

8 December 2007
2-1000-10

Transportation Commission
Parks and Community Services Board
Environmental Services Commission
Planning Commission
City of Bellevue
Bellevue, Washington

cc: City Council, City of Bellevue

Subject: Comments on City Staff's Proposed Outline/Content for Bel-Red
Corridor Subarea Plan

Reference: a. Memo, Joyce Nichols, Utility Policy Advisor, to
Environmental Services Commission dated 27 November 2007
b. Memo, Kevin McDonald, transportation Planner, to
Transportation Commission dated 5 December 2007

Dear Commissioners and Board Members:

The Bel-Red implementation project is Bellevue's "Proposition 1;" as such, it deserves the same kind of public disclosure and debate that attended that controversial issue. However, the Bellevue staff's schedule and procedure for implementing this project is far too compressed to enable the public to become informed and aware of the impact of the staff's proposed rezone scheme. Thus, the public is not able to make informed comments to the City's commissions, board and Council on the blizzard of proposals emanating from the staff. Nevertheless, it is important to provide some counterbalance to the outlandish claims and proposals being advanced by the City staff.

It should be recognized from the start that the proposed scheme for rezoning the Bel-Red area (corridor, if you like) is the *Bellevue City staff's* proposal; it is not a concept or scheme that was developed by the Bel-Red Project Steering Committee. That committee only endorsed and slightly edited the proposals that were developed by the staff and the City's major sub-contractors (Crandall Arambula, CH2M Hill, and Leland Consulting Group). *There was essentially no public participation in the Committee's deliberations, and virtually no input from the estimated 2000 business operators and owners in the area. Moreover, no Bel-Red*

was a member of the Bel-Red Project Steering Committee. (See attached tables 4 and 5 for information on public and business/property owner participation.)

The only rationale ever advanced by the staff for their proposed rezone was a slight dip in the area's employment during a short time period (1995-2004). As is now well known, *this rationale is a compete fallacy, and area employment has now surpassed former levels.* The City staffers have also complained about the area's 'aging' appearance, the sale of some Safeway property, and the departure of the former King County Journal. Amazing that such trivial rationale can be parlayed by the staff into Bellevue's 'City of Oz'!

At present, there is no exhaustive, definitive list of the public infrastructure and services required to implement the staff's proposed rezone scheme. There are no life-cycle cost estimates for the infrastructure and services required to implement the staff's scheme. There is no tax or funding plan available that supports the required infrastructure and services for the staff's scheme.

The staff's proposed rezone for the Bel-Red corridor is nothing more than a clone of Downtown Bellevue designed to increase tax revenues to the City. If developed according to the staff's scheme, the area will have a residential population identical to Downtown: 70% high-income single persons; the balance will be high-income childless couples.

Land rents resulting from the staff's proposed rezone will force out many small businesses, and result in housing costs similar to Downtown Bellevue, i.e., \$700-1000/square-foot (2007 \$s). Such housing costs will ensure that there will be no affordable housing built in the area.

The City departments have neither proposed nor accomplished any substantive/significant improvements in the Bel-Red stream network or the area's riparian areas. If the staff wants to rehabilitate these features, they can initiate these improvements under existing City land use, code, and Comprehensive Plan provisions. There is no need to rezone the entire Bel-Red corridor in order to improve the area's streams and riparian areas. Nor has there been any public discussion of, or demand for a major City-wide sports facility in the Bel-Red area.

The staff has provided you with a kind of draft concept document for their proposed version of the "Bel-Red Subarea Plan." Apparently the intent is to flesh this skeleton with more specific/extensive language and policies based on feedback from you. There is no intent to solicit input on these writings from the general public; indeed,

the staff has gone to great lengths to ensure that the public is excluded from the process by implementing their version of Hadrian's Wall.

In spite of this hostile treatment by the staff, I've made an incomplete attempt to review the version of the concept plan provided to the Transportation Commission for their 13 December 2007 meeting. My comments on this version of the staff's plan are attached. I encourage you to ignore all the staff's writings, and start with fresh approaches of your own.

I urge you to consider my comments, and to reject the staff's draft of a new Bel-Red subarea plan to replace the existing Bel-Red/Northup plan. Further, I urge you to request the staff to suspend any further presentations to you on this subject until they provide: (1), an exhaustive, definitive list of the public **infrastructure** and **services** required to implement the staff's proposed rezone scheme; (2), **life-cycle cost estimates** for the infrastructure and services required to implement the staff's scheme; and (3), their proposed **tax or funding plan** that supports the required infrastructure and services for their scheme.

