

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BEL-RED CORRIDOR PROJECT
PROPERTY OWNER PANEL
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

March 14, 2007
4:30 p.m.

PANELISTS: Betty Spieth, Len Mattson, Ken Mattson, Jilian Hansen, Brian Kelly, Bob Lynch, David Murray, Bob Hale, Luke Fu

MODERATORS: Kevin McDonald, Diana Canzoneri

Mr. McDonald: We are recording the meeting this afternoon so the steering committee can get verbatim the comments you had about the alternatives and the direction you would like to see them go. We would like to start out with introductions just to make sure we all know who we are. My name is Kevin McDonald. I'm a transportation planner with the city of Bellevue. I have been helping to manage this process for the last eighteen months or so, and I will be your facilitator this afternoon. I'll read from the questions and try to capture the intent of your comments in notes, and again, we'll have it recorded and transcribed for the steering committee. And to my left is –

Ms. Canzoneri: Diana Canzoneri with the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Panelist: I'm Betty Spieth. I'm with Langton Spieth Consulting.

Panelist: Ken Mattson with Len's Automotive.

Panelist: Len Mattson, property owner on 136th.

Panelist: Hi, Jilian Hansen, Chown Hardware.

Panelist: Brian Kelly, Kelsun Distributors. We're on 130th.

Panelist: Bob Lynch, general surgeon with Overlake Hospital. We're working on a project at 130th and Bel-Red, a medical office building there.

Panelist: I'm David Murray. I'm working with Dr. Lynch on that project on 130th and Bel-Red Road.

Panelist: Bob Hale, Robert Hale and Company. We're wholesalers on 132nd.

Mr. McDonald: Okay, thank you.

Panelist: Luke Fu, 1825 116th Avenue NE. Acupuncture [clinic].

Mr. McDonald: And just so you know, we're recording the comments today so it's important that we have your name and address. Thanks.

Alright, we've got four questions to ask. The first question deals with the land use components that in my presentation were characterized as being approximately the same for each of the alternatives. You've got this sheet that lists in the top left what those components are for reference, and we've got the maps on the wall so you can see where those components exist on the ground in the three different action alternatives. So my question to you is, of those land use components that are seen to be essentially the same or in common along the alternatives, are you generally supportive of including these components in the preferred alternative, or is there one of those components, or several of those components, that you would object to having in the preferred alternative? So again, we've got the nodal development pattern focusing more intense development around light rail stations, future light rail stations. We've got the continuation of medical office uses along 116th with perhaps some intensity increases over time. We've got mixed use housing and retail in that little wedge of land on the east side of 156th. Retaining the retail along NE 20th. Providing some enhancements to the stream systems that are degraded in the Bel-Red Road, looking for ways to increase the natural function of those streams and actually create of those streams an amenity for new neighborhoods. And including a segment of the parks and recreation system that doesn't exist in that area right now, as we develop new neighborhoods we would add parks and open space. So are all of these alternatives ones that you would support? Are there ones you might not like? Are there any that you might want to add to this list of components?

Panelist: Mostly they don't seem to change tremendously, other than a nodal development. You might say this is already in place. The medical is already in place, the retail is already in place. The streams you need to do something about as much as you can. It just seems like other than adding sort of a retail and housing mix or a few other things, it's pretty much consistent with what's there now.

Mr. McDonald: The big difference is the nodal development pattern and where those nodes exist is variable. But the concept we're trying to get at is should land use be more intense in some areas relative to others. And when we say intense we mean more units per acre, more

square footage of commercial than exists today. And we would support that type of new development with transportation infrastructure, including a light rail system and stations. If that's understood and that's acceptable to you all, then we can consider that a common land use component that would carry forward into the preliminary preferred alternative.

Okay, you're cool with medical offices on 116th, professional offices south of Bel-Red Road? Okay.

Panelist: That doesn't mean that's the only place they can be.

Mr. McDonald: It doesn't mean that's the only place they can be. In fact the medical office district doesn't limit itself to medical offices, either. It can be all sorts of different office-type uses. But as you know, the tendency is for like uses to be in proximity to one another so they can play off of one another, and that's the vision for 116th.

Are we still recording, Diana?

Ms. Canzoneri: Yes. This morning one of the tapes stopped. We only lost about five minutes.

Mr. McDonald: Well the next question might be a little more interesting, and I can see your point about there's not a lot to discuss about the things in common because they are the things in common. So let's focus on the land use components that might vary between the alternatives, such as the specific locations of those development nodes, the concept that is embraced in Alternative 1 of a services core, the concept embraced in Alternative 2 of a light industrial sanctuary. That's different from any of the other alternatives. And you can see in the bottom left of your handout all of the variables that we've identified between the alternatives. So the question is, are there any of these land use variables that you really want to see included in the preferred alternative? Let us know what those are so we can give that information to the steering committee on the 29th. And also if there's something in that list of variables that you really don't like, we want to know that too so the steering committee can consider that as they develop their preliminary preferred alternative. So let's start on a positive note. What variables would you really like to see in the preliminary preferred alternative?

Panelist: I'd like to see you do something on uniform building height, so you'd have some – I mean, if you're going to transition throughout the area. And the issues I see if you are going to retain a

commercial zone or an industrial zone, building height and the ability to get larger vehicles in and out is going to be an issue. So building height has more to do with how much density you are going to put in there than anything else. I would think that by addressing that issue early you could make the longer-range traffic implications easier to deal with.

