

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BEL-RED CORRIDOR PROJECT
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

April 25, 2007
4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Creighton, Co-Chair; Terry Lukens, Co-Chair; Joel Glass, Doug Mathews, Steve Dennis, Earl Overstreet, Bill Ptacek, Dean Rebhuhn, Faith Roland, Ken Schiring, Pat Sheffels, Laurie Tish

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kurt Springman, Sue Baugh, Norm Hansen

OTHERS PRESENT: Matt Terry, Dan Stroh, Emil King, Michael Paine, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kevin O'Neill, Kevin McDonald, Goran Sparrman, Department of Transportation; Leonard McGhee, Sound Transit

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. Welcome and Review of the Agenda

Co-Chair Creighton called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Mr. Greg Johnson, president of Wright Runstad and Company, said the purchase of the Safeway site in the Bel-Red corridor will close on May 1. He noted that during the developers forum prior to the meeting the company unveiled models and views to highlight how the site could be developed. He said the urban village character of the development envisioned for the Safeway site can really be a special thing for the city. The fact that the site is outside the downtown core will strengthen the notion of Bellevue as a place to both live and do business. From the start, Wright Runstad has supported Alternative 3, which will allow for including housing and good urban design. Some variability in structure height will be necessary given the size of the parcel and the densities under discussion; height to 130 feet will accommodate some terrific urban amenities, including lower impact development, more open space, better integration of future transit, and a more attractive urban character.

Mr. Andy Lane, an attorney with Cairncross and Hempleman in Seattle, spoke on behalf of Bill Sherman and Sherman Development. He noted that Mr. Sherman owns an office building on the corner of Northup Way and 124th Avenue NE and would like to see the office use continued into the future on that site. Mr. Sherman has steadily supported Alternative 1 but understands that the committee is leaning toward Alternative 3, which would designate the area mostly for housing. The committee was encouraged to consider allowing office uses in the area. One option would be to let the market decide what is most appropriate; that could be a mixed use scenario, or not designating a specific use. The area is very close to the interchange of Northup Way and 124th Avenue NE, which may not be the best place for housing. A mixed use arrangement with dense residential housing could work in conjunction with office uses. For the most part, people are little concerned with what goes on inside a particular building, provided there are no odors or

hazards associated with it; most are interested in the external impacts, such as visual and traffic impacts, things that can be mitigated.

Mr. Creighton commented that no action taken by the committee would not eliminate office uses on the site in question. The committee has said that housing might be appropriate, but office is still contemplated for that portion of the corridor.

Ms. Cindy Ludwig spoke as a resident of Bridle Trails, one of the neighborhoods that will be most impacted by the changing development patterns in the Bel-Red corridor. The neighborhood is situated on a hill to the north of the corridor and already experiences a lot of passthrough traffic. Alternative 3, which the committee has called the preferred alternative, is very intense. Adding 5,000 units of housing and 4.5 million square feet of office space in conjunction with what is being planned for the Overlake area will be too much to handle. There is insufficient infrastructure to absorb the additional traffic that will be generated. The modeling shows that the NE 29th intersection at 148th Avenue NE will fail under each of the alternatives. That intersection was created in the first place to correct the problems at NE 24th Street and 148th Avenue NE; under Alternative 3, the fix will in fact become the problem. The 5,000 homes will accommodate some 10,000 residents, and most of the homes in the area have 2.5 cars per person; it is not believable to think the people will eliminate their cars, and those who choose to use light rail if it comes through will not be those who live in the corridor. It is already difficult for Bridle Trails residents to get into and out of Downtown Bellevue; with the extra traffic impacts, it may be easier for them to drive SR-520 to Seattle to shop in University Village. The neighborhood believes the city should start right away constructing extra capacity to avoid having to do so in crisis mode as redevelopment occurs. The steering committee has not been very responsive to the concerns voiced by the public regarding Alternative 3. The Bridle Trails neighborhood can support Alternative 1 and opening the riparian corridors. The notion of allowing up to ten-story buildings will impose on the views of Bridle Trails residents and will increase both the light and noise levels. If the committee is truly listening to the public, there is no way it can choose Alternative 3.

