



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 6, 2007

TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Kevin McDonald AICP, Senior Transportation Planner, 452-4558
Bellevue Transportation Department
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SUBJECT: Bel-Red Corridor Project Briefing – Preliminary Preferred Alternative

At the June 14 meeting, I will review the preliminary preferred alternative for the Bel-Red Corridor Project as developed by the project steering committee, and discuss next steps on the project.

When last I briefed the Transportation Commission on the status of the Bel-Red Corridor Project - on January 25 - the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) had just been released. The steering committee used the analysis of the four alternatives studied in the DEIS, plus considerable public input, to develop a preliminary preferred alternative. This alternative is a “hybrid” of the DEIS alternatives, comprised of desirable components of each alternative embedded in the preliminary preferred alternative.

One of the purposes of this briefing is to more fully discuss the transportation system components of the preliminary preferred alternative. This is an opportunity for the Commission to provide comments for the steering committee’s consideration and for ongoing staff work to develop design and finance strategies for the transportation system.

Background – Steering Committee Action

The following is a summary of the steering committee’s recent actions leading up to the preliminary preferred alternative.

March 29:

During this 5-hour workshop, the steering committee began developing a preliminary preferred alternative, creating a hybrid choice from components of the 4 alternatives studied in the DEIS. The committee provided direction to staff on a number of different topics, which were further developed and brought to the committee for review at their April 25 meeting.

April 25:

The committee worked through the products and issues that staff had prepared based on direction provided at the March 29 workshop. The committee also considered issues pertaining to building height in the corridor, and directed that height analysis be done for specific locations in the corridor as part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

May 3:

The committee discussed components of the preliminary preferred alternative, and their ideas for a future vision of the area. The committee adopted a motion directing staff to proceed with the FEIS based on the preliminary preferred alternative.

Summary of Preliminary Preferred Alternative

Maps showing the land use, parks, environmental, and transportation components of the steering committee's preliminary preferred alternative are attached (Attachments 1 and 2). Below is a summary of the alternative (more information on all of these items is included in the April 25 memo to the steering committee, Attachment 3).

- Land Use
 - Land use pattern with four development “nodes” of mixed use development, around potential light rail stations. Two of these light rail stations are located outside the study area (one at Overlake Medical Center and one in Redmond’s Overlake district) and were also assumed in the “no action” alternative.
 - Accommodates a development program of 4.5 additional square feet of commercial development and 5,000 housing units between now and 2030 (same development program as assumed under Alternative 3 analyzed in the DEIS). This is the 2030 market forecast identified by the project’s economic consultant.
 - Existing light industrial uses would be allowed to remain, expand, and be rebuilt; vision does not contemplate new light industrial uses.
 - Most service uses would be allowed to remain, and future uses constructed, throughout the planning area. Service uses with impacts that may be incompatible with housing and more dense mixed use development (e.g. noise, use of hazardous materials, etc.) would be allowed to remain in places where they already exist, and new ones would be allowed in parts of the planning area outside of housing areas and mixed use nodes.

- Transportation—The transportation system components include several major projects, including:
 - Extension, and expansion, of NE 16th Street, to provide capacity for automobiles, non-motorized transportation, green spaces, and a shared alignment with light rail transit.
 - Extension of NE 10th Street to connect with 124th Avenue NE.
 - Expansions of NE 116th, 120th, and 124th Avenues.
 - Completion of the interchange at 124th Avenue NE and SR 520 to provide connections to and from the east;
 - Pedestrian and bicycle improvements throughout the corridor, and connections to the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe corridor where a future multiple use trail is contemplated.

- Environment
 - Improvements to riparian corridors to attain multiple benefits: place-making, habitat enhancements, greenways and trails, and green infrastructure.
 - Specifically tailored concept planning has been completed for the West Tributary (greenway/trail) and Goff Creek (urban place-making). Concepts are applicable to the other riparian corridors.