Mr. McDonald: Do you have any suggestions about building height? The vision for the nodes, just to let you know, is probably up to about six stories. In a mixed use setting it could be a level or two of commercial on the ground floor with housing above. That comfortable to folks?

Panelist: I was thinking four to five would be the upper limit. Because beyond that you are just going to –. Just observing traffic patterns on Bel-Red every day, because we sit there every day – I mean our office looks out and I'm saying, okay, there's only a certain amount of transportation even if you add light rail, there's still a very significant volume of commercial transportation. And even if you are just dealing with medical you still have records and labs and all kinds of other issues that are going to be transiting in and out. Even though the vehicles may be smaller the number of trips isn't going to be less.

Mr. McDonald: Any other variables that you'd like to see?

Panelist: I appreciate the nature of recreation – I'm sorry, the character and urban design that you're enhancing the existing streams and different areas that are in rough shape. Aesthetically, Bel-Red Road is pretty nice to drive down.

Mr. McDonald: We've heard many times that people really like the character of Bel-Red Road. And one of the things the steering committee has been looking at is ways to retain that character, the tree-lined character, the relatively low-intensity uses along Bel-Red Road. People appreciate those now. And one of the early options for a light rail corridor was along Bel-Red Road, and the steering committee and the City Council rejected that option, so Sound Transit is no longer considering a light rail corridor along Bel-Red Road. So that speaks to how important the character of Bel-Red Road is. I appreciate you reiterating that.

Anything else? Any other land use variables?

Panelist: I guess I've got a couple of questions, because this is all new to me. What's a services core?

Mr. McDonald: Good question. I'm happy to answer that. The steering committee – and maybe some of our services folks that have businesses in the area can help me out – The steering committee has heard from the users of service-type businesses and the providers of those services that those are really valuable to retain in the Bel-Red corridor as the future unfolds. There are services related to automotive uses primarily, but there's a lot of business services, there's printing, there's auto detailing, there's a saw shop, lawnmower shops, all that stuff happens in the Bel-Red corridor. And people who use them don't want to see them gone.

Panelist: I would definitely want to keep that kind of business in the neighborhood. The alternative is driving many, many miles to find them. I think it should be in real close proximity to downtown. Because otherwise we're just putting more and more miles on cars.

Mr. McDonald: One of the questions is how in the future to provide for those services. And one of the ways that Alternative 1 contemplates is having an area specifically set aside that says this is what we're going to emphasize here to the exclusion of many other types of uses that might occur. So those services would have an enclave to stay in for the future. That's Alternative 1. Another way to approach the perpetuation of services is to allow them to co-exist with other types of uses in mixed use neighborhoods and mixed use structures. And there's pros and cons to either of those. The bottom line is we've heard from a lot of people that its very important and for the reasons that you state, Bob, to retain services in the Bel-Red corridor. Exactly how it's done is not yet know, but there's a number of different options. I'm hearing support for retaining services in some fashion in the Bel-Red corridor.

Panelist: I guess the other question I have is – being on the medical side of things – the mixed-use housing. Is there any kind of plan for assisted living-type facilities? The population is getting older, and I think in terms of having them closer to the hospital area rather than – They don't have to be on the campus, but getting placement is a real issue for some patients, and having a nursing home or assisted living, places like that, associated with the medical campus, close, would be nice.

Panelist: That's true because now the nearest ones or in Factoria or Redmond.

Panelist: Or Renton. There's one right at the Y-intersection of Bel-Red Road and Northup. But that's like the nearest to the hospital now, I think.

Panelist: Right. I'm just going to say in terms of the mixed use housing/retail, it would be probably nice to put those kinds of condos/businesses closer in.

Mr. McDonald: That's a good point. We haven't heard that perspective before, so I'm glad you mentioned that. We've heard from people about the provision of affordable housing, workforce housing. Assisted living facilities are also important, especially in relation to the hospital. One of the principles that guide our work set by the Council is take advantage of the proximity to the hospital if you can, and this is one of the ways you can do that.

Panelist: I heard one of the new developers is considering that.

Mr. McDonald: Yes, we've heard from one developer who would like to do some assisted living in the little wedge of land on the east side of 156th.

Okay, what do you think about the light industrial sanctuary? Should an area be set aside in perpetuity, or at least as long as we are planning for, to have light industrial uses?

Panelist: Describe some light industrial. Give some examples.

Mr. McDonald: Sure. The Coke bottling company, for instance, is a light industrial use. The Safeway ice cream plant is a light industrial use. Those exist today and they've given us no indication that they're going to move anytime in the near future. But the question is whether the map should show them there, or whether like services they could be integrated with new development like office uses. Are those uses so unique that they have to have their own color on the map, or can they be integrated with other uses and evolve over time to be compatible with the neighborhood.

Panelist: Well I think in that area, then you're starting to talk, you know, lots of semis in terms of Coca Cola bottling plant and the Safeway distribution center and things like that. That really starts to impact the mobility of passenger cars and things like that. I don't know that those two plants specifically are that big a deal, but, you know.

Mr. McDonald: Essentially the light industrial would be drawing a line around those two plants, so there wouldn't be a lot more truck traffic beyond what exists today, but it would give them a sanctuary so they could stay there.

Panelist: The light industrial would include some small-scale

manufacturing, that sort of thing as well?

Mr. McDonald: Right.

Panelist: Machine shop, that sort of thing.

Panelist: I don't think a machine shop could afford the square footage.

Panelist: Yeah, it's pretty pricey.

