20 December 2007

City Council
City of Bellevue
Bellevue, Washington

Subject: Financing the Staff's Bel-Red Rezone Scheme

cc; Bellevue Transportation Commission
Bellevue Planning Commission
Bellevue Environmental Services Commission
✓Bellevue Parks and Community Services Board

Dear Council Members:

At your 10 December 2007 study session you heard from the presidents of the City's planning and community development department and the finance department speak extensively in their coded bureaucratic gibberish on how Bellevue, State and US citizens are going to pay the freight for the Staff's grand rezone scheme for the Bel-Red Corridor. Among their quiver of sharp-pointed arrows for striking at our citizen's pocketbooks, you heard:

1. The Bel-Red Corridor needs 'accelerated capital investment compared to other areas of the City' (no explanation was offered);
2. The area needs about $200-300 million in 'earmarks' for developers to support their profit goals;
3. Roads (and other assorted infrastructure) need to be deployed in advance of development to support developers' profit goals;
4. Costs for all the infrastructure should be shared among beneficiaries, and Bellevue citizens will reap grand and glorious benefits, so they should be prepared to shell out;
5. Costs for all the infrastructure should be charged to the City's (i.e., the citizens') MasterCard (Visa is OK, too) so they can be spread out over time, and not hurt the bottom lines of the developers;
6. Public investments should be 'leveraged to return the greatest public good' - does anyone know what the hell this means;
7. Utility rate increases can be an easy way for citizens to make contributions to the developers' bottom lines;
8. The SR-520/124th NE 'interchange' improvements are clearly a State problem, though it is essential to the staff's rezone scheme, so the City Council/staff will need to put this on their State (and probably Federal) agendas to make sure that costs for this boondoggle are equitably shared among all citizens of the United States;
9. The unique financing principles evolving from the staff's plan to have Bellevue, State, and US citizens pay for all infrastructure in the Bel-Red Corridor will have immediate and long-ranging application to all areas of the City, e.g., to building green streets and sidewalks in the Downtown area, to paying for the Downtown merry-go-round (called by some, the 'Downtown Circulator'); and,

10. The 5-lane NE16th Champs Elysees will move more cars from nowhere to nowhere (see attached traffic flow tabulations) while providing gigantic traffic relief to users of the Bel-Red Road and NE 8th - oopps! little mistake here (see below and attached Table T1), but don't sweat the details.

Judging by the few comments you offered in response to Mr. Terry's and Ms. Hawn's pitch, it seems like us citizens can definitely plan on being hit with a big tax bill for the staff's rezone scheme. And, as Councilmember Balducci put it, 'we wouldn't be doing this (the Bel-Red) unless there was a City-wide benefit.' I wonder what the 'benefit' is - more tax revenues to the City and greater profits to the Bel-Red land owners and developers??

Well, one thing you can be sure of, and prove to yourselves, the traffic analyses performed by CH2M Hill for the Bel-Red Corridor Project are deficient in that:

1. They do not forecast traffic flows likely to be experienced in the Corridor in the absence of light rail transit (LRT);
2. They do not explain how westbound PM peak traffic can increase from 579 vehicles/hour on 136th Place NE to 1334 vehicles/hour on NE 16th;
3. They do not explain how eastbound PM traffic on NE 16th can decrease from 1175 vehicles/hour to 684 vehicles/hour on 136th Place NE (where do the other 491 vehicles/hour from the eastbound flow on NE 16th go?);
4. They do not explain how the total traffic flow (westbound and eastbound) can double (from about 23,3000 vehicles/day to about 49,700 vehicles/day) without a major change to the I-405/NE 12th overpass, and major improvements to NE 12th from 112th NE to Bellevue Way NE;
5. The forecasted traffic flows do not reflect the traffic generated from Redmond's Overlake area expansion; and,
6. They do not forecast what the traffic flows are likely to be (in/around the Corridor) without the revision to the SR-520/NE 124th intersection. ***WSDoT has no plan or funding to support such revisions, nor is it likely that such revisions are even feasible.***