- Watershed-wide application of low-impact development techniques to manage storm water, protect ecological function and create community amenities.
- Committee direction is to attain improvements through use of incentives or City investments, not new regulatory requirements
- Parks/Open Space
 - Open space opportunities and trails along stream corridors
 - Community park facilities
 - Neighborhood “pocket” parks
 - Urban plazas – especially near transit stations;
 - Connective trails and corridors (particularly the NE 16th Street and the BNSF corridor)

Transportation System Components of the Preliminary Preferred Alternative

The transportation system components to support the land use vision for 2030 includes several major projects:

Roadway Improvements

- Extension, and expansion, of NE 16th Street, to provide capacity for automobiles, non-motorized transportation, green spaces, and a shared alignment with light rail transit.
- Extension of NE 10th Street to connect with 124th Avenue NE.
- Expansions of NE 116th, 120th, and 124th Avenues.
- Completion of the interchange at 124th Avenue NE and SR 520 to provide connections to and from the east

Light Rail

- Alignment through the heart of the corridor on approximately NE 16th Street, and on 136th Ave NE
- East of downtown, alignment may cross I-405 at approximately NE 12th Street or NE 6th Street.
- Alignment of the eastward extension to Redmond may proceed on NE 20th Street or SR 520/NE 24th Street.
- Overlake Hospital Station not specifically sited due to uncertain I-405 crossing location. It could be in three different locations to serve this area, at: NE 12th Street/I-405; West of lake Bellevue; or at NE 8th Street/116th Ave NE
- Two stations within the Bel-Red Corridor: NE 16th Street/122nd Ave NE and NE 16th Street/130th Ave NE.
- Redmond Overlake Village Station, serving the Angelo’s Nursery site in Bellevue, at approximately 152nd Ave NE/NE 24th Street

Non-Motorized Transportation

- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements would be implemented throughout the corridor
- Arterial improvements can be planned and mapped – and incorporated into the update of the Pedestrian And Bicycle Transportation Plan.
- Neighborhood street non-motorized facility improvements will be guided by the vision for creating walkable (and bikeable) communities.
- Non-motorized connections to the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe corridor would be provided.

Green Infrastructure

One element of both the transportation system and open space system in the Bel-Red Corridor should be innovative methods of managing stormwater to provide more environmentally sensitive and aesthetically pleasing solutions that serve multiple functions, including creating publicly accessible open space. Designed and developed in this light, green stormwater management infrastructure related to the transportation system (swales, rain gardens, detention ponds) can be significant community amenities.

Implementation

The Bel-Red Corridor transportation system will likely be implemented through a mix of public funding and private development standards, incentives and funding. These implementation strategies will be developed – with Transportation Commission input - subsequent to the steering committee's final recommendation.

Next Steps

Over the next several months, the steering committee will meet to refine their preliminary preferred alternative. Issues that the committee is expected to address include:

- building height,
- refinements to the preferred alternatives map, and
- broad policy recommendations on how to implement the recommended vision.

Staff anticipates that the committee will be ready to make a recommendation on the future vision of the Bel-Red corridor to the City Council in September. Once the Council receives the committee's recommendation, we anticipate that work would begin with City boards and commissions on potential changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan, subarea plans, and Land Use Code, which would likely be considered by Council in early 2008. During this period, staff would also be working with City of Redmond staff on an update to the Bel-Red/Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) agreement, based on the future preferred visions for both Bellevue and Redmond in the two cities' respective planning areas.

Below is a general timeframe for upcoming milestones in the process. In addition to the events itemized below, staff will provide additional briefings to city boards and commissions this summer.

Mid-July: Final EIS released

Late July: Additional steering committee deliberations on preferred alternative

September: Steering committee recommendation to City Council on future vision for the corridor

Fall 2007: Council refers Steering Committee recommendations to City Boards and Commissions for additional work on amendments to city plans and codes

Winter 2008: Council considers changes to City plan and codes; updated BROTS agreement