I would appreciate any comments that you might care to send along.

Sincerely; happy holidays; RSVP,


David F. Plummer

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Attachments:

Comments on Proposed outline/content for the Bel-Red Corridor
Subarea Plan

Table 4: Public Involvement in Bel-Red Project

Table 5: Major Landowners in Bel-Red Corridor and Participation in
Owners Panels

Comments on Proposed Outline/Content for the Bel-Red Corridor Subarea Plan

1. General

1.0 Retain the current name for the subarea plan ("Bel-Red/Northup") as this is consistent with the naming convention for the subareas of the City's comprehensive plan; the name would also convey more accurately the geographic area covered by the plan.

1.1 Delete all areas east of 148th Avenue NE. The two minor areas included in the staff's scheme have no relationship to the Bel-Red/Northup area; these areas should be retained in the Crossroads Subarea Plan. This will enhance the awareness of residents in this (Crossroads) subarea of the staff's plan to permit intensive zoning in their area, and may help solicit more informed citizen input. Also, the impact of the staff's plan to rezone the two small areas east of 148th Ave. NE can be considered in a more integrated fashion with the major redevelopment planned for the Crossroads shopping area.

1.2 Delete all references to light rail transit (LRT) as a majority of the Region's citizens within the Sound-Transit/RTID service area have rejected this form of public transit. Also, LRT plans/provisions for the area should be delayed until the State legislature and Sound Transit determine and publicize their future plans for this type of public transit in the Puget Sound Region.

1.3 Specifically define/identify which neighborhoods in the Bel-Red/Northup area will be improved to reduce the impact of cut-through traffic generated by increased development in the area. Also, specifically identify the types of improvements that will be deployed, the expected locations of the deployments, and the improvements expected to be achieved.

1.4. *Delete any plans/policies that would reduce or modify mode-split targets and level-of-service (LOS) standards for the Bel-Red/Northup subarea. This area should be treated exactly the same as all other areas of the City.*

2. Bel-Red/Northup Subarea Plan

Delete all staff prepared text, and change to incorporate the substance of the following:

2.0 Overall Goal

Change to read: *Develop an area that can provide a wide variety of commercial and light-industrial goods and services to all Bellevue citizens and to the Puget Sound Region while allowing it to evolve according to normal market forces and sustainable environmental policies.*

2. Bel-Red/Northup Subarea Plan, continued

2.1 Land Use Goals

- a. Develop a land use pattern driven by normal market forces while recognizing the importance of sustainable environmental and economic development;*
- b. Delete all references to residential development in the area;*
- c. Retain emphasis/policies from the current Bel-Red/Northup subarea plan to promote development consistent with existing zoning and land-use policies for the subarea;*
- d. Encourage continuation of existing and new uses consistent with existing zoning and land-use policies for the subarea;*
- e. Encourage rehabilitation of the stream network and riparian areas where it is cost-effective to do so;*
- f. Retain existing zoning along the north and south boundaries of the area to ensure effective transition between the area's permitted uses and the nearby residential areas.*

3. Urban Design

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

3.0 Goal

Change to read: *Encourage evolution of the area's built environment so that it is consistent with the light-industrial, commercial and business/service uses permitted by existing zoning, while improving the area's stream network and riparian areas. This should include low building heights consistent with light-industrial, commercial and business/service activities, while introducing visually interesting and attractive, human-scale shapes and sizes to enhance the area's appearance and economic vitality. Such developments should be encouraged and placed so that they do not impact or detract from views of nearby and distant topographic features from nearby residential areas.*

3.1 Policies

Delete all the staff-prepared text, and change to incorporate the substance of the following:

- a. Encourage introduction of mature natural vegetation (plants and trees, etc.);*

3. **Urban Design**, continued

3.1 Policies, continued

b. Provide sufficient and safe parking areas for employees' vehicles (automobiles, bicycles, etc.), and for vehicles of consumers of goods and services provided by the area's businesses;

c. Ensure deployment of an adequate road/arterial network to support the light-industrial, commercial and business/service activities in the area, and which will enable efficient bus transit service to serve the area;

d. Encourage development of new/improved structures needed for the light-industrial, commercial and business/service uses that have low floor-area ratios and low-profiles.