In his presentation to you at your 10 December 2007 study session, the director of the Planning and Community Development Department asserted that residents living near the Corridor (presumably north and south), would benefit from the Bel-Red Corridor infrastructure (i.e., road/arterial) developments, and therefore it would be reasonable for them to help pay for such developments. The alleged benefits are supposed to be 'traffic relief' on the Bel-Red Road, Northup/NE 20th, and NE 8th (NB! Mr. Terry mentioned only the Bel-Red Road and NE 8th, perhaps for good reason). However, as shown in the attached table, the PM peak and total traffic flows on these three roads/arterials show no significant improvement whatsoever; indeed traffic on Northup/NE20th is forecast to deteriorate significantly.

The staff has yet to provide you with any definitive, exhaustive list of the infrastructure required to implement the staff's rezone scheme; they have also yet to provide you with any life-cycle cost estimates for this infrastructure. Without such a list and cost estimate,

it is not possible to determine preferred/possible funding schemes. And without any accompanying cost/benefit and cost effectiveness analyses, it is not possible to determine a rational apportionment of the costs for the infrastructure.

I urge you to direct the staff to suspend further implementation of the Bel-Red Project until:

1. An updated traffic analysis is prepared that accounts for (a), traffic generated by Redmond's Overlake expansion; (b), the absence of an LRT line through the Corridor; (c) a revised/updated BROTS interlocal agreement; and, (d), the absence of any improvement to the SR-520/124th NE intersection. This updated analysis should be presented in the form/format of the City's "Traffic Data Books" so that the analysis results can be readily compared to historical traffic-flow data for the City;
2. There is a defined, exhaustive list of the infrastructure required to implement the staff's proposed rezone of the corridor;
3. There are credible life-cycle cost estimates available for the infrastructure; and
4. There is a credible funding scheme for the costs that has been vetted by an independent financial analysis, and has been subjected to public review and scrutiny.

Sincerely yours,

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Attachment: Table T1. 2006, and 2030 Peak and Estimated AADT Flows, Bel-Red Corridor

# Table T1. Traffic Flows, Bel-Red Corridor, 2006 PM Peak and AADT Actual Traffic Flows, and 2030 Predicted PM Peak and Estimated AADT Traffic Flows

