



DATE: October 28, 2010

TO: Bellevue Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Station Area Planning

In the study session on November 4, staff will brief the Commission on the project to develop a station area plan surrounding the planned 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE light rail station in the Bel-Red Subarea.

No action is requested of the Transportation Commission at the November 4 meeting.

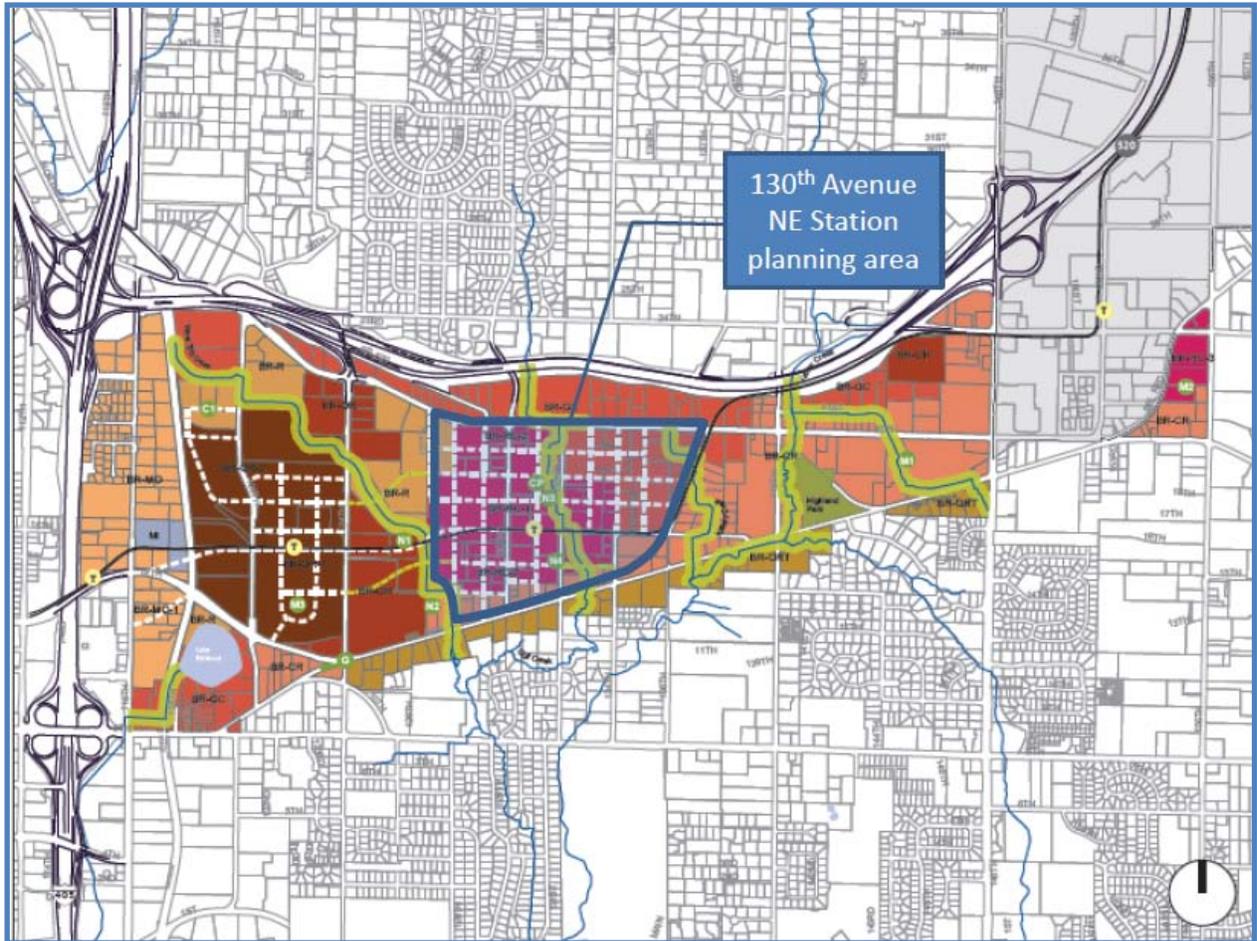
## **BACKGROUND**

In 2009, the Bellevue City Council adopted policies and regulations intended to transform the Bel-Red Subarea from a light industrial and auto-oriented commercial corridor to a series of vibrant, mixed-use, livable neighborhoods supported by light rail transit. The Transportation Commission, along with several other City boards and commissions, was very involved with the plan update as well; the Transportation Commission reviewed and provided comments on all of the draft policies and projects in the plan pertaining to transportation.