4. **Environment**

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

4.0 Goal

Change to read: *Improve the built and natural environment in the Bel-Red area in a manner that does not contribute to global climate change, which minimizes to the maximum practical extent, the rejection of heat and other pollutants to the atmosphere, and minimizes the impact of development on surrounding neighborhoods.*

4.1 Encourage rehabilitation of the areas' streams and riparian areas where it is cost-effective to do so.

4.2 Require preparation of cost/benefit and cost effectiveness analyses to support environmental planning and implementation in the area.

4.3 Encourage natural drainage practices, including on-site treatment of storm- and surface-water runoff when it is cost-effective to do so.

4.4 Encourage new and renovated buildings to be constructed to promote cost-effective: water use; effluent-discharge controls; and energy use.

5. **Parks and Open Space**

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

5.0 Goal

Change to read: *Encourage property owners to create and maintain small/pocket parks and open spaces for use primarily by their employees, but which can also serve nearby residents. Discourage development of large parks and open spaces except where it is cost effective to do so in conjunction with stream and riparian area restoration and enhancement. No large/regional parks*

5. **Parks and Open Space**, continued

5.0 Goal, continued

are contemplated for the area, as such parks will only lead to traffic congestion within and around the area.

5.1 Provide walking areas and trails to encourage area employees and nearby residents to use non-motorized means of transportation.

5.2 Use the same level-of-service criteria for pocket-park and open-space development as apply to the City as a whole.

5.3 No provision or plans are contemplated for a major City-wide recreation or sports facility, as there is no demand for such a facility, and its location in the area would only add to increased traffic and would require condemnation of private property.

6. **Housing**

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

6.0 Goal:

Change to read: *Residential housing is not contemplated for the area, as residential uses and the light industrial, business and services permitted under existing zoning are generally not compatible. Rezoning to accommodate residential housing is to be discouraged, as it will only drive up land rents, and lead to a gradual elimination of services and businesses that depend on relatively low land rents to be economically viable and profitable.*

6.1 Recognize that no credible market analysis has been performed on the demand for residential housing in the area. City staff has arbitrarily assumed that the area can accommodate 5000 housing units, but the City's current buildable lands report clearly shows that there is no need to rezone land in the City to accommodate any such use in the Bel Red area. The City's buildable lands report clearly shows that the City has sufficient land under existing zoning to accommodate City housing/population growth through 2022.

7. Arts and Culture

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

7.0 Goal:

Change to read: *Recognize the importance of centralizing performing and visual arts venues in the Bellevue Downtown area, while allowing opportunity for small arts-related activities to take advantage of the lower-cost facilities in the Bel-Red area.*

7.1 The Downtown area will provide ample opportunities for location of major arts and cultural activities; thus, no provision for similar facilities are needed in the Bel-Red area.

7.2 Because facilities for arts-related activities could benefit from the lower land rents in the Bel-Red area, provision for such activities should be made in the permitted uses of the various zoning codes applicable to the area.

8. Transportation

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

8.0 Goal:

Change to read: *Improve the area's arterial/road network to enhance light industrial, commercial and business activities in the area allowed by the existing zoning codes, and to facilitate access and service by bus transit.*

8.1 No new **major** arterial/road developments are required; however, provision should be made for completing some of the area's arterials/roads to enhance the efficiency of light industrial, commercial and business activities permitted by existing zoning.

8.2 Improve sidewalks along all streets to encourage pedestrian use.

8.3 Provide environmentally friendly trails and paths to improve access to pocket parks and other public open spaces by area employees, and nearby residents.

8.4 There is no need for uneconomic rail-type transit systems, as such systems consume too much land, and are environmentally unfriendly due to their large demand for energy resources, and other aspects of their deployment and operation.

8.5 Provide reasonable parking facilities for area employees and customers who use the services provided by area businesses.

9. Neighborhoods/Districts

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

9.0 This topic is not applicable to the Bel-Red area as only activities related to light industrial, commercial and business activities contemplated under existing zoning will be permitted, and no residential development is to be expected.

10. Interjurisdictional Coordination

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

10.0 Continue coordination with the City of Redmond via the BROTS Interlocal Agreement, and other initiatives to ensure that the City and Redmond harmonize their planning and implementations for the Bel-Red/Overlake areas.

11. Implementation

Delete all staff-prepared text and revise to incorporate the substance of the following:

11.0 In guiding the evolution of the Bel-Red area in consonance with normal market forces, the City should follow existing land-use regulations and codes.

11.1 The City should initiate cost-effective proposals to enhance the area's stream network and riparian areas, while recognizing the normal objectives of the area's property owners.

