



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 14, 2008

TO: Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: Update on NE 15th/16th project

At the May 22 Transportation Commission meeting, staff will provide an update and additional information on the design and function of the proposed NE 15th/16th Street. This roadway was discussed during the April 10 Commission meeting, and Commission requested staff return with information regarding how park/open space components would be incorporated along the corridor.

Background

At the March 13 and April 10 meetings, the Commission discussed all of the major transportation projects to be included in the draft Bel Red Subarea Plan. These projects are shown on Figure 1.

NE 15th/16th Street would extend from the existing NE 16th Street right-of-way east of 134th Avenue NE to the west, connecting with NE 12th Street. As outlined at the April 10 meeting, the project would have the following components:

- 4 lanes of through traffic with left turn lanes at signalized intersections
- Light Rail Transit at-grade, with an alignment and 2 stations in the median
- A frontage road with on-street parking on north side in development nodes
- Wide sidewalks on both sides lined with street trees
- Multi-purpose, off-street “cycle-track” on the north side
- Integrated, connected green elements along the alignment

One element of NE 15th/16th Street that was identified as part of the Bel-Red steering committee recommendation was a “parks blocks” concept. This idea was shown to the steering committee in June, 2007 as a concept that could include a 60 to 100 foot-wide area for open space and pedestrian/bicycle facilities on the north side of the roadway. This is shown in Attachment 2.

The Transportation Commission did not make a recommendation to include NE 15th/16th Street in the Bel-Red Subarea Plan pending additional information and context, including more information on how parks and open space concepts would be addressed along the corridor. The

Commission also was interested in hearing of the further deliberation by the Parks & Community Services Board.

Proposed Design

The design concept for NE 15th/16th Street has evolved since the steering committee concluded its work - driven by several framework principles. These principles include:

- Multi-modal focus: The cross-section accommodates light rail, automobile (in a 4 lanes), pedestrians, and bicycle facilities (recognizing that this will be the principal non-motorized corridor through the area connecting pedestrians and bicyclists to Downtown Bellevue)
- Strong interface with adjacent land use and with light rail stations
- Signature green linkage/connection with open space and amenities
- Integrate natural drainage practices where appropriate
- Right-of-way cost considerations
- Base design of roadway on proven examples

The current design includes 4 travel lanes, light rail alignment/stations in the median, a frontage road and on-street parking on the north side in development nodes, a separated bicycle track and pedestrian facilities, and street trees/green infrastructure components. The configuration calls for a cross-section width of 197 feet at light rail station locations, and 153 feet at non-station locations. These two cross-sections are shown in Attachments 3 and 4. The current design for NE 15th/16th Street does not include a “parks block” concept. The park/open space component would be accomplished at urban plazas in the development nodes, with broader parks/open space/stream corridor areas outside of the nodes.

Parks & Community Services Board Discussion

The Parks & Community Services Board considered the NE 15th/16th Street design concept at their May 13 meeting. Following a staff presentation and discussion, the Board arrived at the following conclusions:

- NE15th/16th Street as currently designed is a fine transportation corridor for all of the modes of transportation it is intended to carry
- The roadway is also incorporates elements of a “green” corridor with the multiple rows of street trees
- Absent the park blocks, NE15th/16th Street should not be considered a component of the Bel-Red Subarea park and open space plan
- Parks and open space can be accommodated elsewhere in the Subarea, however, current policy language should be strengthened to provide greater assurance that the park implementation strategy is accomplished

The Board directed staff to prepare a letter to the Transportation Commission and the Planning Commission that summarizes their concerns, conclusions and recommendations. That letter was