Panelist: My biggest concern on that is do you have enough space. The reason I bring up services or light industrial in terms of the amount of space is because the way I view this is if I look at the development downtown and I look at a redevelopment here that's going to add more housing, every one of these alternatives presumes housing units in the thousands, as well as the thousands in the downtown, six or seven thousand coming online in the next three years, something like that, and the service businesses that are existing are actually going to get more stressed than they are. I mean, we're going to be pushed harder from an efficiency standpoint to use just the space that we have. Let alone with these types of uses going in our option to grow in this area is probably going to be limited. So our businesses aren't going to expand in their existing space, which means we are going to use our existing space more efficiently, and they are going to be pushed harder in that existing space, both in terms of transit of goods in and out as well as transit of customers in and out. The transportation side of the issue is critical, because to retain any kind of services or light industrial core, you're going to have to move trucks in and out. And they're not all going to be UPS trucks. They're going to be forty-foot containers.

Mr. McDonald: That might be a good segue to the next question, unless there are other land use components that you want to talk about. The next question deals with transportation system components. We can move there if you'd like.

Okay, transportation system components. Here's the question – I have a script because we wanted to make sure that all the groups are getting the same background and questions. So as we shift to the subject of transportation, the work that we've done so far as identified a set of transportation improvements that show up on the map, the second from the right. The blue lines represent arterial improvements to the transportation system. For the most part, these improvements are common to all the alternatives. There's a couple minor variations depending on where the concentration of

development is, but for the most part the transportation projects that you see on that map represent what's needed to support additional land use. So, looking at it from the other way, if you omit any of these transportation system improvements, it might cause one of two things to happen. One is, congestion on the other streets might become intolerable. Or two, you might have to limit the amount of development in order to reduce the number of trips on a diminished transportation system. If you eliminated one of those projects, you might have to reduce the amount of land development that could occur. So the question is – and as you look at that map, and as you look at the list of transportation system components on your list, the right-hand column – what particular transportation system component would you like to see included in the preliminary preferred alternative, or not? Is there any one you would absolutely not want to see moved forward, if you think it's just that bad?

One of the defining characteristics of the transportation system improvements is a brand new street, NE 16th, that broad blue line that goes through the middle. That street doesn't exist right now. It would require that the city and Sound Transit acquire parcels of land that are currently occupied by businesses. And so, but it's considered essential for providing mobility within the Bel-Red corridor. Without NE 16th, none of it works, so that's a critical transportation system component. I just wanted to let you know that. The other ones as we go from west to east, the vertical lines are 116th, there would be an additional lane added from NE 12th up to Northrup Way on 116th. The pink line is the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad that would be converted from a railroad to a trail, but preserving the long-term future of that corridor as a rail route if needed. The next line over is 120th. It's currently a two-lane road, no shoulders, no bike lanes, no sidewalks. That would be improved to probably a three-lane road with shoulders and sidewalks. The next one over is 124th. That would also be expanded. What is unique about 124th is that it would connect with 520, and there would be ramps to and from the east completing that intersection. Then further to the west with the T in the middle – T's represent transit stops, by the way – is 130th. That would be widened as well.

So, all those projects look good to you? Any one that you would specifically want to call out?

Panelist:

Well, I actually work off of 120th Street, but we have our own feelings about how that road could be improved. But that sounds like a great idea. In fact, I was coming to work one day – and I

don't want to be dramatic – but a biker was hit by another car. I could have just gone, poor biker, he got hit by a car. But whether you are walking or biking there really is no room for that, and people just whip down that road. So that improvement would be nice.

Panelist: Who's going to be displaced on the new 16th?

Mr. McDonald: It's hard to tell because the alignment hasn't really been decided yet. What's envisioned for that corridor is surface rail and a boulevard-type roadway with bike lanes and sidewalks. So it could be a hundred, a hundred and twenty feet wide.

Panelist: Would that cross the expressway?

Mr. McDonald: It probably would cross 405 by turning to the south and using the NE 12th bridge. So to answer your question, we don't know specifically which parcels would need to be purchased, because we don't know the width of the corridor specifically or the exact alignment. We know like point A to point B where it needs to go, but we don't know exactly how it would be configured in between point A and point B. With regard to the west connection, the connection of 16th downtown, it would curve to the south more than likely and go across NE 12th. The NE 12th bridge will be torn down and replaced with a wider structure. It needs to be torn down because 405 is going to be expanded and there's not enough room

Panelist: And that would also carry the light rail across it?

Mr. McDonald: The specific alignment for light rail in the downtown hasn't been determined yet. When that's determined, that will help determine where it crosses 405, where the bridge crosses 405.

And just so you know, we've been joined by one of our steering committee members, Earl.

Mr. Overstreet: Earl Overstreet, hello.

Mr. McDonald: So he'll be listening to your comments. Earl, we're talking about transportation system components right now and which of those blue lines on the map people have concerns about or people really support. We just heard that there's some support for improving 120th, especially for pedestrians and bicycles.

Any other transportation system comments?