[Sound Transit](#) is planning to build and operate light rail through the Bel-Red Subarea, en route between downtown Bellevue and the Overlake Transit Center, with stations at 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

While the area directly adjacent to the planned 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station is under a single ownership, the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station area includes many smaller parcels. This presents a challenging setting for coordinated redevelopment in the area around the transit station. On the other hand, there are opportunities here to create a unique mixed-use neighborhood that embraces walkability and transit, takes advantage of and enhances natural amenities, and has a well connected pedestrian and bicycle system, consistent with the vision for this area in the Bel-Red Subarea Plan.

The map on the following page shows the approximate area for the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station area planning work, in the context of the Bel-Red Subarea land use plan map. The planning area is not the traditional  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile radius circle, but instead reflects natural barriers like the West Tributary stream and wetland complex, and manmade edges such as NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Bel-Red Road. Even these are not hard boundaries, as some elements such as planning for pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and stream corridor restoration may pierce these edges.



### Station Area Planning 101

Since Bellevue is just beginning to embark on station area planning around planned East Link stations (beginning with the 130<sup>th</sup> station area), below is some background information about the station area planning process.

- What is station area planning?

Station area plans are typically developed around planned light rail stations (although bus rapid transit stations may also be the focus). Detailed planning is done for the area within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius of a station - a scope that is more focused than for subarea planning or a comprehensive plan. Station area planning is also distinct from the work that a transit agency does on the design and construction of station platforms. While station area planning may help influence design and operation of stations; overall it is focused on what happens in close proximity to the station – areas that are within the City’s purview - rather than on the station itself.

- What is included in a station area plan?

Specific issues that station area planning typically address are more detailed and specific due to the smaller, more focused planning area than a subarea plan. The geographic and topical scope

of any individual station area planning effort may vary widely depending on the relationship to the surrounding area and the propensity for redevelopment. The table below provides a comparison for what is typically included in a subarea versus a station area plan.

Subarea Plan	Station Area Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals and policies focused on land use, urban design, the environment, transportation, housing, parks, etc. (similar to a Comprehensive Plan element but focused on a specific geographic area)</li> <li>• Land use plan map</li> <li>• Planned transportation, parks, and other infrastructure projects and improvements</li> <li>• Finance plan for improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific implementation actions (as opposed to goals and policies)</li> <li>• Focused market analysis to identify sites that are near term redevelopment opportunities, and preparing design concepts for those sites</li> <li>• Specific types and locations of pedestrian connections</li> <li>• Specific bicycle routing to and bicycle parking standards at stations</li> <li>• Appropriate bus routing to serve stations</li> <li>• Recommended changes to land use code or design standards to ensure good transit-oriented development</li> <li>• Identify and address spillover effects of light rail on adjacent neighborhoods</li> </ul>

- Why is it important to do station area planning prior to light rail operations?

Many cities have found that conducting the station area planning process during engineering design for light rail is an effective means to identify local actions that can result in the most benefit from the transit investment.

For example, the City of Seattle began an extensive station area planning process in 1998 (prior to adoption of the Sound Transit Central Link FEIS). Station area planning in Seattle built upon recently completed neighborhood plans. While each station area is unique, the process identified prospective zoning changes and infrastructure investments at each planned light rail station in the city. The initial station area planning process concluded in 2001, well before the start of light rail service in 2009. Now, city investments are occurring and new development projects are springing up around several of the SE Seattle light rail stations in accordance with the station area plans.