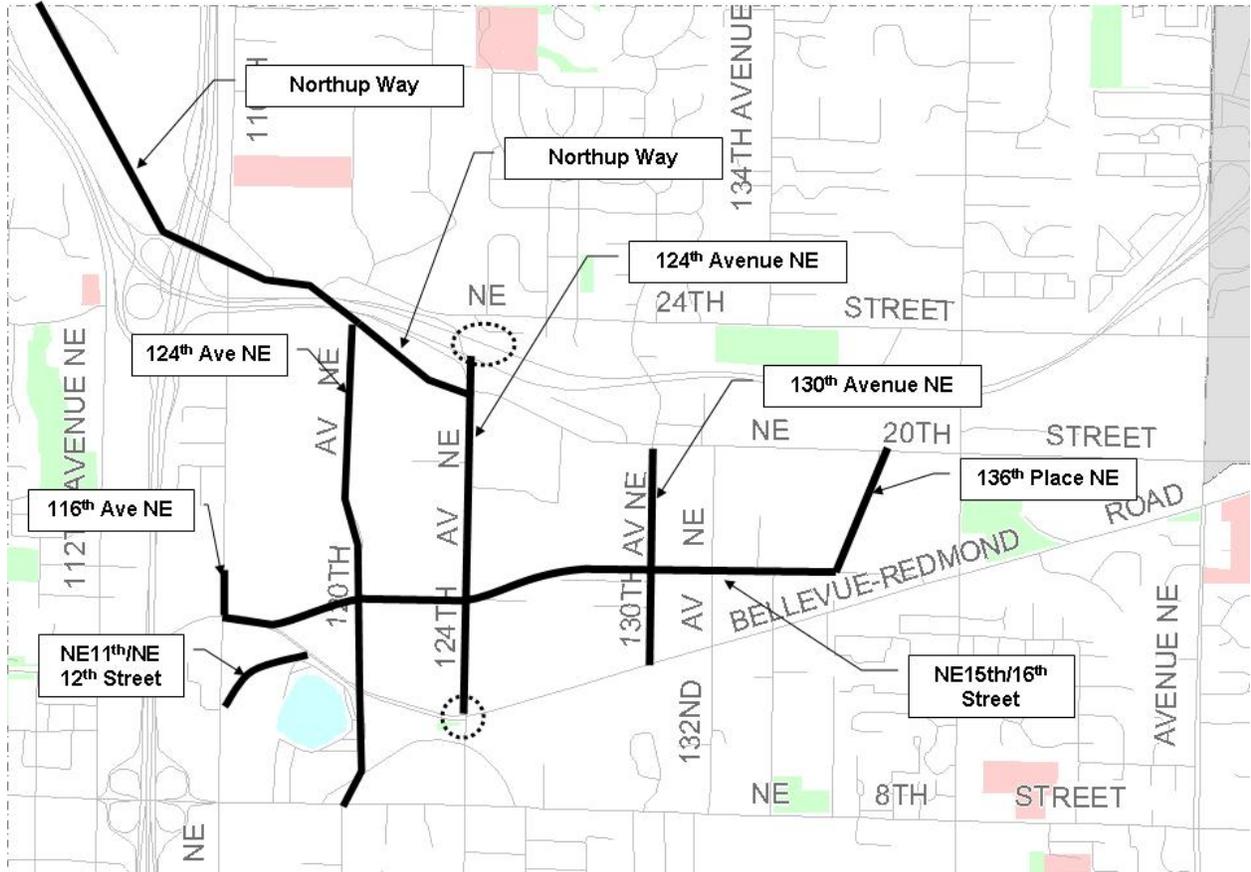
not available at the time this packet was prepared. Staff will provide this letter in the Commission's desk packet on May 22.

At the May 22 meeting staff will provide more information on the NE 15th/16th Street design concept, focusing on the parks/open space element. Given that several commissions have been deliberating on this project, and given the scope, complexity and cost, the City Council is scheduled to receive an update on the project design on May 27. We will brief the Commission at a subsequent meeting on the outcome of that discussion.

If you have any questions prior to the May 22 meeting please let us know.