- Panelist: You mentioned that NE 16th doesn't exist.
- Mr. McDonald: Correct, not in its entirety. Portions of it on the east side exist.
- Panelist: Right. Now, would that pretty much be the location? It's not going to change much where it already does exist?
- Mr. McDonald: Where it already exists it probably won't change much. It would be wider, but west of 130th it doesn't exist so we'd have to acquire new right-of-way from that point.
- Panelist: I'm not considered an expert on transportation or anything like that, but just synchronizing stoplights would seem to improve traffic flow. If you travel the speed limit of twenty-five or thirty and you stop at every light in downtown Bellevue no matter which way you're going, okay? I grew up in the east they synchronize stoplights and the traffic system flows. Is that a major disaster, or is that just something money's not been put aside for or what?
- Mr. McDonald: My understanding is that we have one of the most sophisticated signal operating systems in the country. Your experience doesn't speak well about the function with respect to your specific needs. But the signal operations are designed to move the most amount of people in the direction that they want to go the most efficiently. You may be going counter to the way the signals are set up.
- Panelist: Just go from 130th, or 140th on 8th Street and try to get to downtown. You'll stop at every light every time. And there's about six million other people experiencing the same thing. Whatever.
- Mr. McDonald: Well, the goal is to optimize the pavement that's out there by moving as many vehicles through as is possible. I don't know specifically about the route that you're talking about or why it is operating the way it is, but we can pass that on to our signal operations folks and let them know that you have experienced some frustration getting to Bellevue Square.
- Panelist: I think it's probably not an uncommon experience no matter which direction you're going anywhere in most of the Eastside.
- Mr. McDonald: One of the interesting components of the transportation system that I should point out are the little round circles with the hands in them that are framing the perimeter of the Bel-Red study area. That is our indication to the surrounding neighborhoods that we will work to limit the amount of cut-through traffic and commuter parking

within those neighborhoods. Specifically, we don't know what traffic calming, traffic diverting measures would be anticipated. We won't really know what to do until the problem arises. But we wanted to ensure the neighborhoods that the potential exists and that we would actively work to discourage cut-through traffic and parking within those neighborhoods.

Panelist: On NE 16th you are talking about, is the land available for you?

Mr. McDonald: No, we would have to buy land. The city, if it's going to put a road through, would have to acquire parcels of land. Sound Transit, if they were going to put their light rail system through there, would also have to acquire land. What we're going to try to do is, instead of having two separate corridors, try to have one corridor that accomplishes the function of moving the train and moving vehicles and also moving pedestrians and bicycles. And one of the visions for that NE 16th Street corridor is that it's a boulevard in character, so there's lots of trees, wide sidewalks, some adjacent parks that kind of provide for community identity and gathering places. So it's more than a street, but it requires some land that the city and Sound Transit currently don't own, so we'd have to work with the property owners on how best to make that boulevard happen.

Panelist: The question is how to you decide which land to buy?

Mr. McDonald: There're a couple of different strategies you can use for widening streets. You can do an equal amount on either side and treat both sides of the street equally. Sometimes that results in bad news for both sides of the street, because if you take ten feet from one side and ten feet from the other you may have eliminated a row of parking on both sides of the street, diminishing the viability of businesses on both sides of the street. So another strategy can be to take twenty feet from one side, leaving the other side intact and taking all the right-of-way from one side. That does impact those uses on the one side, but it leaves intact the uses on the other. So there's a couple different strategies. No strategy at this point has been identified for how best to acquire right-of-way. Many of the road widening projects don't even need a lot of new right-of-way because there's already like a hundred feet or a hundred twenty feet of public right-of-way that exists. You just widen the street within the land the city already owns. There's some cases where you would have to buy some parcels.

Panelist: Is that what you would say to make this boulevard, the maximum width would be a hundred and twenty feet?

Mr. McDonald: I don't know what it would be. You'd have to add five lanes of traffic together with light rail that goes in two directions, bike lanes and sidewalks. How all that adds up I'm not sure. I would suspect it is a hundred, hundred and twenty feet. Maybe even a little bit more if you really want to express your park vision for that boulevard and maybe have a landscaped median in between the lanes of traffic. That could add to the width as well. But none of that's really been decided yet. It's essential as a transportation corridor east-west, but the design of it is not determined.

Panelist: Well five lanes, how many feet do you need?

Mr. McDonald: Well, if you consider that each travel lane is approximately eleven feet, you've got fifty-five feet just for the lanes. If you add – Okay, let's do the math here. Fifty-five feet for five lanes. Bike lanes are five feet each, so that's another ten, a bike lane on both sides. Sidewalks, probably want to have a minimum ten or twelve feet, so let's just say twelve, so that's twenty-four additional feet. Then you add light rail. The light rail corridor probably requires – I'm just going to guess – maybe thirty feet. Let's add that up, that's one hundred and nineteen feet. I was pretty close in my guess, wasn't I?

Panelist: You ought to try and make a living doing that.

Mr. McDonald: Back of the envelope engineering, sure.

Panelist: What is the timeframe here? When I went to one of the earlier meetings they were talking about one of the whole reasons for discussing this is Sound Transit seemed relatively committed to doing this, and the idea was to be engaged in the process rather than have sort of a multi-level, multi-agency process going on. My question is what is Sound Transit's timeline for getting this far?

Mr. McDonald: Well, Sound Transit is in the process of doing their draft Environmental Impact Statement for the East Link project, which is from downtown Seattle out to Redmond. They'll be doing that over the next year or so. They're actually scheduling a series of workshops over the next few weeks to talk to neighbors about that. There's a vote in November for funds to specifically create, to construct the East Link rail. If that ballot measure passes in November, the best estimate is about 2018 that we would have rail service coming through downtown Bellevue out to Redmond. If that doesn't pass, then who knows, but we're looking at ten years out for rail service. In the meantime, we don't want land use to

stagnate in this area, so we're looking for surface transit enhancements, bus enhancements, to augment the street improvements we're planning to do to provide multiple modes of transportation for folks that live here and do business here. When light rail comes through, that opens up a whole new transportation infrastructure and maybe buses can be realigned to provide other service elsewhere in the city. In the interim between now and 2018 we want to bump up transit service in the area.

