

City of
Bellevue



MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 5, 2007

TO: Chair Robertson
Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Paul Inghram AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager 452-4070
pinghram@bellevuewa.gov

SUBJECT: Public Hearing for Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Downtown Mobility
Comprehensive Plan Amendment (07-138956 AC)

On December 12, 2007 the Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing to receive testimony related to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for Downtown Mobility transportation project improvements to several locations in and adjacent to Downtown Bellevue.

BACKGROUND

Downtown Bellevue is the major activity center for the greater Eastside, with concentrations of office, retail and residential uses. To support the continued vigorous pace of development in downtown Bellevue the Downtown and Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plans and the East Bellevue Transportation Plan are proposed to be amended to include future transportation improvements located in or near downtown Bellevue. These improvements include the extension of NE 4th from 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE; an HOV and pedestrian extension of NE 6th from 112th to 120th Avenue NE; and the addition of second left turn lanes and right turn lanes at specific downtown intersections.

The November 21, 2007 staff report provides additional background information, discusses the public notice process, and analyzes the consistency of the proposal with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment decision criteria. Please **bring the November 21 staff report** to the December 12 Planning Commission public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff presented the proposal to a study session of the Bellevue Transportation Commission on September 27 and November 15, 2007. The Transportation Commission's comments to the Planning Commission are attached to this summary.

Staff presented the proposal to the Bellevue Downtown Association's (BDA) Land Use Task Force. While there was an understanding of the vehicular benefits received with the addition of the right turn lanes, BDA members expressed concern that additional widening requirements necessary for right-turn lanes would diminish the development opportunity for the sites affected. Concern was also expressed that construction of the proposed lanes would be required at the time the site was developed. The BDA noted that additional work is necessary for the extension of NE 6th Street to more fully understand the transportation benefits, transit improvements, and the future use of the BNSF corridor.

Public comments were also received related to the NE 4th Street extension during the Wilburton/NE 8th Street planning study, during which a number of public meetings and engagements with the adjacent neighborhood were held. Mixed feelings were expressed for the potential new NE 4th Street connections between 116th Avenue and 120th Avenue. Several residents expressed opposition to the NE 4th Street extension due to fear of cut through traffic on NE 5th Street that might result to the east. Others noted that a connection could provide convenient access and supported relieving congestion on NE 8th Street. Some suggested that transportation improvements would be important to support any new development that occurs in the Wilburton area. Several commented on the need to straighten the intersection of 120th Avenue with NE 8th Street. (Improvements to the 120th/NE 8th intersection are identified in the East Bellevue Transportation Plan (project 514), although they have not yet been included on the city's 7-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

As detailed in the November 21 staff report, this proposal satisfies the decision criteria for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Following the December 12 public hearing and consideration of the public comment and analysis in the staff report, staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

We request that you conduct and close the public hearing, discuss the proposal, ask questions of staff and reach a recommendation.

ATTACHMENT

1. Transportation Commission comment letter

December 5, 2007

Ms. Jennifer Robertson, Chair
Bellevue Planning Commission
450 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98005

RE: Downtown Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Ms. Robertson;

On September 27, 2007 and November 15, 2007 the Transportation Commission was presented with the proposed Downtown Comprehensive Plan Amendment. A detailed description of the improvement projects proposed for this amendment is attached and include:

1. NE 4th Street Extension – from 116th to 120th
2. NE 6th Street HOV Bridge over NB I-405
3. Intersection Modifications at:
 - a. NE 2nd Street and 112th Avenue NE
 - b. NE 2nd Street and Bellevue Way
 - c. NE 8th Street and 106th Avenue NE
 - d. Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street
 - e. Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street

The Transportation Commission supports the proposed Downtown Comprehensive Plan Amendments in order to reserve right-of-way needed for additional vehicular demands. However, even with these improvements, Bellevue will not be able to provide sufficient roadway capacity to sustain current levels of service in our highly urbanizing downtown core. Congestion in downtown Bellevue will worsen over time and the City must provide alternatives for its residents and employers. We look forward to working with Council to craft the right mix of transit, non-motorized and parking management options to ensure a vital downtown.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments regarding the Comprehensive Plan Amendments. A representative from the Transportation Commission will be in attendance at the Public Hearing December 12, 2007.

Sincerely,

Al Yuen, Chair
Bellevue Transportation Commission

Cc: Transportation Commission Members
Goran Sparrman, Director of Transportation

Attachment 1

Proposed Transportation Improvement Projects to Enhance Downtown Mobility

1. *NE 4th Street Extension* – The extension of NE 4th Street from 116th to 120th Avenue NE was evaluated within the context of Auto Row redevelopment, and as a component of both the Wilburton/NE 8th and Bel-Red Corridor planning efforts. It is a critical project, extending the grid of arterial streets serving both the downtown and the redeveloping area just to the east. It would serve a large number of trips, offering needed relief to NE 8th Street, 116th Avenue, and 120th Avenue south of 4th Street. [The NE 4th extension would be amended into the Downtown Subarea Plan as a project serving Downtown from outside the subarea, and also into the East Bellevue Transportation Plan project list.]
2. *NE 6th Street HOV Bridge over NB I-405* – The extension of the NE 6th HOV bridge would allow buses and carpools to cross the freeway without the traffic and signal delays associated with the congested intersections at the arterial crossings of NE 12th, NE 8th and NE 4th Streets. Transit travel time savings entering/exiting downtown are expected to become more important with the implementation of King County Metro’s Rapid Ride connection between Downtown Bellevue, Overlake and Downtown Redmond, plus future feeder bus connections to a Downtown Bellevue light rail transit station. [The NE 6th HOV Bridge extension would be amended into the Downtown Subarea Plan Project List.]
3. *Intersection Channelization Modification* –The work done to date to analyze 2030 traffic conditions, including some new potential downtown development, has indicated that additional intersection improvements are necessary to alleviate congestion and maintain traffic flow. If the current pace of development continues, opportunities to make these changes could be lost:
 - a. NE 2nd Street and 112th Avenue – The recommendation would provide for the future connection of NE 2nd Street to I-405, including a straightening and realignment of NE 2nd Street to the north between 112th and 114th Avenues, dual southbound to eastbound (toward I-405) left turn lanes, and a northbound 112th to eastbound NE 2nd right turn lane.
 - b. NE 2nd Street and Bellevue Way – The needed upgrades include a northbound Bellevue Way right turn lane to eastbound NE 2nd Street, and a dual left turn lane for southbound Bellevue Way to eastbound NE 2nd.
 - c. NE 8th Street and 106th Avenue – This intersection is complicated by the close proximity of a large sequoia at the northwest corner, just behind the sidewalk. While intersection improvements will occur on the northeast quadrant as part of the Wasatch block, some realignment will be needed to maintain the curbline at the northwest corner. This will require shifting the south curbline along NE 8th about 8-10 feet further to the south.
 - d. Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street – The needed upgrade is a southbound to westbound right turn lane on Bellevue Way. The current southbound through/right curb lane is often blocked due to pedestrian traffic in the NE 8th Street crosswalk, blocking the through movement and upstream driveways. A dedicated right turn lane would allow the through movement to flow during the green phase.
 - e. Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street – The needed improvements include right turn lanes for southbound Bellevue Way to westbound NE 4th (toward Bellevue Square parking) and westbound NE 4th to northbound Bellevue Way movements (toward Lincoln Square).