11.2 No new development schemes, codes or other initiatives are expected to be required to guide, and improve the development of the Bel-Red area.

Table 4. "Public" Involvement in Bel-Red Project

| Meeting Date | Type of Meeting/Other | Est. No. of 'Pub.' Attendees | No. of Public Comments | Comments |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 8-Aug-05 | Interview via telephone or in meeting | 40 | 0 | Interviews of so-called "stakeholders" by Leland Consulting Group prior to start of Project |
| 27-Oct-05 | Steer. Comm. | 5-10 (?) | 0 | |
| 9-Nov-05 | Public Workshop (EIS Scoping Mtg) | 25-40 (?) | N/A | Attendees were organized into small groups and responded to scripted questions from Staff; no opportunity for public comments to entire group. |
| 1-Dec-05 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15 (?) | 1 | |
| 19-Jan-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15 (?) | 1 | |
| 2-Feb-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15 (?) | 2 | |
| 2-Mar-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15 (?) | 4 | |
| 6-Apr-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15(?) | 7 | |
| 18-Apr-06 | Open House | 25-30 (?) | 0 | Attendees wandered around room and asked questions or made comments to staff. |
| 4-May-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15(?) | 0 | Special meeting of Steer. Comm. for business and property owners; public could attend, but not participate or comment. |
| 16-May-06 | Series of 4 Bus. & Prop Owner Panels | 3-5(?) | 0 | Public could attend but not participate or comment. |
| 1-Jun-06 | Steer. Comm. | 15-20(?) | 3 | No 'map' of no-action alternate. |
| 6-Jun-06 | Series of 3 Bus. & Prop. Owner Panels | 3-5(?) | 0 | Public could attend, but not participate or comment. |
| 8-Jun-06 | Public Meeting | 40-60 (?) | 32 Questions | Written comments ?? |
| 12-Jun-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-12(?) | 0 | No public comments permitted |

Table 4, continued

| Meeting Date | Type of Meeting/Other | Est. No. of 'Pub.' Attendees | No. of Public Comments | Comments |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 29-Jun-06 | Steer. Comm. | 8-10 | 4 | |
| 14-Nov-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-12 | 5 | |
| 7-Dec-06 | Steer. Comm. | 10-12 | 3 | 1 comment from Sound Transit Rep. |
| 1-Feb-07 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15 | 3 | |
| 15-Feb-07 | Pub. Hearing on DEIS | ~50 | 12 | |
| 1-Mar-07 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15 | 5 | |
| 14-Mar-07 | Staff Meetings w/ Bus. & Prop. Owners | None; ca 39 Bus/Prop Owners | 0 | Public could attend, but not comment or participate. |
| 20-Mar-07 | Staff Meetings w/individuals | 17 Citizens | ca 75, 20% were questions | Scripted Q&A sessions; no opportunity for presentations by public. |
| 29-Mar-07 | Steer. Comm. "Retreat" | Unknown; no minutes taken | 0 | Public could attend, but not comment or participate. |
| 25-Apr-07 | Steer. Comm. | 10-20 | 6 | 1 comment from Sound Transit Representative |
| 3-May-07 | Steer. Comm. | Unknown | 6 | |
| 13-Jun-07 | Steer. Comm. | 10-15? | 3 | |
| 26-Jul-07 | Steer. Comm. | Unknown | 2 | |
| 6-Sep-07 | Steer. Comm | Unknown | 7 | |

Source: Meeting minutes for number of comments; attendance estimated.

Table 5. Business and Property Owners Attending Special Meetings to Obtain Input on Land Use in Bel-Red Corridor