Panelist: So you're looking at doing NE 16th then ahead of the light rail, or in concert with? How are you looking at that for land acquisition?

Mr. McDonald: I suspect that if the preferred alternative that Sound Transit comes up with matches our preferred alternative for a NE 16th alignment, we'll work hand-in-hand to acquire the right-of-way that's needed for both of those projects. That's my guess. We're working pretty closely with Sound Transit to make sure we're synched up. Like I said earlier, we don't want to have two separate alignments going through the Bel-Red corridor. We want to combine them to the extent possible. There may be some places where light rail veers away from the street, maybe at a different grade to help work around curves or gain some advantage for going up the hill. Going up the hill to 140th will be a challenge because it's steeper than light rail can climb. So you're going to have to start building the elevated structure up so it can meet the top of the hill. So there will be some elevated parts of light rail as you move toward the east side of the study area. Where it's elevated it doesn't necessarily have to follow the road alignment. But where it's at-grade we'd really like to make sure that it's not in a separate alignment.

Panelist: I think that light rail could really increase a sense of community. If you create housing and parks and things. It's like unique businesses and like you roll up to the station and you're in like Redmond Towne Center or something like that. You know, housing there and condominiums. Some may work in Seattle and could just ride back and forth without needing a car. But it does make an opportunity for some people. It's an idea, a way of living that Seattle has not caught up with many other US cities that really are wrapped around transit systems.

Mr. McDonald: I agree that we need to catch up with the rest of the world when it comes to public transportation and light rail.

Panelist: We could put a monorail there.

Panelist: With two stops, one at each end.

Mr. McDonald: Well, what you hit on is really an important concept when you talked about getting off the train and having housing and retail right there. That's the concept of the mixed use nodes that we are talking about that we all embraced earlier in our discussion. We want to increase the density and increase the mix of uses around there so people really can think of that as a neighborhood in which they don't need a car, and in which they can hop on the train and be in Redmond at Towne Center, go to Microsoft, or go the other direction to downtown Bellevue or downtown Seattle. We want to focus a lot of the growth around those potential new train stations so that it will provide for an alternative and replace the need for folks to have a private automobile to go wherever they need to go. That's a really good point, and it's embraced by all of these alternatives. It's just that the location of the nodes are a little bit different.

Panelist: I would like to comment on bike lanes. I don't particularly think a little white line that separates me from a two-ton car is all that safe. I don't like riding in bike lanes at all. If I have the choice, I ride on the sidewalk. I know that's going to get me a ticket one of these days, but I ride a lot and I don't feel safe in a bike lane. I know there's other ways of making bike lane corridors that can separate you from the cars to some degree a little bit safer. A white line will not stop a car.

Mr. McDonald: In European cities I've been to there's actually a grade separation between the bike facilities and facilities that cars use.

Panelist: In downtown Bellevue I do use the bike lanes because cars aren't going that fast. But if you get out past this side of 405, when you're on 8th Street, I'm sorry, I ride the sidewalks. If a cop wants to give me a ticket, I'll take it.

Panelist: And from the driver's side, it scares the bejesus out of me when I see these people riding in the middle of the street on 148th. Riding down 148th, the speed limit is thirty-five, traffic flows probably in the low forties, and you know, you've got cars, you've got heavy commercial trucks, you've got work trucks and vans, and you know, two hundred pounds of man and fifteen pounds of bicycle is just not a good contact sport.

Panelist: And I think if it was better separated you'd see more bikers, you would.

Mr. McDonald: You don't want to take advantage of your Overlake Hospital facilities, right?

Okay, let's double check to make sure everybody has said what they want to say about the transportation system before we move on to the next question, which gets back to land use. So the transportation system components, maybe creating a safer bike environment with engineered bike lanes.

Panelist: There will be displaced people if you are going to acquire property on 16th.

Mr. McDonald: That's why Sound Transit has a real estate division. They have folks – and we do too, we have property acquisition folks. They know the market and they do the negotiations based on the market value of people's properties. It's commonly done. I don't know specifically how it's done, but the folks receive adequate or fair compensation.

Panelist: If it was decided to widen NE 16th to a hundred and twenty feet, do you just say this is the way it is and we'll give you fair value for your property?

Mr. McDonald: That's the power of condemnation the city of Bellevue has, yes.

Panelist: Okay.

Mr. McDonald: Okay, so let's talk about land use. My question reads, shifting back to look at the land use alternatives, which are the nice color blobs, when the steering committee developments a preliminary preferred alternative, they are not limited to picking one of these three alternatives in an of itself as a wholesale alternative to suggest to the City Council. Although they can do that if they want to. What they may instead do is pick one of the alternatives as a base and mix and match components from the rest of the alternatives to add to that base. For instance, they could pick Alternative 3. They like the location of the stations, they like the general land use layout, but they want to have more housing in the northwest corner up there where it says office campus. They could take that component from Alternative 2 and they could say okay, we like Alternative 3, we like this part of Alternative 2, let's throw housing in at this location. And that begins then to build the preliminary preferred alternative, using one as the base and cutting and pasting pieces from the other alternatives to make a complete preliminary preferred alternative. So the question is, if you were to pick one, which would it be? And once you've picked one, what

components of the others would you add to it to make a complete alternative? That may take a little looking at, so I'll let you think about it for a minute.