Ms. Loretta Lopez, co-president of the Bridle Trails Community Club, noted that the club submitted a written response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). She said the club was quite surprised to see the learn that the steering committee is leaning toward Alternative 3. The Bel-Red corridor supports economic diversity in the city. It is unique and distinct from the downtown core. The city has spent a lot of time and money, and years of planning putting together and implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth different uses throughout the city, and for years the place for intense housing and business uses has been the downtown. Alternative 3 will extend that beyond the downtown into the Bel-Red corridor. The city has spent time and money making sure the downtown is supported with the infrastructure it needs to be a regional center. To allow for the massive redevelopment of an area beyond the downtown borders will be expensive, time-consuming, and will destroy the economic diversity the Bel-Red corridor now enjoys. There is a clear lack of evidence that the majority of citizens in Bellevue support or want to see the density of the corridor increased to the extent contemplated by Alternative 3. The committee has not taken into account the effect the change in Bel-Red will have on other areas of the Comprehensive Plan; the city has not done its work with respect to reviewing all of the other subareas that will be affected. The programmatic EIS approach has had the effect of limiting the scope of public notice, which is not acceptable. The people who live on 148th Avenue NE do not understand how the changes will affect them because they have not been notified. It is beyond understanding how traffic will be able to move through the region if so much development can be added to such a small area. The economic diversity that will be lost if the massive rezoning is approved is incredible. Small businesses serve as the economic foundation for cities; their loss is something the city should consider very seriously in charting a course for the corridor. The City Council has directed the steering committee to keep in mind the surrounding neighborhoods and

communities; it should be made very clear what the ultimate outcome will be. There have been projects undertaken in the city in which the citizens have not been well represented. The citizens have not had a voice in the Bel-Red study, and it is the responsibility of the steering committee to make sure the residents are heard.

Mr. David Plummer agreed with speakers from Bridle Trails. He said the type and intensity of development being considered by the steering committee amounts to a rather complete repudiation of the long-held commitment to concentrate development in the downtown core. He said it is virtually impossible to understand the rationale of the committee for supporting Alternative 3. It is not understandable at all how the committee concluded that housing should be included on the south side of Bel-Red Road. The committee has not made any significant effort to get out into the neighborhoods along the south side of the Bel-Red corridor. The committee has received nothing but biased input from the consultants. The committee should reevaluate its position and move closer to the No Action alternative.

Ms. Pamela Toelle, 14845 NE 13th Street, noted that during the days of Planning Director Bruce Freeland it was often said by him that the services and businesses that keep a city running must be protected. In Palo Alto, rezoning actions drove service businesses out in favor of housing, and now all of the residents must go somewhere else to get what they need. She concurred with the speakers from Bridle Trails. The discussion of allowing ten-story buildings is disconcerting; the fact is buildings that tall in proximity to residential uses does not work. A number of neighborhoods will be negatively impacted. The steering committee should reconsider its position.

Leonard McGhee with Sound Transit reported that at the Overlake workshop for Sound Transit light rail design found general support by those who participated for the basic plans to bring light rail through Bel-Red to Redmond. There was support voiced for the NE 16th Street alignment over the SR-520 alignment; for having local parking access to the stations; and for good bus connections with the stations. Station spacing was highlighted as important, as was the need to serve existing and emerging markets. The NE 24th Street option was introduced as an alternative to serving the Overlake area via NE 20th Street, and it met with some favor. The concerns voiced included potential neighborhood cut-through traffic, particularly along 130th Avenue NE; the potential for hide-and-ride parking activities; and the level of safety for at-grade operations. He thanked the steering committee for helping to inform the Sound Transit process and design work and noted that there is yet a great deal of work to be done.

3. Review March 29 Workshop Notes and the Preliminary Preferred Alternative Map

Long Range Planning Manager Kevin O'Neill said the workshop on March 29 was lengthy and included a review of all alternatives identified in the DEIS. The committee worked through a series of questions, many of which were discussed at length. He proposed walking through the meeting notes to make sure the document accurately indicates the direction given by the committee, and to review how the stated direction is reflected on the various maps.

Mr. O'Neill said when the committee is ready, direction will need to be given to staff on proceeding with the Final Environmental Impact Statement work based on the preliminary preferred alternative; he stressed that taking the action will not establish a final recommendation.

Mr. O'Neill said the first direction given to staff at the March 29 meeting was to eliminate from further consideration the No Action/Existing Plans alternative. The committee made two important points, however. First, there are in fact elements of the No Action/Existing Plans alternative that will likely be in the preliminary preferred alternative. Second, elimination of the alternative does not mean the committee has no regard for the existing uses.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members that the meeting notes accurately reflect the actions taken by the committee with regard to the No Action/Existing Plans alternative.