| Road/Street | | 2030 Peak PM Flows, Vehicles/Hour, for No-Action Alternative | | Preferred Alternative | | Total PM Peak Flow, Vehicles/Hr 2030 | 2030 | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NE 12th St. | | WB | EB | WB | EB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | Actual |
| 112th - 116th | | 1905 | 1585 | 2349 | 2124 | 3490 | 4473 | 2463 |
| *2006 AADT* | *23300* | | | Est. AADT | | 38,778 | 49,700 | 23300 |
| *% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:* | | *113.3%* | | | | % Difference | 28.2% | |
| Bel-Red Road | | WB | EB | WB | EB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | Actual |
| 116th - 120th | | 1770 | 1618 | 1052 | 1377 | 3388 | 2429 | 2191 |
| 120th - 124th | | 1428 | 1358 | 1924 | 1585 | 2786 | 3509 | |
| 124th - 130th | | 1838 | 1555 | 1279 | 1236 | 3393 | 2515 | 2711 |
| 130th - 140th | | 1661 | 1508 | 1649 | 1679 | 3169 | 3328 | 2333 |
| 140th - 148th | | 1454 | 1698 | 1469 | 1808 | 3152 | 3277 | |
| 148th - 152nd | | 1085 | 1437 | 1114 | 1563 | 2522 | 2677 | 1775 |
| 152nd - 156th | | 1002 | 1034 | 1017 | 1118 | 2036 | 2135 | |
| Avg. Flow | | 1463 | 1458 | 1358 | 1481 | 2921 | 2839 | 2253 |
| *2006 AADT* | *23300* | | | Est. AADT | | 32,454 | 31,540 | 23300 |
| *% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:* | | *35.4%* | | | | % Difference | -2.8% | |
| NE 16th | | | | WB | EB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | Actual |
| 116th - 120 | | - | - | 1432 | 1792 | - | 3224 | |
| 120th - 124th | | - | - | 1573 | 2036 | - | 3609 | |
| 124th - 130th | | - | - | 1449 | 1669 | - | 3118 | |
| 130th - 136th | | - | - | 1334 | 1175 | - | 2509 | |
| Avg. Flow | | - | - | 1447 | 1668 | - | 3115 | |
| *% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:* | | | *?* | Est. AADT | | - | 34,611 | |
| | | | | | | % Difference | N/A | |
| 140th NE | | NB | SB | NB | SB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | Actual |
| NE 24th - NE 20th | | 1322 | 1037 | 1451 | 1230 | 2359 | 2681 | |
| NE 20th - Bel-Red | | 974 | 1100 | 1088 | 1076 | 2074 | 2164 | 1735 |
| Bel-Red - NE 8th | | 846 | 982 | 848 | 977 | 1828 | 1825 | |
| Avg. Flow | | 1047 | 1040 | 1129 | 1094 | 2087 | 2223 | |
| *2006 AADT* | *19900* | | | Est. AADT | | 23189 | 24704 | 19900 |
| *% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:* | | *24.1%* | | | | % Difference | 6.5% | |
| Northup Way | | WB | EB | WB | EB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | Actual |
| 124th - 130th | | 1653 | 1309 | 1865 | 1433 | 2962 | 3298 | 2365 |
| 130th - 136th Pl | | 1372 | 1422 | 1339 | 1428 | 2794 | 2767 | |
| 136th Pl - 140th | | 1387 | 1584 | 1570 | 1845 | 2971 | 3415 | 2543 |
| 140th - 148th | | 1430 | 1403 | 1509 | 1618 | 2833 | 3127 | 2442 |
| 148th - Bel-Red | | 1408 | 1125 | 1421 | 1197 | 2533 | 2618 | |
| Avg. Flow | | 1450 | 1368.6 | 1541 | 1504 | 2819 | 3045 | 2450 |
| *2006 AADT* | *27900* | | | Est. AADT | | 31318 | 33833 | 27900 |
| *% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:* | | *21.3%* | | | | % Difference | 8.0% | |

# Table T1, continued

| Road/Street | | 2030 Peak PM Flows, Vehicles/Hour, for No-Action Alternative | | Preferred Alternative | | Total PM Peak Flow, Vehicles/Hr 2030 | 2030 | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 136th Pl NE | | NB | SB | NB | SB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | |
| NE16th - NE20th | | 53 | 63 | 684 | 579 | 116 | 1263 | |
| ***2006 AADT*** | ***?*** | | | Est. | AADT | 1,289 | 14,033 | |
| ***% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:*** | | | ***?*** | | | % Difference | 988.8% | |
| NE 8th St. | | WB | EB | WB | EB | No-Action | Pref. Alt. | 2006 |
| 120th - 124th | | 1288 | 1528 | 1076 | 1524 | 2816 | 2600 | |
| 124th - 140th | | 1104 | 1769 | 1091 | 1896 | 2873 | 2987 | 2196 |
| 140th - 148th | | 991 | 1330 | 1074 | 1422 | 2321 | 2496 | |
| 148th - 156th | | 961 | 1192 | 992 | 1280 | 2153 | 2272 | 1623 |
| Avg. Flow | | 1086 | 1455 | 1058 | 1531 | 2541 | 2589 | 1910 |
| ***2006 AADT*** | ***22300*** | | | Est. | AADT | 28,231 | 28,764 | 22300 |
| ***% Chng, 2006-2030 for Pref. Alt:*** | | | ***29.0%*** | | | % Difference | 1.9% | |

Source:

1. 2006 PM peak values from "Traffic Data 2006"; City of Bellevue; no date.
2. 2007 PM peak values from "Weekly Reports"; pdf files; City of Bellevue; no date.
3. Estimated 2006 and 2007 AADT values based on data given in sources 1 and 2.
4. 2030 peak PM values taken from Figures A-1 and A-2 of "Bel-Red Corridor Project Final Environmental Impact Statement"; City of Bellevue; 19 July 2007.