Panelist: That's partly sort of the blobs, but it's also sort of the density that you're talking about each one? It's the density increases for each one of these?

Mr. McDonald: It's the blobs, it's the intensity of those uses and the mix of uses within the blobs. You know, you may take Alternative 3, for instance, and look at the transit station that's around 122nd and you see that that's medium density office zone. Well, there's nothing to say the steering committee couldn't say, well we want to have housing located there as well as office. So we're going to take a little bit of housing from elsewhere in the corridor and put it near the station at 122nd, mix up the land uses a little bit instead of just having an office focus at that point. In terms of building height, again the alternatives envisioned maybe a six-story maximum, but there's nothing to say that you couldn't trade open space for additional building height for instance. Say a developer had a project in mind that was six stories and included no open space whatsoever. Well you could say hey, if you want to go higher than that we might let you do that if you provide some open space available to the public. So it frees up some land that can then be used by the general public in exchange for a little extra building height the developer can use. So that's some of the tradeoffs and alternatives that the steering committee can consider.

For this particular question, we're talking less about urban form and more about the arrangement of the blobs. So let's think about that. Look at the alternatives. In just a couple of minutes I'll ask you again which of those you'd build from, and which of those components you'd switch from others to complete that alternative.

Panelist: I'm not sure which one of the three I would pick, but one of the concerns I would have is I'm noticing on number one it's the only one that has a service core. You had mentioned earlier kind of what the vision was of building certain things around the Sound Transit areas, certain types of stuff. One of the things that I feel would be important would be to have some services around one of those, because not only am I looking at just this area as far as the people it's servicing, what about people that live out further, like Duvall that maybe work in Seattle. They could obviously – me being in auto repair, I have that thought – but if they could bring their car, drive to this station and have a service area where they could drop their car off and get it worked on or take care of some

other service needs, hop on Sound Transit and hop into the city. So kind of it being a mid-point station for these people that live out. So you're not just limiting to people who live in this area, but a much greater area. So again, I don't know which one of the three, but putting some more emphasis on putting some more services around one of those.

Panelist: I would agree with that. I was looking at these things and going, you know, why are we building housing around every single transit station? There's no reason you can't take Alternative 1, put a transit station in there, and build a services/light industrial core around that whole area. That makes, I mean, that makes – I don't think you're going to be able to get as much housing in there – If I look at the city in aggregate and say okay you've got six or seven thousand roughly condominium units under construction now, you add another thirty-five hundred just in this corridor under Alternative 1, you're at ten thousand housing units. At one point five people per housing unit –

Mr. McDonald: One point eight.

Panelist: Alright, one point eight. So the math gets worse. The reality is where are these people going to get services? They are going to have to have a place to go, and you're going to have to have a combination of surface street access, both for bringing goods in and out, and you're going to have to have that plus some kind of, you know, bus or light rail transit to get them to this core and get them in and out of the core efficiently. And if you build housing around every station and don't allow for that to spread out, I think you are hurting yourself in the long term, because to get back to the point I made originally, I look at eighteen thousand more people in the city and go my business is going to get stressed by that. I mean, I have no place to grow. I have drop warehouses that I use for my business outside of the area now. I expect I'll probably be taking more square footage for that. But for me to service the people that show up at my business every day, it's just going to increase not decrease.

Panelist: I don't understand why Alternative 1 (inaudible). Here we have an office campus with no Sound Transit station to serve it. We're trying to reduce traffic, and light rail is supposed to do that, so why don't we put a station there?

Mr. McDonald: Well, Alternative 1 doesn't include that for analysis and comparison purposes. What you are saying is that you don't like that part of Alternative 1, that you'd rather see something like

Alternative 3 where you have office surrounding a station?

Panelist: Uh huh.

Mr. McDonald: Or Alternative 2 where you've got a station that supports the medical office district on 116th. You're saying that you don't like the sort of sprawling office campus envisioned in Alternative 1, the low-density, sprawling auto-oriented approach.

Panelist: About how far does Sound Transit think people will walk from a station to a business or their house without finding some other method of linking transportation systems together?

Mr. McDonald: The modeling we've done anticipates a quarter-mile walking radius. Those circles are a quarter-mile radius. Sound Transit issuing a half-mile walking radius –

Panelist: That's too much.

Mr. McDonald: – and we think that's probably too much. The true answer probably lies somewhere in between. The true answer might depend a lot of topography.

Panelist: I would think most people would not mind walking a quarter mile in a downtown setting, and maybe even half a mile to get home. But more than that, I think most people are going to want to link with something else, a bus or a bicycle or something like that. Which is okay, if they are planning to put bus racks on the trains.

Mr. McDonald: Probably not bike racks, but cars you could take your bike into. It's done in some areas.

Panelist: I'm bringing a medical bias to this whole process. I think there's got to be a transit stop near the hospital. I just can't imagine that there wouldn't be. It just makes sense to me. We are all healthy here, or largely healthy, but there are immense numbers of people who are pretty challenged and have trouble getting places. A quarter mile is a long way.

Panelist: Right. Some patients have trouble walking a hundred feet, or two hundred feet.

Mr. McDonald: What about staff at the hospitals. Do you think they would use a station for commuting?

Panelist: Yes.

Panelist: Absolutely. Especially if we start charging more for parking.

Mr. McDonald: There is a correlation there between public transit use and paying for parking, and the price of gas.

Any other comments?

Panelist: On the other two alternatives, two and three, are those service cores? They don't seem to be –

Mr. McDonald: It's housing.