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald explained that the transportation components discussed at the workshop were those that the modeling showed are essential to support the anticipated development program outlined in the preliminary preferred alternative. The components include a number of capacity improvement projects on the north-south roads 116th Avenue NE, 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE, expansion of NE 4th Street to 120th Avenue NE, and a new corridor along NE 16th Street to be designed to accommodate light rail. The components also envision conversion of the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way to a trail, and accommodates a light rail maintenance base. In addition, the components include three alternate potential light rail station locations in the vicinity of Overlake Hospital, at 122nd Avenue NE, at 130th Avenue NE, and at 156th Avenue NE in Redmond. The light rail alignment from downtown to Bel-Red has not been determined; it could be either NE 6th Street or NE 12th Street, either of which would converge onto the NE 16th Street alignment. A number of options have been considered for moving into the Overlake area. Consideration has been given to addressing neighborhood traffic impacts. The possible use of NE 24th Street as a light rail alignment to get to the Overlake area is a new alternative that will be studied in the EIS in addition to the other possible alignments.

Department of Transportation Director Goran Sparrman pointed out that the city already has on the books very strong policies addressing the need to protect residential streets from traffic impacts. The collection of tools available to enforce the policies run the gamut from very aggressive to less aggressive methods, everything from speed humps and traffic circles to education. Traffic calming for the arterial system lacks the same policy basis. Staff recognizes that there is more work to do in developing tools to be used to protect neighborhoods adjacent to the arterials.

Mr. McDonald said the thinking is that the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way will undergo a trails to rails conversion. In the short term, a trail use could be developed while maintaining the long-term potential for rail if and when such a use becomes viable.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Ptacek, Mr. O'Neill said Bellevue staff is coordinating with Redmond staff on preliminary modeling of the Redmond preferred development program for Overlake and the development program identified by the steering committee on March 29 for the Bel-Red area. The focus is on assessing the joint impacts. It will take several months to complete the work, but the hope is that the preliminary results will be ready for the committee to see in May.

Mr. Schiring noted that the materials refer to allowing the BROTS capacity limit to expire in 2012 and asked if at that point a new cap will be negotiated. Mr. O'Neill explained that the existing agreements runs through 2012; the development levels identified on both the Redmond and Bellevue sides are predicated on that horizon year. It has always been contemplated that the entire BROTS agreement will need to be renegotiated and extended to 2030. The initial steps in that direction are already under way.

Recalling data supplied by the consultant that 75 percent of the new trips on the system will be by automobile, Mr. Rebhuhn asked if there will be sufficient capacity to keep the trips in the corridor and out of the neighborhoods. Mr. McDonald said the trips passing the screenline on the north, south and west sides of the corridor have been projected. In general, the volume of trips based on the development potential is on the order of 10 to 20 percent greater than current volumes. The traffic will principally use the arterial streets, which is what the estimates are based on; the city does not have the capacity to project the possible increases on neighborhood

streets. There are a number of tools in the box to use for traffic calming on neighborhood streets, but far fewer tools to use on arterial streets.

Mr. O'Neill reminded the committee that from the start of the study the Council has been clear that the principle of syncing land use and transportation must be adhered to. That principle will play out both in the planning and in the implementation. Furthermore, in all of the alternatives, transportation improvements were linked with the areas targeted for increased land use intensity; most of the land use intensity is earmarked for the west side of the corridor, and not surprisingly most of the transportation improvements are focused.

Mr. Glass asked how many lanes there will ultimately be on I-405. Mr. Sparrman said between NE 12th Street and Main Street in Bellevue there will be one additional through lane in each direction along with a collector/distributor facility. To the north of NE 12th Street and to the south of Main Street there will be two additional general purpose lanes in each direction. Most of the project components are already funded; those not yet funded are included in the RTID/Sound Transit Phase II package to be voted on in November. The city has been aggressively lobbying for fixes to I-405 and SR-520; the modeling all shows that traffic is using the East Bellevue area to bypass freeway congestion. Once the freeway system is improved, some of the local pressure points will be relieved.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members that the meeting notes accurately reflect the actions taken by the committee with regard to the transportation components.

With regard to stream enhancements, Mr. McDonald noted that the green asterisks on the map represent opportunity areas where a park and open space amenity could occur adjacent to a stream corridor. He noted that the committee concluded at the workshop that the stream enhancement components can contribute to placemaking, habitat enhancement, greenways and trails; the incorporation of green infrastructure can serve to improve water quality in the streams. The Goff Creek and West Tributary in the vicinity of the 130th Avenue NE station could have wider riparian buffers, and there are opportunities for acquiring open space.

