

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

April 4, 2005
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Marshall, Deputy Mayor Noble and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, Davidson, Degginger and Lee

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

At 6:00 p.m., Deputy Mayor Noble opened the meeting and announced recess to Executive Session for 20 to 25 minutes to discuss two items of potential litigation.

The meeting resumed at 6:31 p.m. with Mayor Marshall presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Intelligent Transportation System Master Plan

Laurie Gromala, Transportation Assistant Director, opened staff's presentation of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Master Plan.

Mark Poch, Traffic Engineering Manager, said ITS is the application of advanced technology, management techniques, and real-time information to enhance transportation productivity and safety. It involves identifying better routes and travel mode choices for commuters, managing construction zones, improving safety, and enhancing overall mobility. Mr. Poch said Bellevue has been a leader in ITS since implementing the nation's first centralized traffic computer system in the mid-1970s. ITS increases roadway efficiency, provides a strategic outlook for prioritizing resources, and makes the City eligible for federal funding.

The City's existing ITS facilities include 172 traffic signals, a centralized traffic computer system, traffic cameras, copper and fiber communications, the Traffic Management Center (TMC), portable message signs, emergency vehicle preemption, and driver feedback signs. Mr. Poch described the development of the ITS Plan, which began with the identification of goals to

continue to be a regional leader and to maximize the safety and efficiency of the roadway system. An existing conditions report and needs assessment were completed to determine the current status of the system and citywide needs and goals. A deployment plan was then created identifying 32 projects in low, medium, and high priority categories. High-priority projects can be implemented over the next five years, medium priority could be implemented in 6 to 10 years, and low priority projects would likely be implemented in 11 to 20 years.

Mr. Poch noted the deployment plan is not funded. He reviewed cost estimates for the top priority projects. The move to a new City Hall provides a good opportunity to upgrade the Traffic Management Center currently in the Leavitt Building. The TMC will be relocated to the 7th floor of the new building, adjacent to the 911 Communications Center. A new video wall funded by a grant (\$150,000) is planned for the TMC. Council approval of the video wall is requested by Consent Calendar Item 8(h)(1) on tonight's Regular Session agenda.

The City currently has 20 traffic cameras, and the plan calls for a total of 72 cameras. Mr. Poch displayed a map of existing cameras as well as 15 new camera locations to be implemented this year through a Homeland Security grant. These cameras are to be placed on the City's evacuation routes along with 12 miles of new fiber optic cable. Consent Calendar Items 8(h)(2) and (3) represent the grant-funded cameras and cable, which will be installed later this year or by early 2006.

Mr. Poch explained that a flood monitoring system is integrated within the traffic management system. This increases overall public safety and emergency response times in the event of excess water on the roads.

Mr. Poch described plans for an arterial congestion map to depict up-to-date congestion levels on Bellevue's arterials. Dynamic message signs will provide the public with real-time messages regarding special events and traffic conditions at four locations. Variable speed limits, which allow changes in the speed limit based on the time of day or a specific event, are included in the ITS Master Plan for all elementary school speed zones and potentially other locations, particularly those affected by weather conditions that warrant a reduced speed limit at times. Inter-agency integration will allow Bellevue's TMC to communicate with other traffic management centers. Bellevue's TMC is currently linked to WSDOT's center and they share traffic data regarding ramp and freeway conditions. Redmond is developing a TMC over the next few years and Bellevue staff are working with their staff to ensure coordination.

Mr. Poch described a photo of real-time transit arrival signs currently in use at Bellevue Transit Center. Metro plans to install additional signs at all Park and Ride facilities, malls, and major activity centers in Bellevue as part of the ITS Plan. The plan further calls for transit signal priority, which synchronizes traffic signals to expedite bus travel. Smart Bus will be implemented in the next few years and will communicate information regarding bus occupancy and schedule adherence to allow better decisions on prioritizing bus travel.

Mr. Poch described a proposal for red light photo enforcement. The legislature is currently considering Senate Bill 5060 to legalize red light photo enforcement in Washington state. The

main benefit is accident reduction and it is an option Bellevue might want to consider in the future.

Mr. Poch summarized the benefits of the City's Intelligent Transportation System: 1) road capacity increases, 2) safety enhancements, 3) productivity increases, 4) ability to handle special events and holiday/incident-related traffic, and 5) development of a communications network for expanded needs.

Mr. Lee commended staff on the presentation but feels the City's goals should be more ambitious. He envisions a regional ITS solution to optimize overall transportation functions. Mr. Lee is concerned that the ITS Master Plan is not funded in the Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan.

Mr. Chelminiak was pleased with the presentation. He noted the issue of red light photo enforcement will require careful consideration by Council and the community.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Ms. Gromala said staff will utilize the CIP Plan to identify opportunities for funding and implementing components of the ITS Master Plan.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Poch said some of the high-priority projects were chosen because they involve known technology and are able to secure funding, such as grant funding for the new cameras. Other items will likely wait for new or better technology, and red light photo enforcement is not yet legal in this state.

Dr. Davidson noted complaints from citizens regarding long traffic lights and encouraged a balance between expediting transit and individual vehicles.

Mayor Marshall said Council would like to be involved in prioritizing project funding. She noted Council has had previous discussions about red light photo enforcement, which she does not favor.