Transportation Commission Input

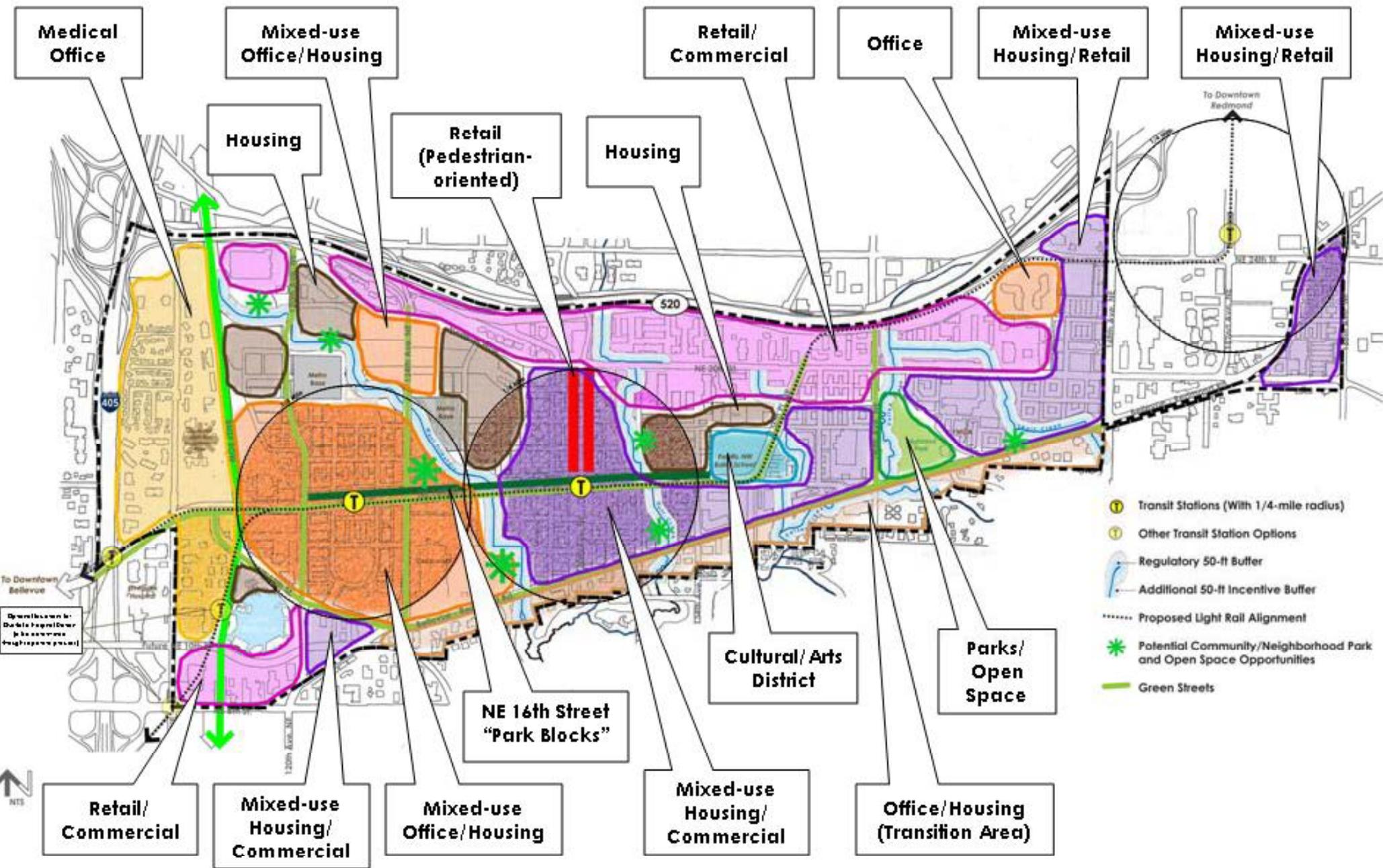
I will be happy to relay comments from the Transportation Commission to the steering committee at their July meeting.

The Planning Commission will be the lead in developing new policies and regulations to implement the Bel-Red Corridor vision. Input from the Transportation Commission during this process will be valuable especially in the update of the Transportation Facilities Plan, and transportation-related policies and implementation strategies. I will continue to work closely with other Transportation Department staff to develop implementation strategies and will schedule briefings with the Commission, to ensure timely input into the process.