Mr. McDonald said the critical areas ordinance currently requires a 50-foot buffer adjacent to streams. The footprints of existing buildings are exempted from the buffer requirement. He showed a map indicating an additional 50-foot buffer that could be added through an incentive program through redevelopment. The notion is that the existing buffer requirements would be held constant, and any additional buffers would be brought about through incentives. The West Tributary is envisioned to function as more of a natural stream system; it could have wide buffers incorporated the wetlands as well as a trail from the northwest near the intersection with the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way to the southeast near the intersection with Bel-Red Road. Goff Creek carries with it more of an urban vision with developments that take advantage of the riparian corridor. Because there are adjacent streets there, a trail system along the creek would not be needed.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members that the meeting notes accurately reflect the actions taken by the committee with regard to the riparian corridors.

Turning to the land use issues, Strategic Planning Manager Emil King began with the medical office uses along 116th Avenue NE between SR-520 and NE 8th Street. He noted having those uses in that location was constant among all three of the action alternatives and is consistent with the existing zoning in the area. The suggestion was made that the city may want to address higher intensities in the area south of NE 12th Street should a light rail station be located there.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members that the meeting notes accurately reflect the actions taken by the committee with regard to medical office uses along 116th Avenue NE.

Mr. King said the notion of retail and commercial uses along the NE 20th Street corridor was also consistent among the three action alternatives and with the existing zoning. The intensities currently in place are similar to what the preliminary preferred alternative will allow; it is generally acknowledged that there will continue to be infill and continued development along the NE 20th Street corridor.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members that the meeting notes accurately reflect the actions taken by the committee with regard to retail and commercial uses along NE 20th Street.

The steering committee had a lengthy discussion at the workshop regarding a strategy for dealing with traditional light industrial uses in the Bel-Red corridor. Four different alternatives were reviewed before the committee selected Option 3. Under Option 3, existing LI uses would be allowed to remain in the area and continue operating. No new LI uses would be allowed in the corridor, though expansions of existing LI structures would be permitted. Discontinued LI uses could not be reestablished, but destroyed LI uses could be reconstructed.

Mr. Dennis asked if existing LI uses allowed to continue under Option 3 would be conforming or non-conforming uses. Mr. King said under the direction given by the committee, LI uses would be disfavored in the future but allowed to remain for as long as they wish. The exact terminology for how to refer to such uses has not been determined.

Mr. Schiring said the term “non-conforming” is something the committee was trying to move away from. Mr. King said staff has heard from both the committee and the public that there are concerns with being labeled “non-conforming.”

Mr. Rebhuhn said he could not recollect the committee using the word “disfavored” in referring to LI uses in the corridor. Mr. O’Neill said what the committee is focusing on is a vision for the future looking out to 2030. The direction given was that the future vision does not contemplate the development of new LI uses, which includes warehouse/distribution and manufacturing uses. The committee made it clear that steps should be taken to ensure that all existing LI uses will be permitted to remain where they are and functioning as they are, and that they will be permitted to expand and rebuild if destroyed. The word “disfavor” is applicable to the vision for the future, not any existing uses. Mr. Rebhuhn said the committee concluded that existing LI uses should be allowed and even encouraged to remain; the committee did not say such uses would be disfavored.

Mr. Lukens suggested that if no new LI uses will be allowed, it cannot be said that such uses are favored. He said he added his support for Option 3 because it permit existing LI uses to continue operating as they are and to rebuild if something untoward occurs. Coca Cola is a case in point; they have made it clear that they intend to stay where they are for some time to come. Option 3 makes is clear, however, that no new LI uses will be allowed, which sounds very much like they are disfavored.

Mr. Dennis agreed with Mr. Rebhuhn. In deciding that all existing LI uses should be allowed to remain, the committee was saying they love those uses and have no intention of driving them out. That is the simple message that needs to be stressed.

Ms. Tish held the view that Option 3 attempts to acknowledge the reality that the market forces will govern the uses.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Ptacek, Department of Planning and Community Development Director Matt Terry said the way the city normally deals use changes where the Comprehensive Plan contemplates something different from what exists is to treat them as non-conforming uses. He said staff is working to develop a new category of use that is allowed to continue and expand and be viable while discouraging other similar uses in the area from being created. That concept does not exist in the code currently. Option 3 is not a definition of non-conforming as it is currently used in code.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members to confirm its choice of Option 3 and to let staff work to develop a new term of art that accurately captures the particulars outlined by the option.

