonWald were contacted about a month ago by Visiting Nurse Services of King County which has received a small grant to develop a medical registry for

vulnerable populations. She said the organization was referred to Bellevue's Emergency Operations Center staff. The key issue for emergency management staff is what expectations will be placed on them to keep the information updated.

Ms. Stern said Microsoft HealthVault is a program focused on having information readily accessible. Protected by a password, the information includes everything from an advanced directive to a living will, to a healthcare proxy and a durable power of attorney. She agreed that not all seniors are tech savvy and that for a variety of reasons it is not always a good idea to have the information printed out and hung on the refrigerator. What is key is having all the information some place where it is physically accessible. HealthVault is a free service offered by Microsoft and to the extent possible Redmond and Bellevue should be taking advantage of it.

Ms. Thompson said the other issue discussed for possible joint collaboration with the Kirkland Senior Council was a fall prevention project. Kirkland already has a fall prevention video and has proposed included a tag at the beginning and the end of it saying the project is a joint collaboration of Kirkland and Bellevue, and to launch a publicity campaign to make people aware of methods for preventing falls.

Ms. Seltzer noted that Overlake Senior Services already has a fall prevention program.

Ms. VonWald reported that Bellevue Fire recently received a grant from EMS to do a fall prevention program. The department is working with Overlake on an evidenced-based exercise program.

Ms. O'Reilly added that she and Sam Esadean, director of the Home Repair Program, will be taking fall prevention training at the North Bellevue Community Center in May. When Mr. Esadean visits seniors in their homes to see what work needs to be done, he will take along his fall prevention checklist.

Motion to support collaborating with the Kirkland Senior Council in developing a personal health record project was made by Ms. Stern. Second was by Ms. Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Transportation

Mr. Dickerman said the subcommittee has been meeting with the Eastside Easy Rider Collaboration on putting into action the projects that have been awarded funding. The group is working to reform its vision and develop a roadmap for moving ahead.

Mr. Dickerman reported that the circulator project has been tabled, though the subcommittee remains a strong proponent of it.

Ms. Seltzer said the thing that came out of the meeting with the Eastside Human Services Forum was that acting and speaking regionally will yield a much bigger voice. The organization will work to get Redmond, Kirkland and Bellevue acting with a single voice for Eastside concerns.

Mr. Dickerman said the Bus Buddy/Travel Ambassador project is being rolled out with Hopelink. A press release has been put out, and ad copy for recruiting has been written. A Powerpoint presentation for training is being developed. The pilot project will focus on only six bus buddies.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Eastside Human Services Forum does not intend to serve as the voice for older adults on the Eastside. The idea is to help promote what elders on the Eastside may need or want. The organization exists to serve as the voice for human services on the Eastside.

B. Housing

Ms. Rasnack distributed copies of the letter written by the housing subcommittee. The subcommittee has identified four things to be highlighted for the Planning Commission: making sure there is housing affordable, making sure there is housing for seniors, including universal design, and making sure there are mandatory incentives. She asked for approval of the letter by the Network before submitting it to the Planning Commission.

It was agreed the letter should reference the need for very low- and low-income housing.

Motion to approve the letter was made Ms. Stern. Second was by Mr. Dickerman and the motion carried unanimously.

It was agreed to present the letter in person to the Planning Commission on April 16.

C. Support Services

Ms. Coulter said the support services subcommittee has drafted a letter to be sent out directly to the neighborhood associations offering short presentation about available services to older adults in Bellevue and/or facilitate Gatekeeper training for the associations. She said the Network will need to approve the letter before it is sent out.

Motion to approve the letter was made by Ms. Seltzer. Second was by Mr. Dickerman and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Coulter said members of the subcommittee will be meeting with Debbie Lacey and the Eastside Human Services Forum senior subcommittee which is looking at creating a senior resource guide.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

David Joel, Mercer Island Senior Commission, thanked the Network along with the Kirkland Senior Council for making it easier to get the Mercer Island Senior Commission started. He said both chairs have been very helpful. He explained that the Mercer Island group has been allowed to meet only four times in developing the body; a request to meet monthly has been submitted to the City Council, which has not yet seen the importance of having the group. The fact is that 61 percent of the voters in the last election were 55 or older.

Chair Robinson told Mr. Joel that part of the mission of the Network is to work with other Eastside bodies that work with the senior population.

9. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Robinson reviewed the list of topics to be discussed at upcoming meetings.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.