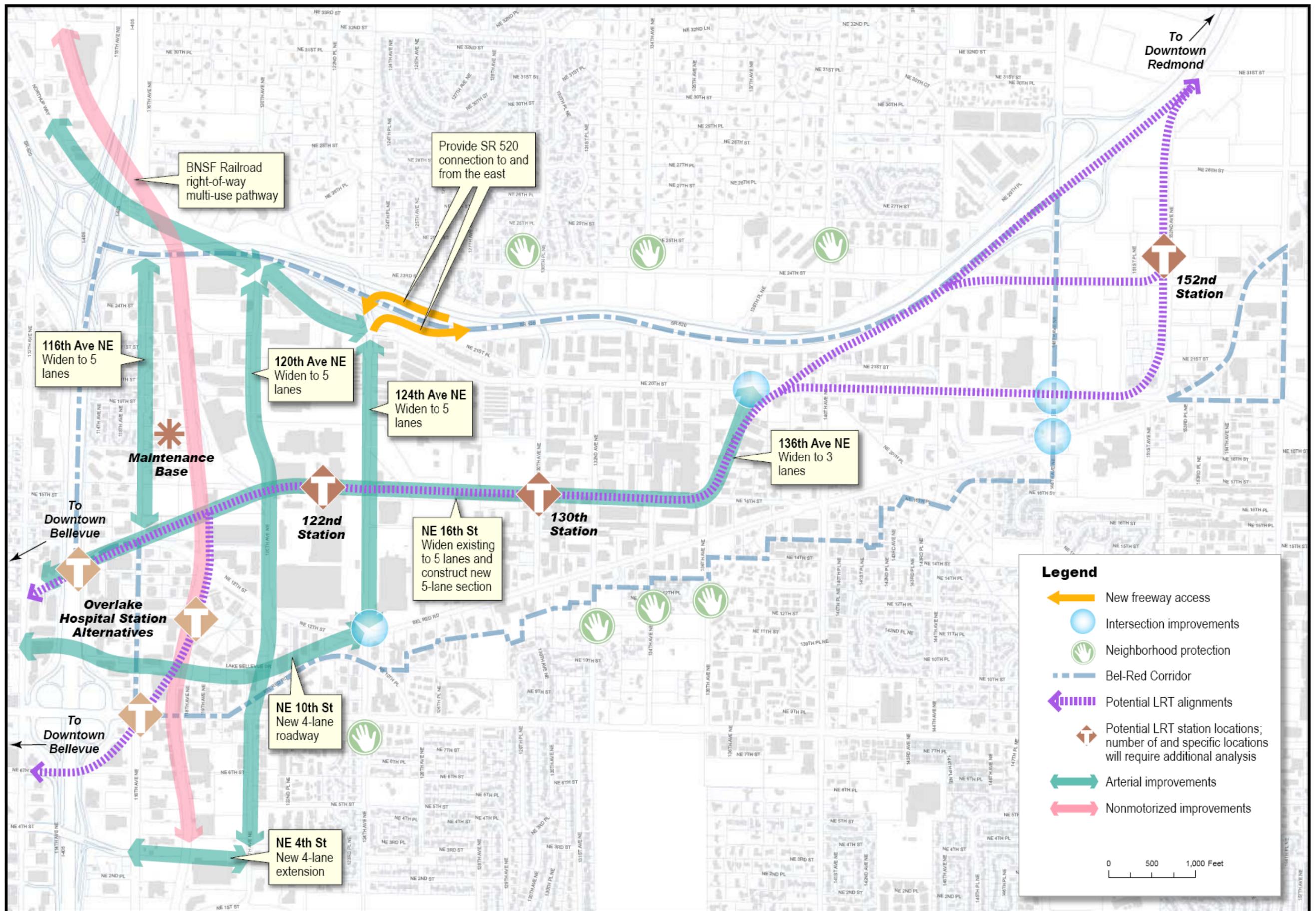
Please feel free to contact me if you have any comments or questions.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1: Preliminary Preferred Alternative Map (May 3, 2007)
- 2: Transportation Components of Preliminary Preferred Alternative (May 3, 2007)
- 3: Memorandum to Bel-Red Steering Committee highlighting policy direction from the Committee's March 29 workshop (April 25, 2007)



Preliminary Preferred Alternative – May 3, 2007



Transportation Components of Preliminary Preferred Alternative – April 25, 2007



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 23, 2007

TO: Bel-Red Corridor Project Steering Committee

FROM: Kevin O'Neill, Transportation (425-452-4064)
Kevin McDonald, Transportation (425-452-4558)
Emil King, PCD (425-452-7223)

SUBJECT: Policy direction identified at the March 29 Steering Committee workshop—
Agenda Item 3

During the steering committee workshop on March 29, the committee provided direction on a number of issues pertaining to development of the preliminary preferred alternative. At the April 25 meeting, staff will be presenting two maps that depict the steering committee's direction to date on the preliminary preferred alternative land use and transportation components. The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the discussion that the committee had on these items on March 29, and document the direction that the committee provided. This document should be read carefully to ensure that it accurately reflects the committee's direction at the workshop. At the April 25 meeting, we will review this list with you, and ask if there are any changes/revisions that should be made, either to the list or the accompanying maps that we hope reflect your direction.