In Bellevue, a “Light Rail Best Practices” document was prepared that identified various actions taken by other light rail cities around the country. Developing light rail station area plans before design and development of stations was identified as a key “best practice”. The station area planning process can help to identify mitigation and betterments as well as coordination and timing of city capital investments with light rail construction.

Sound Transit is finishing defining the light rail alignment and is embarking on station design. This is an opportune time for Bellevue to proactively look at these issues in a broader context in order to influence Sound Transit design decisions, while identifying local actions, investments, and key redevelopment opportunities.

## **130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Station Area Planning**

The 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station area planning process will prepare a detailed plan for land redevelopment, environmental enhancements, and new transportation facilities around the station, building on the framework of the adopted [Bel-Red Subarea Plan](#) and the updated zoning in the [Land Use Code](#). The station area plan will address the details, connections and opportunities for redevelopment, and will identify conditions essential to catalyze vibrant transit-oriented development. Key issues the plan will address:

- Details for implementing Bel-Red Subarea Plan policies and zoning strategies paying attention to urban design, land use-particularly housing, open space, the pedestrian realm, bicycle facilities, and streets – particularly 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and the planned NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Strategies to build off of existing strengths and characteristics to guide the development of a transit-oriented neighborhood.
- Design guidance for redevelopment within the station area to provide and enhance walking and bicycling access to the station.
- Improvements to non-motorized access to the planned station from adjacent neighborhoods and regional trails (planned BNSF Trail, SR 520 Trail), and within the area surrounding the station.
- Analyze potential bus transit needs and plans for integrating bus transit to the light rail station area and the future park and ride facility.
- Identify coordination opportunities of station area redevelopment with City-initiated stream enhancement strategies.
- Strategies to implement natural drainage practices, and integrating these features into streets, stream corridors – particularly Goff Creek, parks and open space, and private development sites.
- Ongoing opportunities to coordinate with the Sound Transit – including the planned light rail station and the park and ride lot design and location.
- Document opportunities through station area planning to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled and transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

### Best Practices Research

The City and consultant team are identifying station area planning efforts from other North American cities to identify the best practices related to both the process for developing station area plans, and the content of such plans including implementation strategies. Research focuses on station areas similar to the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Station that are redevelopment areas of existing industrial and commercial uses and include degraded natural systems.

### Final Report

A final report is expected to be a model for other station area planning efforts in Bellevue. The report will include the elements of the station area plan as described above, plus relevant components of previous and related work, such as the Bel-Red Subarea Plan and zoning, Bel-Red Street Development Standards, NE 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Street corridor design, Goff Creek corridor plan, and others that will establish the context for redevelopment in the station area. A station

area planning “toolkit” will contain the essential component pieces of station area planning and implementation that could be mixed and matched at other station areas in the city of Bellevue.

### Funding

130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE station area planning is substantially funded with a grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Council accepted this grant funding in June of 2010. Grant funding is matched with City funds, and in-kind contributions of staff time from the Transportation Department and the Planning and Community Development Department.

### Professional Services

The city has retained the firm VIA Architecture to head a multidisciplinary consultant team to work with staff and the community on this project. VIA brings to the project an extensive portfolio of station area planning and transit oriented development work from throughout the United States and Canada. The project team includes proficiencies in real estate market analysis, non-motorized transportation, greenhouse gas emissions analysis (a key deliverable as required by the terms of the grant agreement), landscape architecture, and civil engineering.

### Community Involvement

Staff has met several times with group of property owners and business owners near the planned 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE light rail station. These meetings will continue and will supplement community events, such as the upcoming community meeting on November 9 that will focus on mobility and infrastructure projects in the Bel-Red and Wilburton Subareas.

An interactive web site is planned that will allow those interested to learn details about the project and to provide comments on-line.

Staff will also provide briefings to Boards and Commissions (Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, Parks & Community Services Board, Environmental Services Commission).