Mr. King said the lengthy discussion at the workshop on March 29 clarified the difference between LI uses and service uses. The committee concluded that of the four options presented it would prefer to see Options 1 and 3 combined. Under Option 1, existing uses can continue, new uses are allowed, expansions are permitted, and destroyed uses can rebuild. Option 3 would not permit new services uses with LI characteristics.

Mr. King said the recommendation of staff is that all existing and future service uses, except for those with LI characteristics, should be allowed to occur throughout the corridor without limitation. For service uses with LI characteristics, the principles of Option 3 should apply to the areas within the station nodes and within areas identified for standalone housing, and Option 1 should apply everywhere else within the corridor.

Ms. Sheffels asked if the nodes and their associated development patterns will remain as they are outlined even if for some reason light rail does not come through the corridor. Mr. O'Neill said that decision will be up to the committee. In the opinion of staff, the hope is that the land use plan will include light rail in the corridor, but all along it has been said that the land use will have to make sense with or without light rail.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members to accept the proposed application of Options 1 and 3 as outlined by staff.

Mr. King noted that at the workshop the committee agreed there should be four nodes within the corridor: at 152nd Avenue NE, at 130th Avenue NE, at 122nd Avenue NE, and one near Overlake Hospital. Referring to the node near the hospital, he explained that there are three potential station locations. The direction to date has been that the study process should not be the driver in deciding where the actual station location will be. It is understood that the intensity of development within the nodes will be higher than outside the nodes.

The committee confirmed its decision regarding the nodes.

Mr. O'Neill called attention to the land uses outside the nodes, beginning with the area to the south of Bel-Red Road and the notion of allowing a mix of office and housing. The direction given by the committee at the workshop was to permit housing uses to be included provided the overall intensity is no greater than what currently exists.

Ms. Sheffels said it was the intent of the committee to have housing uses to the south of Bel-Red Road be very limited and suggested the notes do not bring that out clearly.

Mr. Lukens concurred and pointed out the committee discussed the fact that housing in the area could only be one lot deep. He said he could support including the phrase "very low intensity" in referring to housing uses in the area.

There was consensus on the part of the committee to take that approach.

Mr. O'Neill called attention next to the area on the west side of 148th Avenue NE near Highland Center where the current focus is on retail. He said the alternatives dealt with the area differently, and the committee concluded there should continue to be a strong retail focus while allowing the introduction of some housing uses.

Mr. Dennis asked if the outlined vision would impose restrictions on the scale of retail uses; he asked specifically if Fred Meyer would be a permitted use under the vision. Mr. O'Neill said the vision does not contemplate any changes to what is currently allowed in the area; it simply permits an additional use on top of what is already permitted.

Mr. Terry pointed out that the Community Business zone currently allows retail and residential uses.

The committee confirmed its vision for the area to the west of 148th Avenue NE.

Mr. O'Neill allowed that there was a difference of opinion and split vote by the committee at the March 29 workshop with regard to the notion of an arts district. He said one of the guiding principles handed down by the Council is to build on existing community assets, such as the Pacific Northwest Ballet facility located in the corridor. The notion of creating an arts district does not contemplate a concentration of major performing arts facilities such as PACE but rather places for rehearsals, facilities in which art is created, and possibly small-scale performance spaces.

Mr. Glass questioned the establishment of an arts district if it will not carry with it a specific zoning classification. He proposed treating arts uses similar to service and LI uses by permitting them, or even encouraging them, alongside other uses. Mr. O'Neill agreed and said that is the approach envisioned by staff for bringing an arts district forward.

Mr. Lukens suggested the term "arts district" may in fact be too limiting; he held that a branch library might be appropriate in the corridor. Titling it "Arts/Civic District" could give it a broader community orientation.

Mr. Mathews said he recently visited Philadelphia and found that they have a neighborhood in which the arts is emphasized. The area is serving as a catalyst for bringing additional arts and related businesses into the city. Some of the spaces accommodate both studio space and a place for the artists to live. From the first day the concept has met with success, and the city is contemplating expanding the area, and it has all been brought about through incentives rather than zoning requirements.

Mr. Ptacek commented that the Bel-Red corridor will need a place for people to come together. When the Downtown Plan was worked on, it was agreed that there was no "there" there, so steps have been taken to address that issue. The same is true of Bel-Red. The notion of an arts district is supported by the Cultural Compass adopted by the city as the general direction with regard to the arts. If the city allows for an arts district, it will set the tone for the future of the area.

Ms. Roland said it would not be inconsistent to identify the area in which Pacific Northwest Ballet has its building as an arts district. There already has been a significant investment made in the arts there. She agreed that the term could be phrased in broader language along the lines of "Cultural/Civic."