Panelist: Oh it is.

Mr. McDonald: Yeah. Unfortunately, we used the same color for the services core in Alternative 1 as we did for the housing in Alternatives 2 and 3.

Panelist: I think it's important to embrace what Ken said about having access to the service core with transit.

Mr. McDonald: So you can drive to your service facility and be proximate to a station, you can hop on and go to work.

Panelist: Or a dry cleaners or whatever.

Mr. McDonald: Those types of services.

Panelist: Do you know how many transit stations you are planning, how many you think Sound Transit will put in?

Mr. McDonald: Well, our most ambitious plan is to have two in the corridor, which is Alternatives 2 and 3.

Panelist: And then one on the perimeter there?

Mr. McDonald: Yeah. The Redmond side has one over at 152nd, and also there's a station downtown, or maybe more than one station. Alternative 2 has that station at 148th. This station is different from this station. This one's in Redmond at 156th. Alternative 2 has a station here west of 148th. There's maybe problems with that location but we did it for modeling purposes.

Panelist: Do you think it's realistic that Sound Transit will put two stations in the corridor here?

Mr. McDonald:

I don't know if its realistic or not. I'm not a transit planner. Our goal is to provide Sound Transit with the best recommendation that we can. We think that the spacing issue between stations is not a fatal flaw in Alternative 3 where the stations are at 122nd and 130th. They are half a mile apart, and if people are willing to walk a quarter mile, that gets everybody within walking distance of those two stations. And what that does is help the ridership of those stations increase, because more people can walk to them.

Okay, so is there any consensus around the room about what alternative might be the best one to start with, getting back to the station again? And if there's not, that's okay. It may be the same struggle the steering committee has on the 29th. It's relatively easier to identify components than to begin the process of mixing them all together to make one preferred alternative.

Panelist:

If I was going to choose, I would choose Alternative 1, and I would look at taking both the orange area and the services core. Because my view of this is you're taking about nine hundred acres roughly of what is now light industrial/commercial services, and you're going to compress it. I mean, with these decisions, you will compress that core. Given the growth of the city, how small can that be before you start to really create yourself a bind in terms of delivering the services you have to deliver for the number of people that are going to increase the density of the population. I mean, I don't know what those ratios are, I don't know if there're guidelines to that people have looked at. The only real example that I have to go on is when we started out we were down – we had a business south of what was then the King Dome, it's now Safeco and Quest Field. That whole area down there through the Duwamish was all that type of business. And of course there's heavy industrial in there that is never really going to happen here. I mean, it hasn't happened here and it's not going to happen here. But light industrial/commercial, many of the services to the city of Seattle are delivered out of that core. Out of those acres a lot of the services flow into the city of Seattle and into the surrounding areas as well. You are going to have similar problems with increasing urban density and decreasing availability of land to deliver those types of services, so is it three hundred acres, is it four hundred acres? Is there a ratio or a method of looking at that from a planning perspective? I would certainly think about how physically big that area needs to be to get that done, because as other people have said, they're not going to drive to Preston, they're not going to drive to Kent. That's just going to make people mad.

Mr. McDonald: And since they are not going to drive to Preston or Kent, is there a way that we can keep those services in the Bel-Red corridor and still allow for some redevelopment? Are there some compatibilities that we can find where the services can be integrated with new housing or new office? Certainly services like dry cleaning and those personal services would have a heyday with redevelopment of this area that includes new housing. Some of the services that are a little bit more incompatible with residential areas, they may need an enclave unto themselves if they are going to survive and not be pushed out. So how big that enclave needs to be is hard to tell. How incompatible some of those new services are with housing or office, that's hard to tell, too. In fact, some of the services could modify the way they do business so they could be compatible and take advantage of that new market that's right there at their doorstep.

Panelist: I think we're a little confused here as to what we consider services. In terms of auto repair, that would be one thing. But maybe not a body shop underneath an apartment building. If you just have a guy tuning cars and replacing spark plugs, that's one thing. But if a guy's got a stamping plant in there and he's hammering out fenders, probably not going to make the neighbors happy.

Mr. McDonald: So there's an adjacency and compatibility problem we're talking about.

Panelist: Right. I don't think you have to have just one core where everybody has to be in just this one block that does any kind of a service. It just makes no sense to say that your services all have to be here.

Mr. McDonald: Mix it up where you can.

Panelist: Right.

Mr. McDonald: The next question reads as follows. We're going to wrap things up soon, but one thing we'd like to see – and I think we've come close to answering this question already, but let me phrase the question as it's written and see what you think. Are there any comments or ideas that you haven't already expressed to the steering committee that you'd like them to consider as they are developing their preliminary preferred alternative? We've talked about services, we've talked about transportation, housing, mixing uses up, supporting nodes. Anything else you would like the steering committee to consider? Have we covered it already?

Panelist: One thing that's on my mind is I appreciate having car repair and that sort of thing in that area. It's where our business is and we don't live far from there. And we really appreciate it. But I don't think anybody will deny that it's awful hard to make car repair services very attractive. They just aren't. And I think I would – I don't know how you would resist the pressure to make everything look like the architect's renderings of beautiful promenades with attractive people and leafy trees, everything like that. But we've got to keep these ugly services, and I don't know how we do it. But I think we've got to keep them. And we have an office. I think the pressure is going to be very strong to get rid of them or reduce them, and I would not want to see that.

Panelist: I would say Bel-Red has always been the ugly part of town that no one is going to walk down or drive down. There's a lot of car and repair places in the area around Trader Joe's that there's a mix of everything. That really creates some – well, those places don't have a monopoly on that area. It could diversify.