### Related Projects

Station area planning work is dependent on, and is being coordinated with several other current projects, in particular:

- NE 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Street design

The City is developing design options for the planned NE 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Street through the Bel-Red Subarea. This roadway was described in the Bel-Red Subarea Plan and is now being more precisely designed. This process and the design outcome will affect station area planning for the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Station – particularly in regard to the number of travel lanes and the provisions for bicyclists.

- Sound Transit East Link light rail alignment and station design

A Supplemental DEIS will be released November 12 with a 60-day public comment period, and a hearing on November 30. The SDEIS will contain changes to the light rail alignment definition since the DEIS was issued in December 2008. Sound Transit and Bellevue will continue to coordinate efforts to integrate the rail alignment/station design with the design plans for NE 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Street and the areas surrounding the planned stations.

- Bel-Red Street Development Standards

The Bel-Red Subarea Plan and zoning regulations describe and map the planned internal street circulation pattern, including several street typologies. Existing, redesigned, and new streets will form the framework for the redevelopment that will transform the area around the station.

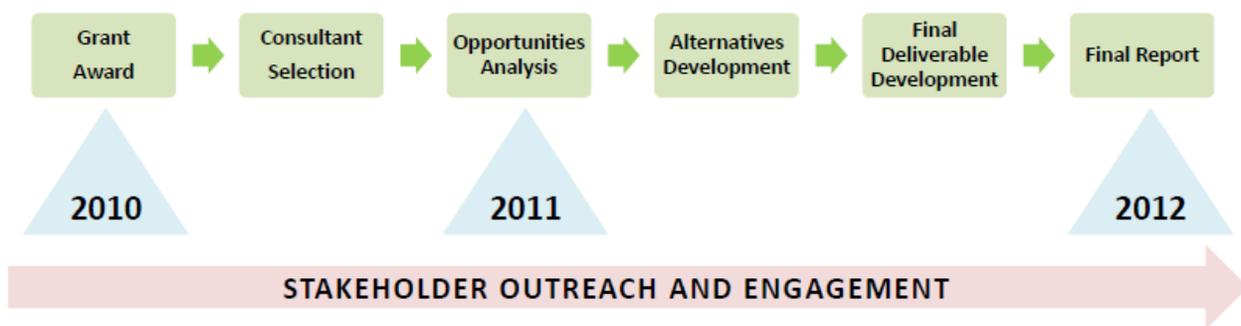
- Bel-Red streams hydrology and hydraulics/Goff Creek culvert and channel alignment

For the West Tributary, Goff Creek and the Unnamed Tributary, the City is undertaking and analysis of the watershed hydrology to better plan for redevelopment and restoration. Station area planning will rely on this work to help determine the nature of improvements and open space along the Goff Creek corridor, and culvert sizing and placement under NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street and the light rail guideway.

Each of these is likely to be completed late this year or early in 2011 – in a timely manner for consideration in station area planning.

Timeline

Under the terms of the grant contract, the work on station area planning must be complete no later than February 2012, although the final report may be complete prior to that date.



**NEXT STEPS**

Mobility and Infrastructure Initiative Open House, Tuesday, November 9, from 4:30 to 7:00 at Bellevue City Hall.

**ATTACHMENT**

- A. Scope of work and schedule as specified by the grant agreement.

