

City of
Bellevue



Transportation Commission Study Session

DATE: November 3, 2016
TO: Chair Zahn and Members of the Transportation Commission
FROM: Kevin McDonald, Senior Transportation Planner, 425-452-4558
kmcdonald@bellevuewa.gov
SUBJECT: Neighborhood Leadership Gathering - Public Feedback

DIRECTION REQUESTED

- Action
- Discussion and direction
- Information

On October 4, 2016, the Planning and Community Department's Neighborhood Outreach Program hosted a Neighborhood Leadership Gathering. This meeting was open to any neighborhood leader who has a passion for investing in their community and a willingness to share their heart, vision, priorities and best practices with other likeminded leaders across Bellevue. Over 80 people attended, including neighborhood leaders and residents who are invested in the health and quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Leadership Gatherings are held in the spring and fall, to provide opportunities for neighborhood association board members and emerging leaders to share best practices, learn from each other and dialogue with Neighborhood Outreach and other city staff about current issues facing Bellevue's neighborhoods.

The topic of the meeting was "Picturing the Future of Bellevue's Neighborhoods".

The evening began with an introduction to the neighborhood area planning process from the city's Comprehensive Planning Manager, Terry Cullen. Attendees then engaged in small group discussions regarding their neighborhood values and physical changes envisioned for the future

of Bellevue’s neighborhoods, facilitated by Mike McCormick Huentelman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager.

Conversation and feedback featured several transportation-related topics, including:

- Supporting community walkability through infrastructure design and providing safe access to schools, parks, libraries and businesses.
- Investing in neighborhood and citywide multi-modal transportation options, especially for people walking and bicycling.
- Improving neighborhood safety by slowing traffic speed and discouraging cut-through traffic.

Artist Anne Jess, who practices the art of “graphic recording” through her company The Doodle Biz, illustrated the conversation and assembled a portrait, featuring pictures and words, of shared values and ideas.

Attached are the meeting notes and the artist’s graphic recording from that event. You will notice – probably not surprisingly – that a large number of comments are regarding the topic of transportation. Several of these topics have come before the Commission in the past (Vision Zero, Complete Streets, Transit Master Plan, Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative) and others may be future topics for discussion. The intent of sending these notes to you is to help you stay abreast of the issues of concern to Bellevue neighborhood leaders

Attachments

1. Neighborhood Leadership Meeting Notes
2. Graphic Recording

Attachment 1

Neighborhood Leadership Gathering - "Picturing the Future of Bellevue's Neighborhoods"

October 4, 2016 Meeting Summary

On October 4th, 2016, Neighborhood Outreach hosted a meeting with over 80 neighborhood leaders, including residents who are invested in the health and quality of life in their neighborhoods, that explored the topic of "Picturing the Future of Bellevue's Neighborhoods". Mayor Stokes shared an overview of how Bellevue is growing and the opportunities and challenges that come with that growth.

He also spoke about the importance of neighborhood leaders to partner with the City on helping to keep Bellevue's neighborhoods as 'places where you want to be'. Police Chief Mylett introduced the Sector Captains, providing residents a key point of contact for their neighborhood areas. Terry Cullen, Comprehensive Planning Manager, introduced himself and the goals of Neighborhood Area Planning.

Neighborhood leaders were asked to respond to a couple of questions regarding what they want to see in the future for their neighborhoods. They were asked, "What's Hot?" in your neighborhood? What are the values that help to define your neighborhoods? And to think 15 years ahead - what physical, social or environmental attributes do you want to see enhanced in your neighborhood?

During the facilitated discussion, Anne Jess from The Doodle Biz, provided a graphic illustration of the conversation. The graphic is attached.

The top areas of concern included:

Cut-Through Traffic - Some pointed to the WAZZ-APP phenomenon, where commuters are being directed through local neighborhoods to avoid congestion on the major freeways or arterials. They wondered if the City can help to turn this off? The increase of cut-through commuters has dramatically risen in local neighborhoods and is becoming a significant neighborhood safety concern.

Expect Pedestrians - Neighborhood leaders identified that the future of Bellevue is going to be multimodal transportation and that the infrastructure for pedestrians and bikes in neighborhoods is not adequate to safely accommodate these growing demands. The growth of new developments, schools, and new business districts is great - but residents want safe ways to access them from where they live. This was shared across all neighborhoods, including Downtown as well as Wilburton, etc.

Loss of Tree Canopy - Whether it is from large scale projects (like Sound Transit or potentially Energize Eastside), or the redevelopment of residential properties - neighborhood leaders are witnessing the accumulative loss of mature and significant trees. They feel that the City is in

danger of losing the neighborhood character of being a “City in a Park”, replaced by mega-houses built out to the largest possible parameters.

Increase of LLC’s - Neighborhood leaders are identifying a growing trend of LLC’s that purchase single family houses as investment properties. These homes typically remain either vacant, or might be filled with part-time renters. The growth of LLC’s is beginning to impact local neighborhood character including increases in redevelopment activity (megahomes), driving up the cost of housing, as well as impacting the social connections that are lost as neighborhoods are slowly transformed into investment communities.

The top values for neighborhoods include:

Communication and Transparency - There is a lot of activity that is occurring across the City and neighborhood leaders stressed the need for improved “two-way” communication. They stressed the importance of having integrity to being transparent to the public process. They also requested additional support for neighborhoods that want to help to organize to better build community and be informed on the issues that impact their neighborhoods.

Key attributes were named for neighborhoods: Walkability, Diversity, Safety, Good Education, Environmental Stewardship, Green, Aesthetics, Affordable Housing, Family-Oriented, and Multi-generational.

As for planning for the future, neighborhood leaders offered this insight:

Plan as if 50% of our neighborhoods are children. See our neighborhoods through the experiences that we wish our children will have as they grow up - and plan accordingly.

Importance of Walkability. Develop infrastructure that assumes pedestrians will be using them - including safe routes to schools and access to local parks, libraries and businesses. Similarly, build out bike connections across Bellevue for citywide commuting.

Protect, Preserve and Add Greenspaces and Greenways. As the City develops, pay closer attention to the environment and safeguarding unnecessary loss of a cherished citywide resource. This includes greater coordination regarding the retention of Bellevue’s tree canopy.

Add art, culture into public and private realms. At local schools, on the roadways, or in businesses -Bellevue can be a canvas for showcasing art and culture throughout the community.