The following list is based on the order that these items were discussed at the March 29 workshop.

No Action Alternative

- *Elimination of No Action / Existing Plans Alternative.* Staff described the "No Action/Existing Plans" alternative, and explained that while it's termed "no action" that doesn't mean that change would not occur over time; it means that change and development/redevelopment would happen under the existing policy framework (Comprehensive Plan designations, zoning, etc.). The committee determined that this alternative should no longer be considered. However, they recognized the following:
 - There could, and likely will, be elements of the "no action/existing plans" alternative in the preferred alternative.
 - Eliminating the "no action/existing plans" alternative does not mean that the committee is discounting existing uses; rather they suggested that the future vision should be based on an alternative policy framework.

Transportation

- *Transportation Components.* After review and discussion of the transportation components included in all of the "action" alternatives (these are included in the attached transportation map) the committee determined that all of the projects identified should move forward for further

review and analysis. There was some discussion, based on the March 1 meeting direction, of the 124th Avenue/SR 520 interchange and NE 10th Street extension from 116th Avenue to 120th Avenue, and the committee determined that these projects should remain in the preferred alternative. In their discussion, the committee made the following points:

- There is a need to think about transportation improvements on the east end of the corridor, and potentially re-visit whether additional improvements might be needed in this area, particularly given Redmond's planning in the Overlake area, and the amount of growth potentially contemplated in this area. There is also a need to better understand 156th Avenue/NE 24th accident data
- There is a need to retain the potential for long-term rail (light rail or commuter rail) use in the BNSF corridor, in addition to a regional trail. This topic should be revisited in the future.

Riparian Corridors

- *Acceptance of streams enhancement concepts.* The committee reviewed work done by City staff and EDAW regarding the "great streams" concepts for Bel-Red, which involve conceptual ideas for stream improvements (focusing on the West Tributary and Goff Creek) to attain multiple benefits: place-making (could become a focus for development and/or parks); habitat enhancement; greenways and trails; and green infrastructure (new development could be more sustainable in terms of treatment of storm water, etc.). Achieving this vision will require wider riparian corridors than currently exist plus acquiring and developing "opportunity areas" where elements of the parks system interface with the streams and may incorporate components of storm water management The committee endorsed the concepts presented, so more work will be done on developing these as part of the preferred alternative. In endorsing these concepts, the committee emphasized the following:
 - Improving stream conditions and corridors in Bel-Red should not be done through increased regulation. The baseline should be the City's existing Critical Areas Ordinance. Additional improvements to the stream corridors should be done through use of incentives (for example, offering increased density in favor of greater setbacks) and/or use of City investments.

Land Use (NOTE: The land use direction is reflected on the attached land use map)

- *Agreement with land use constants.* At the March 1 committee meeting, staff discussed with the committee several constants and variables pertaining to the land use concepts in the various alternatives. There were a few constants relating to all of the land use maps that the committee agreed should be part of the preferred alternative. These were:
 - Medical office uses along the 116th Avenue NE corridor. Uses in this area could include other office uses (not just medical), but the vision would be that medical office would be an emphasis due to proximity with Overlake Hospital Medical Center. The intensities could be different, depending on whether a development node was located near the hospital (was discussed under Development Nodes item later in agenda).
 - Retail commercial emphasis along the NE 20th corridor. All of the alternatives (including the no action/existing plans alternative) assume retail along the central portion of the NE 20th Street corridor. Uses in this corridor would have the same

planned development intensity as under current zoning (so this would not be an area contemplated for more intense development).

- *Selection of Option for “Traditional Light Industrial Uses”* In beginning the discussion about the rest of the preferred land use pattern, and the location of potential development nodes (see below), the committee engaged in a discussion on different ways to treat light industrial (LI) uses in the corridor. This is an important topic, in that approximately half of the study area is presently planned and zoned for LI uses. In addition, out of the 750 acres of land in Bellevue zoned for LI uses, approximately 450 acres, or 60 percent, is located in the Bel-Red corridor.

While there are a number of different uses in the LI-designated portion of Bel-Red, LI uses are generally distinguished as either industrial and manufacturing (generally characterized by business activities, manufacturing, assembly, processing, and similar operations) or warehouse/distribution (generally characterized by businesses involved in the warehousing and distribution of wholesale goods and supplies). There is some point of confusion about this, because many of the service uses (see next item) are designated in the LI area, although are also located in many other parts of the planning area (and city) as well.