### Attachment A: Scope of Work

<b>Activity Title:</b>	<b>Transforming the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station Area</b>	
<p><b>Purpose:</b> The project will create a plan to integrate the design of the Sound Transit 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue East Link light rail station in a way that provides a local focal point and enhances the land use vision of the neighborhood by implementing complementary transportation, land use and environmental sustainability policies. The planning process will be coordinated with other opportunities in the area, such as incorporating the city's Electric Vehicle strategy into the proposed Park &amp; Ride and integrating a new multi-use regional trail adjacent to the station.</p> <p>The end goals are to 1) create a plan that will incorporate density, design, and diversity to catalyze vibrant transit-oriented development (TOD) and serve as a template for other light rail station area plans, 2) develop logical connections between the station and the non-motorized networks supporting the TOD and surrounding neighborhoods, and 3) implement achievable near-term and long term strategies to reduce VMT and Green House Gas emissions.</p> <p>City staff and consultants will utilize standard planning techniques, including: researching TOD examples, investigating characteristics of the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue area, conducting an opportunities analysis supported by stakeholder engagement, and producing an alternatives analysis to define the most effective way to guide the transformation of the area.</p>		
<b>Tasks and Deliverables:</b>		
<b>Task 1. Project Framing</b>	<b>Mar-2010</b>	<b>May-2010</b>
a. Consultant Selection (competitive process)	Mar-2010	Apr-2010
b. Establish detailed project schedule with staff and consultant roles/responsibilities.	Apr-2010	May-2010
c. Award Contract	May-2010	Jun-2010
Deliverable 1: Copy of Consultant Contract		June 30, 2010
<b>Task 2. Area Investigation: Existing and Planned Conditions</b>	<b>Mar - 2010</b>	<b>Sep-2010</b>
a. Coordinate with Sound Transit to achieve consensus on preferred alignment and station location	On-going	Sep-2010
b. Review existing and planned land uses in greater station area	May-2010	Jun-2010
c. Analyze property development and ownership patterns	Jun-2010	Aug-2010
d. Evaluate all related planning documents, including street development plans.	Aug-2010	Sep-2010
<b>Task 3. Opportunities Analysis</b>	<b>Jun-2010</b>	<b>Mar-2011</b>
a. Research other station area planning efforts for best practices	Jun-2010	Aug-2010
b. Identify scenarios for increasing access and integrating the transit station into the planned neighborhood area, such as ways to provide	Sep-2010	Dec-2010

**Attachment A**

safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the station and ways to design adjacent development to facilitate access to the station.		
c. Hold Opportunities charrette	Jan-2011	Mar-2011
<b>Deliverable 2: Existing Conditions/Charette Summary.</b>		March 31, 2011
<b>Task 4. Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Sep-2010</b>	<b>Sep-2011</b>
a. Create project page on city's internet site	Sep-2010	Sep-2010
b. Informational mailing(s)	Nov-2010	Sep-2011
c. See Task 3.c above	Jan-2011	Mar-2011
d. Stakeholder panel meetings to engage property and business owners	May-2011	Jun-2011
e. Hold Open House to Present Alternatives (See Task 5) and seek community input	Jul-2011	Sep-2011
<b>Deliverable 3: Internet Pages, Informational Mailings</b>		Sept 30, 2011
<b>Task 5. Alternatives Development</b>	<b>Apr-2011</b>	<b>Oct-2011</b>
a. Coalesce Task 3 input into defined alternatives for evaluation	Apr-2011	May-2011
b. Identify planning issues for further research	May-2011	Jun-2011
c. Present alternatives to Planning and Transportation Commissions	Jun-2011	Jul-2011
d. Evaluate Commission and public input	Jul-2011	Sep-2011
e. Select Preferred Alternative	Oct-2011	Oct-2011
<b>Deliverable 4: Alternatives Summary</b>		Oct 31, 2011
<b>Task 6. Final Deliverable Development</b>	<b>Oct-2011</b>	<b>Feb-2012</b>
1. Design report for 130 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Station Area	Oct-2011	Dec-2011
<b>Deliverable 5: Draft Design report for 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station Area</b>		Dec 31, 2011
2. Draft station area plan addressing integration of land use and transportation planning in a TOD environment, including implementation actions and potential policy and regulatory amendments.	Nov-2011	Jan-2012
<b>Deliverable 6 Draft Station Area Plan</b>		Jan 31, 2012
3. Create a model for other TOD and station area planning efforts, especially in how the immediate vicinity is designed and then connected to the surrounding neighborhoods. Model should be replicable for other cities, as well as other station locations in Bellevue.	Dec-2011	Feb-2012
<b>Deliverable 7 TOD Station Area Model</b>		Feb 28, 2012
<b>Task 9. Close-out Reporting as required by Commerce and DOE.</b>	<b>Mar-2012</b>	<b>April-2012</b>
<b>Deliverable 8: Close-out Report</b>		April 30, 2012