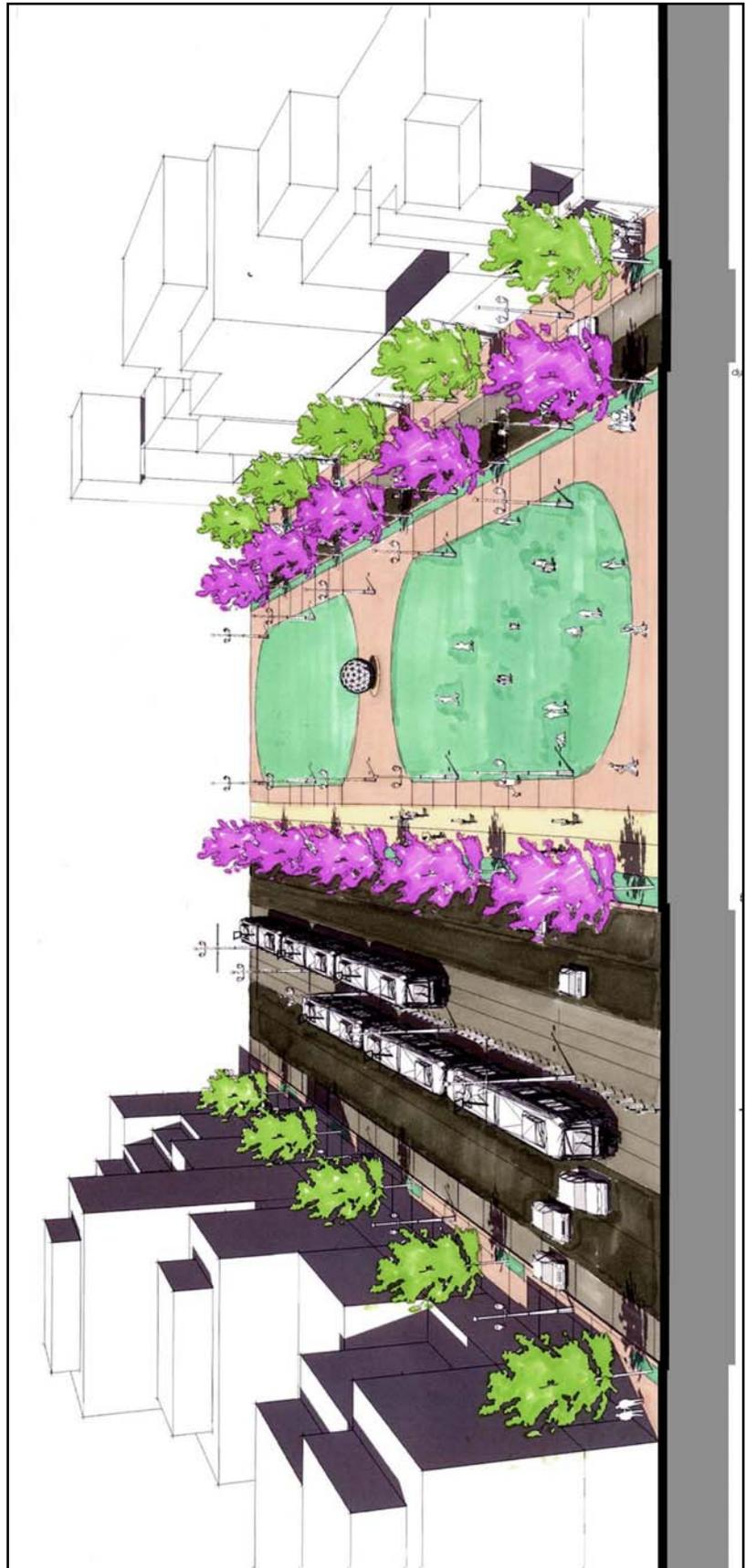
Attachment 1

Bel-Red Subarea – Arterial Projects



Attachment 2

**NE 15th/16th Street
Park Blocks Concept**



Attachment 3

Cross section – Station location