Mr. Creighton urged the committee to be cautious about labeling a district for the arts just because there is an arts facility already there. He noted that the committee did not choose to make 130th the auto repair center because of the existing investment in those uses there. The committee needs to be cognizant of the fact that it is working to create a vision for the future.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members to keep the idea of an arts district on the map in a broader sense and to give staff license to develop a different term that captures the direction given.

Mr. O'Neill observed that the committee at the workshop discussed several options for the area in the northwest portion of the study area. The direction given was to permit housing there, particularly up on the ridge, both as a transitional use and a use that has lower impacts in terms of traffic generation. From a vision standpoint, housing would be the predominant use, though it would not be the only use.

Ms. Sheffels asked if the concern voiced earlier in the meeting by Mr. Lane regarding office uses in that part of the study area would be addressed by the recommendation of the committee. Mr. O'Neill allowed that it would. Existing uses would be allowed to remain, and under the new regulatory scheme housing would be favored, possibly by allowing for greater density, while allowing other uses as well. The vision would be for housing to be the predominant use over time.

Mr. Ptacek said there is good reason for housing to be located there, not the least of which is the view potential. He asked why other uses should even be allowed if the future vision is for housing to be the predominant use there. Mr. O'Neill agreed that the vision for housing would be defeated if the predominant use became something else over time. The Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code language would have to outline support for housing while potentially allowing for flexibility. He said if the committee wants to see housing and nothing else in the northwest portion of the study area, it should make that clear.

Mr. Lukens said the problem with a wishy-washy approach is that the 2030 goal of having 5,000 new housing units and 4.5 million square feet of commercial development may not be achieved. He said his preference would be for a much stronger statement calling for housing in the northwest corner. He added that every time a different use is contemplated someone will step forward claiming that they will be impacted, and the fact is they will; if the goal is to make sure there will be no new impacts, nothing will ever be changed.

Mr. Schiring concurred. When the recommendation of the committee is handed to the City Council, it should be clear and concise and not waffle on this point or that.

Mr. Dennis suggested the argument for allowing office in the northwest corner should be the same as the argument made to allow existing LI uses in other parts of the corridor to continue, to expand, and to rebuild without allowing new LI uses to come online.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Roland, Mr. O'Neill said the various land uses shown on the maps have been arranged by subarea based on the direction given by the committee. Once it is determined where the various uses should be allowed, the 5,000 housing units will be distributed to the areas designated for housing, though the density of each area may differ. When all is said and done, the collective housing areas will accommodate 5,000 new units. Ms. Roland suggested that if the areas selected for housing will in fact yield 10,000 new units instead of 5,000 new units, the committee should know that. Mr. O'Neill said the overall zoning buildout of the area could allow for more than 5,000 units. The development program is based on the horizon year 2030. As land use zoning changes are brought online and phased over time to mesh with transportation capacity, steps would need to be taken to meter the new housing units.

Mr. Lukens said anyone with an existing use who wants to continue it should be allowed to do so. However, if an area is designated for housing as part of the long-term vision, a new office building should not be allowed. He agreed that the arguments made about allowing existing LI uses should carry over and apply to uses other than housing in areas planned for housing in the future vision.

Mr. Mathews suggested that there will need to be some flexibility in determining the type of housing to be allowed in each area.

Mr. Glass agreed that the committee should not be unclear in setting forward a vision for the future. The fact is, the areas shown on the map for housing will not all prove to be good places to have housing; they might end up being a hard sell. Ms. Tish concurred, observing that in the areas where housing will be a hard sell the vision should include an alternative.

Mr. Terry pointed out that the map includes areas designated for mixed use developments, which by definition means there will be combination of uses. For the areas specifically designated for housing, as redevelopment occurs it will be with residential uses. If areas preliminarily shown for housing are not in fact appropriate for housing, they should be shown as something else.

Mr. Ptacek commented that over time as the area redevelops and as the stream corridors are improved and green areas are created, areas that would not currently be suitable for housing may very well be perfect for housing.

It was agreed to put a final decision on hold pending review of the remaining issues.

Mr. O'Neill said the area in the extreme southwest portion of the study area where Whole Foods and several auto dealers are located. He noted that the area is planned for General Commercial uses, and the committee on March 29 agreed the focus should be on retail and commercial. Since the workshop, a letter was received from the owner of a property in the southwest area seeking higher density and potentially an office or mixed use development.

Mr. Creighton observed that how transportation plays out in the area will have a significant impact.