The committee was presented with, and discussed, four options with how to deal with LI uses in the corridor in the future as part of the preferred vision. These options are outlined in the table attached to the memorandum. The options ranged from allowing new LI uses across the whole LI district (Option 1) to disfavoring LI uses (Option 4). After many questions and deliberation, the committee decided on Option 3. Under this option, exiting LI uses would be allowed, and could be continued by future owners. Expansions of existing LI structures would be permitted, and destroyed LI structures could be reconstructed. However, new LI uses would not be allowed, and discontinued LI uses could not be re-established.

- *Selection of Option for Services Uses.* Another very important issue that the committee discussed prior to further deliberation of the preferred land use pattern was how to accommodate service uses. Accommodating service uses in the future is one of the objectives adopted by the committee, and there has been much support for this by existing businesses and members of the public. The services sector is very broad, and approximately 50 percent of existing businesses fall into this category. Service uses include health care, business and professional office, household repair, and auto-oriented services (such as auto repair).

The committee’s discussion acknowledged that generally speaking, services could, and would, be located throughout the corridor in any of the alternatives, and should in the preferred alternative. The discussion then focused on a specific category of service uses that had been brought up many times by business owners and the public. These service uses include auto repair, automotive parts and accessories (including tire shops), auto dealers and boat dealers (particularly the service/repair component), car washing and detailing, towing, and car rental. These uses were distinguished for many reasons: they often tend to have characteristics (such as noise or odor) that are similar to LI uses, and thus may impact other uses; they are clustered in portions of the corridor, including around the proposed 130th Avenue node; and they are valued by members of the community in this location.

The committee discussed and deliberated on four options to accommodate these specific types of service uses. The options (see attachment) ranged from allowing them across the district (Option 1) to disfavoring them in the corridor (Option 4). The committee decided on a combination of two options: Option 1 (allowed across the district) for many areas of the

corridor, but Option 3 (Existing uses allowed, but restrictions on new uses) in areas of the corridor that would have concentrations of housing.

- *Selection of four nodes, generally located at 116th Avenue, 122nd Avenue, 130th Avenue, 152nd Avenue (Redmond)* One major theme in all of the action alternatives is a “nodal” development pattern that would concentrate development in certain areas, in conjunction with potential future light rail stations. The action alternatives included a range of nodal locations: 116th Avenue NE, 122nd Avenue NE, 130th Avenue NE, 148th Avenue NE, and 152nd Avenue NE (in Redmond). The committee discussed the relative merits of the various nodal locations.

The committee started by discounting the proposed node at 148th Avenue NE in favor of the node at 152nd Avenue NE in Redmond. Redmond’s Overlake planning has focused on this location for an LRT station, and the committee concurred. The committee then expressed support for a transit station/node in the proximity of Overlake Hospital Medical Center, near 116th Avenue NE. It was explained that the specific location of that station is dependent on how the alignment gets to Bel-Red from downtown (either via NE 6th Street or NE 12th Street), so the specific location of that station could not be established. However, the committee generally endorsed a station/node in the vicinity of the hospital.

After stating their position on these two locations, the committee discussed the number of nodes/stations in the area. This led to a discussion on ideal light rail station spacing. Sound Transit said that a mile between stations was probably ideal, but stations could be closer together in more urban settings. After discussion, the committee expressed their preference for 4 nodes/station locations between I-405 and 156th Avenue NE. In addition to stations near Overlake Hospital and 152nd Avenue in Redmond, the committee supported a node/station at 122nd Avenue NE, and a node/station at (generally) 130th Avenue NE. The committee then discussed the land use character at each node (next item).

