

South Bellevue Station Area Planning—Focus Group #2 Summary

Monday, November 17, 2014, 4:30-5:30 pm, 1E-109, Bellevue City Hall

Attendees: Todd Woosley, Cheryl Hoople, Peter Marshall, Bob Bengford, Suzanne Dove, Wendy Jones, Margaret Nicoll, Brooks Beaupain

Staff: Mike Kattermann, Kate March, John Murphy

Meeting Background:

City of Bellevue staff working on the city's Station Area Planning (SAP) program met with select individuals to provide an update on strategies that have been developed to address key concerns raised by stakeholders in the South Bellevue East Link station area. The area comprises a roughly ½ mile radius emanating into the Enatai neighborhood and Mercer Slough Nature Park from the future station. Staff have taken concerns raised by residents during the October 2013 Workshop and from comments received during other engagement activities to fold them into a draft station area plan for South Bellevue. Strategies to address the identified issues are grouped into four topic areas:

- Character and crime
- Traffic, safety, and noise
- Station access and parking
- Mercer Slough Park

There are five to ten strategies within each of these topics. Strategies are then grouped into one of two categories:

- Plans and programs
- Capital projects

The intent of the focus group was to provide initial feedback on these strategies. If there were omissions or clarification needed, staff would take those comments to further refine the plan. The draft plan will incorporate comments from both focus groups and will be shared with the wider public in 2015.

Meeting Structure

Kate opened the meeting explaining the purpose of the focus group and showed the October 2013 workshop summary video to remind participants the context for developing the South Bellevue station area plan. Kate emphasized that station area planning is focused on strategies for the area once East Link opens, not during the construction phase. She also noted that the intent of the focus group wasn't to rehash concerns but to go over strategies to fine-tune the overall plan.

Each participant received a packet of materials that highlights the strategies, a map summary of key concerns, and maps of potential pedestrian and bicycle projects that could enhance station connectivity. These materials will help participants to complete an online survey that asks them to identify the ten



most important strategies for the South Bellevue station area and also to prioritize the pedestrian and bicycle projects; a hard-copy of the survey was also included in the packet.

Kate proceeded to go over the map showing primary concerns in the station area. This led to the bulk of the meeting: discussing the pedestrian/bicycle projects and strategies.

As strategies were discussed, it was noted by staff that some strategies have already been completed but are still identified on the overall list. In reference to the residential area signs that were recently installed, an idea was floated to implement additional neighborhood signs similar to the prominent “Enatai” neighborhood entrance sign at Bellevue Way and 108th Ave SE—though smaller in scale. The existing sign was coordinated through the defunct Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP).

There were several comments regarding the redevelopment of Enatai Elementary and possible frontage improvements that were not documented on the issues map. Sidewalk gaps were noted off of 107th Ave SE and near Enatai Elementary.

ACTION ITEM: SAP staff will coordinate with development review to determine what current school design plans show that may change circulation patterns and where new facilities (e.g. sidewalk) will be built

A general comment was made that the ½ mile radius may not be the adequate size for this station area as there are numerous residents in the north end of the neighborhood that will want to access the station, specifically those who currently rely on the Sound Transit 550 bus along Bellevue Way (which will be deleted upon operation of East Link).

Conversation then turned to the potential pedestrian and bicycle projects. Wendy noted that she thought new non-motorized connections in/out of the neighborhood weren’t going to be considered. Staff noted that the origin for the projects was largely drawn for the October 2013 workshop. The “no new connections” perspective hadn’t been previously shared with staff. Tied to this was a question about whether people that are committing crimes (e.g. burglaries) in the neighborhood are parking at the Park and Ride or if they are parking in the neighborhood. It was noted by another focus group member that people are driving into the neighborhood, as gleaned by data from the Bellevue Police Department.

A question was made about why a bike lane is planned on Bellevue Way if there are comparable routes on lower traffic, parallel routes such as 108th Ave SE and 104th Ave SE. Kate clarified that Sound Transit is building a multipurpose path on the east side of Bellevue Way that will connect with the Park and Ride, travel up the east side of Bellevue Way, travel along 112th Ave SE before crossing to the west side around SE 15th St.

As the projects discussion continued, several comments were made by attendees:

- More people in the neighborhood will contribute to an overall safer community
- Projects are just conceptual at this point



- What impact will potential Bellevue Way HOV lane have on projects?
- Let people use lower volume streets for walking/biking; don't overbuild if not needed
- High-mounted street lights aren't desired
- Desire to not maximize intrusion into the neighborhood, especially off Bellevue Way
- Maintaining landscaping on SE 28th St would be beneficial
- There are many urban design opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment with bollards and pedestrian-scale lighting
- A desire was made for a streetlight at the bottom of the stairs off SE 28th St

Additional feedback on these projects can be submitted via the survey or email.

Conversation then moved into the actual strategies with the first topic being the potential Bellevue Way HOV lane. A comment was made that the mailer sent on the HOV lane indicated the potential project extend being all the way up to SE 16th St. Staff explained the current status of the HOV lane.

ACTION ITEM: SAP staff to get clarity on the Bellevue Way HOV scope and geographic scope

Comments then turned to the future parking garage and what happens to local streets when demand will surely increase as parking supply increases by 1000 stalls. A desire was expressed to make sure there are educational opportunities and viewing platforms in the parking garage. Staff noted that this has also been raised by the Light Rail Permitting CAC. Concern was also raised about what happens when the Park and Ride is closed and how resulting changes to traffic patterns and potential increases in hide and ride parking in the neighborhood. Noise concerns near Bellevue Way and 113th Ave SE were raised, especially because residents in that part of the neighborhood may not be as vocal or involved in the planning process.

There was consensus that getting out of the neighborhood, especially in the evening, can be challenging due to traffic queuing on Bellevue Way at 108th Ave SE.

Next Steps

Kate informed the group to take all of this conversation into account and complete the online survey. Staff will take the information received during the session and the responses from the survey and incorporate into the final plan before bringing it back out to the public next year.

ACTION ITEM: Mike let everyone know that the survey results would be shared with the group