Ms. Roland pointed out that Lake Bellevue is one of the few water features in the corridor. A zoning with mixed use housing and commercial may be better able to play off of the lake.

Mr. Glass commented that extending NE 10th Street through the area as contemplated could impact the development of the area. Mr. O'Neill showed on the map where the extension would be located, and he agreed that it will impact the development potential of the area.

Mr. Ptacek said the southwest part of the study area feels more like the downtown than the Bel-Red corridor. He said the proximity of the area to the freeway and other major roads makes it suitable for more intense development.

Mr. Lukens said he did not have a clear picture in his mind of what a mixed use development would look like in the southwest area. Mr. O'Neill agreed that the location is right for a mixed use development, but the current focus strongly favors retail and accommodating mixed use in this location could be challenging.

Mr. Rebhuhn commented that where the transit station near the hospital is located could impact the southwest corner. He added that Sound Transit, not the city, will be making the decisions about where to put the stations. Mr. Sparrman agreed but said the city will have a very strong

voice in the process of determining alignments and station locations before a final decision is made. He added that where the light rail line crosses I-405 will be addressed as part of the DEIS, which will take into account ideas for how to serve the downtown core. The crossing location will dictate station location, as will planning and engineering issues.

Mr. Creighton said he would not oppose some mixed use in the easternmost portion of the southwest corner where it abuts against what is proposed for mixed use development.

The committee agreed to come back to this issue before making a final decision.

Mr. McDonald said the parks and open space concept is very linear in its foundation. The stream corridors represent components, as do the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe right-of-way and the roadway system. As envisioned, the rail corridor trail would have intersections with trail systems and roadways. A number of other types of parks are also envisioned for the corridor which would be developed using both private and public sector funding. The major indoor recreation facility that has been a part of the discussion from the start is not included in the preliminary preferred alternative because it is more of a citywide consideration. Any of the alternatives could accommodate such a major facility.

Mr. McDonald said the anticipation is that the NE 16th Street corridor will have a major park facility along it providing for multiple opportunities for recreation and non-motorized transportation. The concept is being called "park blocks."

Mr. Glass observed that Bel-Red Road all the way across I-405 is shown as a green street, as is 124th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE. Mr. McDonald said all streets will incorporate some green components. To some degree, Bel-Red Road is already a green street because of the tree canopy it has. The various streets could also incorporate low-impact develop aspects to improve stormwater management.

Mr. Glass said he likes the park blocks concept and suggested extending the green line further east toward the gathering and community civic area.

Ms. Roland said one concern still shared by the Parks and Community Services Board is the lack of a larger, ten-acre park facility in the EIS for analysis.

Mr. Glass suggested that some of the areas shown for housing that may not in fact be right for housing could accommodate a major park facility.

Mr. Terry said the conclusion reached after talking with parks department staff was that because the facility has no established parameters, is not defined as to the function it will play, and has unknown locational characteristics, no level of analysis will be meaningful in the long run. General policies supporting the concept should be adopted, and once a site is identified the specific analysis can be made.

There was consensus on the part of the committee members with regard to the park and open space elements.

With regard to the development program, Mr. O'Neill reminded the committee members that the various alternatives had different development programs associated with them. At the March 29 workshop, the committee gave staff direction to use the development program for Alternative 3, with 5,000 new housing units and 4.5 million square feet of commercial space. He stressed that those figures are not on top of what is already in place.

The committee reiterated its support for the development program.

Returning to the discussion regarding the area to the south of NE 12th Street, Mr. Lukens said he would support the idea of mixed use at the eastern portion of the area, but would at least like to have some indication of what mixed use would look like 120th Avenue NE east.

The committee agreed to place a mixed use designation on the eastern end of the area designated housing/commercial.

4. Services Uses: Application of Options 1 and 3

This issue was dealt with during the review of the March 29 workshop notes and the preliminary preferred alternative maps.

5. Building Height: Analysis in Nodes

Planning Director Dan Stroh said a range of heights were included in the corridor study glossary. At the upper end, the contemplation has been that inside the nodes heights could reach four to six stories. Three different property owners have asked the committee to consider higher height limits; to keep the option alive will require inclusion in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Mr. Stroh explained that additional height does not necessarily mean additional density. He shared with the committee three different height scenarios for achieving the exact same FAR on a site. He said urban form is the real key.

Height is a factor contributing to urban form and community character. Additional height can dwarf features that are important to people and natural landforms. Depending on how height is arrayed across the landscape, it can evoke a sense of good planning or haphazard placement.