- *Mix of land uses within nodes:* The committee discussed the preferred land use pattern in each node determined (above), and endorsed the following development patterns:
 - 116th Avenue – Office, with an emphasis on medical office
 - 122nd Avenue – Office and housing, with more of an emphasis on office
 - 130th Avenue – Housing, retail, and services, with pedestrian-oriented retail street
 - 152nd Avenue – “4 over 1” or “5 over 1” mixed use housing/retail in Uwajimaya triangle along 156th Avenue

Land Use Outside of Nodes

- *Mix of office and housing south of Bel-Red Road.* The south side of Bel-Red Road is, for the most part, planned and zoned for office uses. The existing development pattern is low intensity office buildings (buildings are typically one or two stories). This land use pattern is an appropriate buffer between the industrial or commercial uses north of Bel-Red Road, and the single-family residential neighborhoods to the south. All of the action alternatives envisioned that this area will retain the character that currently exists to help maintain the transition to residential areas to the south. The committee discussed whether the area should remain as office, or also include housing (while staying at low development intensities). The committee determined that while office should remain a focus, that housing should also be included in the preferred vision for this area.

- *Area west of 148th Avenue area – mixed housing and retail.* The area just to the west of 148th Avenue NE within the Bel-Red corridor is currently planned, zoned, and developed as auto-oriented retail uses. Large and medium size shopping centers are located in this area, including the Fred Meyer store on 148th Avenue NE and Evergreen Center on 140th Avenue NE. The committee discussed whether the future development of the area should include housing as well as retail. The committee concluded that while retail would remain an important element in future development, mixed use development with housing in addition to retail should be part of the preferred vision for this area. The committee also believed this same retail/housing land use pattern should be in place in the vicinity of the Safeway store on 140th Avenue NE, near Highland Community Center.
- *Arts District.* One of the alternatives had an arts district (labeled as “Civic/Arts”) indicated in the general vicinity of the Pacific Northwest Ballet school on 136th Avenue NE. The concept of the arts district is to build upon this the PNB school concept through adaptive re-use of existing buildings for arts classroom or rehearsal spaces. This could result in a cluster of studio, rehearsal, and potentially performance spaces that could be used by artists and/or non-profit organizations. Uses could also include creation of crafts such as pottery, sculpture, glass-blowing, etc. The committee had considerable discussion of the merits of this proposal, and questions of clarification of what this might be, what it would look like, etc. After a split vote, the committee elected to keep this concept in the preliminary preferred alternative.
- *Housing in northwest portion of planning area (south side of NE 20th Street).* The area in the northwest portion of the study area (north of the Metro base along the south end of NE 20th Street) was shown as housing in many of the alternatives. This was driven in part by the idea that housing in this area could take advantage of view corridors to the west (this is one of the highest points in the study area), and also benefit from potential improvements to the West Tributary stream corridor. The committee elected to have a housing emphasis in this part of the corridor in the preliminary preferred alternative.
- *Retail/commercial southwest portion of study area (south of NE 12th Street).* The southwest portion of the study area (generally south of NE 12th Street and contiguous to Lake Bellevue) is currently planned and zoned for General Commercial uses, and has a combination of retail, office, and car dealerships. One of the action alternatives designated this area for higher-intensity office/housing uses, the other alternatives kept a retail emphasis for the area. The committee elected to continue to designate this area as retail commercial in the preliminary preferred alternative.

Parks/Open Space

- *Acceptance of parks and open space concepts.* The committee was presented with a set of parks/open space concepts that could potentially be part of the preferred alternative. These included the following components:

 - Open space/trails along stream corridors
 - Community park facilities
 - Neighborhood “pocket” parks
 - Connective trails and corridors (including along NE 16th Street, the BNSF corridor, etc.

The committee also discussed other parks and open space concepts, such as “green infrastructure” and consideration of a major indoor recreation facility. The committee endorsed these concepts as part of the preliminary preferred alternative.

Development Program

- *Alternative 3 development program.* Each alternative had a different development program, meaning the amount of future commercial development and housing that would be accommodated in the area by the year 2030. The committee determined that the development program for the area should be 4.5 million square feet of future commercial development, and 5,000 housing units. This was the development program envisioned for Action Alternative 3 that was analyzed in the DEIS.

OTHER ISSUES

- *Affordable Housing.* During the discussion, the committee talked about affordable housing in the area. Several steering committee members spoke of the need to integrate affordable housing into the neighborhoods that are part of the Bel-Red vision. There was a point made about affordable housing being an issue of citywide importance that may best be addressed by the City Council. A discussion of affordable housing may be included in the steering committee’s recommendation to Council.

If you have questions about this prior to the meeting, please let us know.

Attachments:

- Map of preliminary preferred alternative
- Map of transportation components of preliminary preferred alternative
- Table outlining range of strategies for traditional LI uses
- Table outlining strategies for selected service uses