Mr. McDonald: Any other general comments?

Panelist: When are the final decisions going to be made on this process? I mean, are we talking about that meeting that's coming up on the 29th?

Mr. McDonald: That's not the final. That's sort of the beginning of the end.

Panelist: Do you anticipate the general public coming out en masse to weigh in on this issue?

Mr. McDonald: We have a community meeting scheduled for Tuesday next week, on the 20th. And we've sent out thousands of notices for that. We expect a pretty good turnout for that meeting. The steering committee meetings have had variable numbers of people attend them. It started out with about five or six people at each meeting, and now we're up to twenty or thirty for each meeting. So we're building a following and a lot of people are interested in what the steering committee is addressing and how they are making their decisions. The meeting on the 29th is probably not going to attract a lot of public because it's a four- or five-hour workshop, and the public will not really have a lot of opportunity to interact with the steering committee. So our guess is that probably there won't be a lot of public. The meeting on the 20th of March, next week, is going to be important. I think it starts at five with an open house kind of format, and then we'll move to the Council chambers for a short presentation, very similar to the one you saw today. And

then we'll move to small group discussions where we'll ask people questions very similar to the ones we're asking you today just to get a broader community perspective. And all that information will be provided to the steering committee for their deliberations.

Panelist: Do the views and comments you've heard here this evening mimic what you heard this morning at the other sessions?

Mr. McDonald: To the extent the people in this group supported the concept of higher intensity development and mixed use nodes that are supported by transit stations, yes, they are pretty much identical comments. There was a little bit more support in this afternoon session than in the morning session about making sure that there are areas for service uses to be developed and retained over time. But also, the acknowledgement that service uses can morph and evolve over time to fit in with different types of neighborhoods. That was common to the morning session and afternoon session.

Ms. Canzoneri: It's interesting this morning that there was a coalescing around – at least in one of the panels – Alternative 3.

Panelist: Could there be a couple of blobs, service core blobs, that are not quite a big individually so that they could be spread out, one at each end? Does that make sense?

Mr. McDonald: We tried to locate the service core blob where a lot of services are now, with the basis in mind that if we set aside an area they wouldn't be encroached upon and squeezed as Brian keeps pointing to. We hadn't thought of having more than one service core, because that would require changing the character of an area that doesn't currently have a lot of services, and creating a services core where it doesn't exist. We wanted to create one where it does exist. And at the same time as we're thinking, maybe, of keeping services where they are, looking at ways services can be integrated with new uses around the entire corridor. There are places now where services aren't allowed that might be allowed in the future, and we can craft unique zoning to allow that to happen.

Anything else that you'd like me to pass along to the steering committee? I think we got consensus that we really like the services uses and that we want to look at multiple ways of keeping them active and viable within the Bel-Red corridor. We've heard that loud and clear from this group, and from this morning's group as well.

Panelist: I still feel strongly that there needs to be a transit stop very near the

hospital for the reasons stated earlier.

Panelist: I think a combination of two or three in terms of transit stops would be kind of nice. Like I said, one extra stop, and two would be nice, somewhere on that side where the high-density campuses are, and mixed use housing is. I really don't think in 2010 or 2018 when we finally get a train that people are going to be any more active than they are now, and I don't think they're going to be walking a mile to a transit train station.

Mr. McDonald: So you would station stations closer together.

Panelist: Yeah, maybe a half a mile, but anything more than that and people will be hopping on a bus to get to the train, and that will just increase commute times. I can read a bus schedule and I can read a train schedule, but getting them to match up is sometimes not real easy.

Mr. McDonald: Anytime you build in a transfer to a commute it reduces ridership a great deal. I'm lucky I only have one bus transfer to get from my house in Seattle to here. For a lot of people it doesn't work quite so well.

Okay, what other items of consensus can we pass along?

Panelist: What kind of a timeframe do you have?

Mr. McDonald: In terms of starting development or doing the plan? The plan's not going to be done for another year approximately. The steering committee is deliberating on the preliminary preferred alternative. That alternative will go to the City Council. The City Council will probably put its stamp on it before it directs us to implement it. We have to change the Comprehensive Plan, we have to change the zoning. We have to build some transportation infrastructure. A lot will have to happen before you see a great deal of land use change in the Bel-Red corridor. There's a developer chomping at the bit, a couple of them actually, that participated in this morning's meeting that own significant parcels of land that would like to develop sooner rather than later. We have to caution them to be patient because the process needs to play out and the transportation infrastructure has to be available to support the development. Right now all those blue lines on the map are just that, they are blue lines on a map. They haven't received any design or engineering work. There's no funding to build those projects yet. So there's a lot of work to do before you see major land use changes occur in that area. Over the next several years

you'll begin to see some things. Something that might move things faster is if the vote on Sound Transit is favorable this fall and we have a funding source to ensure that light rail will be here. If we get that assurance that light rail will be here, that may free up some land for redevelopment. A lot of ifs and a lot of unknown things at this point.

Panelist: Are we looking at five years to start the job?

Mr. McDonald: Five years? Things may happen sooner than that. It's just hard to tell. I would be surprised if nothing happened between now and five years from now, but it all depends on politics and the amount of money that's available.

Okay, well I really appreciate the time you spent this afternoon and the information you have given us. We have it recorded and Diana and I have taken notes. And Earl has listened to some of your comments. So again I appreciate the time you've spent. At this point we'll conclude our panel discussion.