How height is implemented can be very important. In the downtown heights are transitioned from the highest in the core to the lowest on the edges of the downtown adjacent to the neighborhoods. Height can be sculpted to create a desired urban form and transition.

Height certainly can impact views, though many see the skyline view of higher buildings a great view in its own right. Good planning can take into consideration and accommodate views. With regard to a sense of human scale, even tall buildings can be crafted with setbacks above a certain height so as to give the impression at the street level that the buildings are not all that tall. Taking that approach also allows more light to filter to the street level.

Mr. Stroh said one of the guiding principles for the study is the notion of the Bel-Red corridor carving out for itself a differentiated economic niche. The question is whether that niche is tied to intensity, FAR and the market to be served, or to building height and urban form. At the high end, the focus in the most intense areas of the corridor has been on FARs in the neighborhood of 2.0, while in the downtown the FARs are in the range of 3.0 to 8.0.

If additional height is deemed appropriate for the corridor, the question to be asked will be how it will play into the overall implementation strategy. Additional height is often used as a land use incentive in exchange for providing certain amenities that benefit the overall community. In the DT-MU district, the basic height allowed is 60 feet for an office building; by providing amenities, height of up to 100 feet can be achieved; for residential buildings, the base height is 150 feet, which can be increased to 200 feet with amenities.

Mr. Stroh said staff does not have all of the answers associated with the height questions. Additional evaluation will need to be done. He allowed that direction to further evaluate height in the Final Environmental Impact Statement will need to come from the committee, and suggested that the appropriate locations would be the designated transit nodes. He said the maximum height asked for by a property owner has been 150 feet.

Ms. Tish voiced her support for incorporating additional study regarding height. She noted that the models provided by Wright Runstad showing what could be done on the old Safeway site did not appear to offer significant impacts associated with ten-story buildings. She said as a Bridle Trails resident she can appreciate the concerns that have been voiced, but commented that if done right taller buildings can be very positive for a community.

Mr. Schiring agreed that there should be more study done on the issue of height. Ms. Sheffels concurred, adding that the area to the southwest of Lake Bellevue should also be considered for additional height in the analysis.

Mr. Matthews said it would be interesting to know how much additional housing the different nodes could accommodate if height were allowed to be increased. He suggested that the additional height could result in meeting the housing goals in just a couple of nodes. Numerical evaluations would be helpful.

Mr. Glass added his support for studying additional height. He suggested the analysis should look at the different nodes independently.

Mr. Dennis said there are a host of questions related to height that will only be answered if it is studied further. Mr. Creighton concurred.

Ms. Sheffels asked that the height analysis include the area south of NE 12th Street and east of 120th Avenue NE that the committee earlier in the meeting designated as mixed use.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Roland, Mr. Stroh said as a rule of thumb residential buildings need ten feet for each floor, whereas office structures need 12 feet.

6. Process for Bellevue-Redmond Reconciliation

Mr. O'Neill said the work is already under way; staff hopes to have some initial findings ready for the next committee meeting.

7. Final Environmental Impact Statement: Steering Committee Direction to Proceed

Mr. O'Neill said it will take eight to ten weeks to produce the Final Environmental Impact Statement once direction to proceed is given by the committee. The regular schedule calls for the committee to meet again on May 3, but staff may not be able to be ready that soon. By the second week of May, the committee could begin the vision discussion aimed at articulating the graphics, and could review the initial analysis of the joint Bellevue-Redmond development program analysis. Then in June the committee could take a first cut at the height analysis and continue discussing the vision and concept plan. By July, the Final Environmental Impact Statement should be completed and the committee could potentially give direction on a preferred vision to the City Council.

Mr. Creighton suggested that while the committee wants to make sure it is continuing to move things along, it also wants to make sure it is not rushing its decisions. The process should not be allowed to get too far downstream before the committee has the opportunity to have the discussion regarding the vision for the area.

Mr. Rebhuhn concurred and suggested that discussion should occur at the next meeting.

Mr. Glass agreed as well and added that while the findings of the Final Environmental Impact Statement will not lock the committee into any particular groove, it will present a temptation to just use those findings to develop the plan.

Mr. Ptacek proposed scheduling a committee meeting for May 3 to wrap up some of the loose ends before giving the go-ahead for the Final Environmental Impact Statement work. Mr. O'Neill thought staff could at least have the vision discussion topic ready to go by then. The results of the joint Bellevue-Redmond work would not be ready by then.

There was agreement to schedule a committee meeting for May 3.

8. Next Meeting: May 3, 2007

9. Adjourn

Mr. Creighton adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.