| Land/Property/ Business Owner | Property/Business Owner Attended Meeting of | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | % of Total Bel-Red Area Owned | 16-May 2006 #1 | 16-May 2006 #2 | 16-May 2006 #3 | 6-Jun 2006 #1 | 6-Jun 2006 #2 | 14-Mar 2007 #1 | 14-Mar 2007 #2 | 14-Mar 2007 #3 | 14-Mar 2007 #4 |
| Safeway | 5.1 | | | x | | | | x | | |
| Barrier Motors | 5.1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Wright Runstad | 4 | | | | | | x | x | | x |
| City of Bellevue | 2.9 | | | | | | | | | |
| King County | 2.8 | | | | | | | | | |
| Coca Cola | 2.2 | | x | | | x | | x | | |
| Brenner Const. | 1.5 | | | | | | | | | |
| Shurgard | 1.4 | | | | | | | | | |
| Fred Meyer | 1.3 | | | | | | | | | |
| Regency Tower Corp. | 1.3 | | | | | | | | | |
| NE 20th St. Propert. | 1.2 | | | | | | | | | |
| F-MAC Highland Pk. | 1.2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Willamette Industries | 1.1 | | | | | | | | | |
| C/O Eproperty Tax, Inc | 1.1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Cadman | 1.1 | | x | | | | | | | |
| JSH Properties | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Lowe's | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Sternoff Development | 1 | x | | | | | | | | |
| Robertson Developm't | 0.8 | | | | | | | | | |
| Evergreen Center | 0.7 | | x | | x | x | | | | |
| Mayer's Group | 0.7 | | | | | | | | | |
| Eastside Dom. Viloence | ? | | x | | | | | | | |
| Represent At Work | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Chulsky Auto Repair | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Kobe West Properties | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Schwab family business | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Petrisor office property | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Star Rentals/Industires | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Kelly's Autobody | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Fick residence | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Nickols Realty | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Forum East | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Greg Newhall business | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| T. Woosley/Brierwood Ctr | ? | x | x | | | x | | | | x |
| Wallace Properties | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Campus Office Park | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Sherman Development | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Roger White business | ? | x | | | x | | | | | |
| Burnstead Const.Pine For. | ? | | x | | | | | | | x |
| Lk Bell. Water Qualit. Assc | ? | | x | | | | | | | |
| Cesar Caycedo, sm. Bus. | ? | x | | | | | | | | |
| Auto Logic | ? | | x | | | x | | x | | |
| Lk Bell. Condo Assoc. | ? | | | 2 | x | | | x | | |

Table 5, continued

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Will Knedlick prop. owner | ? | | | x | | | | | | |
| Mike Yuhl prop. owner | ? | | | x | x | | | x | | |
| P&C Koch prop. owner | ? | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| C. Esmorris prop. Ownr | ? | | | x | | | | | | |
| Legacy Real Estate | ? | | | x | | | | x | | |
| Columbia West Properties | ? | | | | x | | | | | |
| Rod Johnson property | ? | | | | x | | | | | |
| Kelson Distributors | ? | | | | | x | | x | | |
| Aamco Transmission | ? | | | | | x | | | | |
| Eastside Transmission | ? | | | | | x | | | | |
| Robles Marshall Arts | ? | | | | | x | | | | |
| Farmers Ins. Office mgr | ? | | | | | x | | | | |
| Langton/Spieth Consult. | (See Wright Runstad) | | | | | | | | | |
| Len's automotive | ? | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| Chown Hardware | ? | | | | | | | x | | |
| Dr. Lynch, & assoc. | ? | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| users of office space | | | | | | | | | | |
| Robert Hale & Co. | ? | | | | | | | x | | |
| L. Fu Acupuncture Clinic | ? | | | | | | | x | | |
| R. Coe & S. Parker-Dixon, medical clinic | ? | | | | | | | | 2 | |
| Dave Peek offices | ? | | | | | | | x | | |
| Chris Lang, prop. ownr. | ? | | | | | | | x | | |
| Bel-Red Design Center | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| Eastside Staple and Nail | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| Patricia Halpin lessor | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| J. Magnussen Sr. & Jr. | ? | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Ironworks Gym | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| LWR Associates | ? | | | | | | | | | |
| Eide Construction | ? | | | | | | | | | |
| Sherwood Shopping Cntr. | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| Crestview Develpiment | ? | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| R. White, property owner | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| D. Robertson, prop. owner | ? | | | | | | | | | x |
| Jim Reid, property owner | ? | | | | | | | | | x |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|------|
| Total Attendees per Meeting | 18 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 11 |
| Total Businesses represented | | | | | | | | | 75 |
| Total attendance for all meetings | | | | | | | | | 87 |
| Total Businesses in Bel-Red Corridor | | | | | | | | | 2000 |
| Percent of Bel-Red Businesses represented | | | | | | | | | 3.8% |

Source: 1. Minutes of business/property owner panels; City of Bellevue, Bellevue, WA; 2006 and 2007 for number of attendees at individual meetings.

2. Total number of businesses in Bel-Red: City of Bellevue memo to Bel-Red Steering Committee, 24 February 2006.

Notes:

1. 'x' indicates one person attended meeting; a number is given if more than one person attended.
2. Percent of Bel-Red total property is a rough estimate; a '?' indicates the area of property owned is not known at time of preparation of this table.
3. Total businesses derived from page 1 of attachment to Source #2.