(b) State Legislative Update

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, noted a full summary of the State Senate transportation package in Council's desk packet. The package represents \$9.1 billion over 16 years through a 3-cent gas tax in 2006, 2-cent gas tax in 2007, and a 1-cent gas tax per year for 10 years as well as a vehicle weight fee increase and licensing fees. Proposed uses include cities and counties (\$600 million), highways (\$8.2 billion), and a flexible \$814 million. Ms. Carlson reviewed a list of Eastside projects to be funded. She said the House is interested in reducing the funding level.

Responding to Mr. Sarkozy, Ms. Carlson said funding for I-405 between SR 520 and I-90 is not on the project list. Also, the NE 8th braided crossing represents just the northbound portion of the project.

Mayor Marshall is pleased that additional funding is proposed for Eastside projects.

(c) Regional Parks Funding

Ms. Carlson recalled that a countywide parks levy was approved in 2003 to provide funding through 2007. King County is beginning to discuss and evaluate options for parks operations and funding beyond the levy. Staff is seeking direction from Council to develop an interest statement to guide future discussions regarding regional park funding and planning.

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran reviewed a regional map of park properties and noted 17,000 acres of parks and open space and 90 miles of trails on the Eastside. Approximately 37 percent of the total King County acreage devoted to public outdoor recreation is within the Eastside subregion. Mr. Foran noted ongoing funding challenges with both state and county parks. The current county levy costs a typical homeowner with a \$450,000 home approximately \$22 per year. Levy proceeds cover 69 percent of the operating costs for county parks and King County is moving forward to plan a second levy.

Mr. Foran discussed the Eastside's interest in the long-term funding and planning of sub-regional parks. He proposed developing a Bellevue interest statement and working together with King County and cities to shape the next county parks levy.

Dr. Davidson expressed concern that a majority of Bellevue property taxes is allocated to King County. He would like to see an itemization of taxes paid to King County and services received by those living in incorporated towns and cities. Dr. Davidson noted that cities have assumed responsibility for some county park facilities in recent years.

Mr. Degginger said Bellevue has taken over four county park facilities since the current levy went into effect. He suggested the next county levy will be reduced in scope due to a reduction in parks. Responding to Mr. Degginger, Mr. Foran said it is likely King County will want to increase the next levy to improve the overall park system.

In further response to Mr. Degginger, Assistant Parks Director Shelley Marelli said parks that are being transferred to cities are not part of the county levy package. Coal Creek Park, which is being transferred to Bellevue, is an exception to that statement.

Mr. Chelminiak suggested that if King County is no longer responsible for parks that were previously funded in its general fund (CX Fund), that money should be available to fund regional parks retained by the county. He shares Dr. Davidson's concern about the portion of property tax revenue forwarded to the county. Mr. Chelminiak said a review of his personal taxes indicates he is paying more to the county, state, and Port of Seattle but less in taxes to Bellevue this year. He feels the money would be more effective if spent locally.

Deputy Mayor Noble encouraged working with Eastside cities early to identify common interests and objectives to be communicated to King County.

Mayor Marshall noted competing interests and levies and the importance of strategic timing. She is in favor of developing an interest statement to guide future discussions on regional parks.

(d) Interlocal Agreement transferring Surrey Downs/Coal Creek Parks Properties to City of Bellevue

Lori Riordan, City Attorney, explained that staff will seek Council approval on April 11 of the Interlocal Agreement to transfer ownership of the Surrey Downs and Coal Creek Park properties from King County to Bellevue. Acquisition of the properties is part of a settlement agreement in the case of Newport Yacht Club and Weinstein v. City of Bellevue and King County. The lawsuit was settled last August and the terms require the City to complete a stabilization project in the Coal Creek Basin to address flooding, erosion, and sedimentation issues. In exchange for the City assuming responsibility for these projects, King County will transfer titles for Coal Creek Park (550 acres) and the Surrey Downs property (11.4 acres and district court facility) to Bellevue.

Council approved the settlement agreement last year, and PCBs were subsequently discovered in the Surrey Downs day care center. King County agreed to remove the PCBs and clean up the site prior to transferring ownership of the Surrey Downs and Coal Creek properties to the City. On March 23, 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued approval of the cleanup. The City is now prepared to move forward with the transfer of the two properties.

Ms. Riordan explained that the City's budget does not include maintenance and operations funding for Coal Creek Park so the park will not immediately be brought up to City standards and will retain its character as a natural open space. The Surrey Downs property will be partially renovated with proceeds from a 1988 bond issue. A public master planning process will determine the future use of the site. District Court will remain on the site through at least 2006.

Mayor Marshall asked staff to send a letter to Surrey Downs homeowners/resident associations and Newport Yacht Club informing them about the outcome of the lawsuit and the acquisition of parks properties.

Mayor Marshall thanked staff for their hard work on this matter. Mr. Foran recognized the work of Jerome Roaché, Assistant City Attorney, and Lorrie Peterson, Parks Property Manager.

Mr. Sarkozy commended Council for stepping forward to address and correct longstanding environmental issues experienced by King County.

3. Council Business [Regular Session Agenda Item 6]

Mr. Chelminiak and Ms. Balducci attended the annual sheep shearing event at Kelsey Creek Farm.

Dr. Davidson attended a meeting of the Shared Strategy group regarding financing the recovery of salmon.

Mr. Lee paid tribute to John Paul II.

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Ms. Balducci attended the Transportation Commission meeting and the annual Easter Egg hunt at Crossroads Community Center.

Deputy Mayor Noble attended the Puget Sound Regional Council annual meeting and Council's retreat.

At 7:52 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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