

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

April 18, 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., Mayor Marshall opened the meeting and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 40 minutes to discuss one item of potential litigation, one item of pending litigation, and one item of labor negotiations.

The Study Session resumed at 6:34 p.m. with Mayor Marshall presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Bel-Red Rd/NE 30th Discussion

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman opened discussion regarding: 1) the City's proposal to add a traffic signal at NE 30th Street and Bel-Red Road, and 2) how to provide access to Microsoft, north of Bel-Red Road. The project to add a traffic signal at NE 30th Street has been in the City's Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan since 1995. It was originally identified as a safety project rather than a capacity project. Mr. Sparrman noted discussions between residents and City staff in the mid-1990s regarding access to Microsoft and neighborhood impacts.

Mr. Sparrman introduced Ted Bell, Chair of the Transportation Commission. Mr. Bell said the Commission recognizes the need to address traffic impacts associated with the proposed expansion of Microsoft. City staff have met with Sherwood Forest residents and 1,100 newsletters were mailed to residents soliciting comments on the project. Approximately 200 newsletter surveys were returned to the City. Residents participating in public meetings developed a recommendation for the intersection of NE 30th and Bel-Red Road that is slightly different than staff's recommendation. Staff's recommendation allows northbound traffic on

Bel-Red Road to turn left into Microsoft's new access point. Residents' preferred alternative provides Microsoft access using right turns only. Mr. Bell said this is acceptable to Microsoft and the City of Redmond. The Transportation Commission recommends approval of Alternative 3 to provide the best balance between Microsoft access and neighborhood protection.

Mark Poch, Traffic Engineering Manager, provided staff's presentation. Bel-Red Road was widened in 1990, which was followed by an increase in accidents at the intersection of NE 30th Street. In late 1995, the City rechanneled the roadway to improve safety. At the same time, a signalization and safety project for the intersection was added to the CIP Plan. A need for the project has been demonstrated. Signal warrants have been met since 1993 due to heavy traffic volumes on both Bel-Red Road and NE 30th Street. Pedestrian crossings at the location have increased over time as well. The project (PW-I-70) is scheduled for design this year and construction in 2006.

Moving to the Microsoft expansion, Mr. Poch said campus access to Bel-Red Road has been discussed for approximately 25 years, dating back to the first Evergreen East proposals. Microsoft's current development proposal with the City of Redmond includes access to Bel-Red Road, which generated concerns about cut-through traffic into the Sherwood Forest neighborhood. In February 2005, Bellevue staff submitted a recommendation through the Development Agreement comment process for a better way to handle the intersection at Bel-Red Road and NE 30th Street.

Mr. Poch noted policies in Bellevue's and Redmond's Comprehensive Plans providing protection against pass-through traffic. Bellevue policies address an upgrade of the intersection at NE 30th Street with no cross traffic, limited access to Bel-Red Road, and collaboration with the Sherwood Forest neighborhood. Microsoft proposed an access point to Bel-Red Road approximately 375 feet from NE 30th Street. Mr. Poch explained how the proposal does not fit Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan policies.

Mr. Poch reviewed three alternatives to Microsoft's proposal for access at Bel-Red Road. Alternative 1, Evergreen East Access Concept, is similar to Microsoft's proposed offset intersection with the addition of a middle "barrier" lane that would not allow pass-through travel from NE 30th into the Microsoft campus or vice versa. This alternative addresses pass-through traffic but the barrier lane raises safety concerns. Alternative 2 creates access into Microsoft at NE 30th Street with a barrier in the middle of the intersection to prevent pass-through travel. Until last week Transportation staff supported Alternative 2, which was favored by residents. However, subsequent discussions with residents led to the development of a third alternative.

Alternative 3 is recommended by the Transportation Department and the Transportation Commission. It is similar to Alternative 2 with the entrance into Microsoft at the intersection of NE 30th Street. An island in the middle of the intersection blocks pass-through traffic. Access in and out of the Microsoft driveway is by right turn only. A left turn from Bel-Red Road into Microsoft is not allowed. Microsoft prefers left-turn access but is willing to live with this alternative. Microsoft is eager to resolve the issue and move forward with its campus design.

Mr. Poch requested Council direction regarding the recommended alternative. Next steps will be revision of the scope and budget for project PW-I-70 and follow-up with the community.

Responding to Mayor Marshall, Mr. Poch said the project includes a traffic signal.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Sparrman acknowledged some concerns regarding the speed cushions on NE 30th Street. Staff will monitor and evaluate their performance for a few more months before deciding about continued use of the speed cushions.

Ms. Balducci is pleased that staff worked to develop a solution based on residents' concerns and needs.

Mr. Degginger expressed support for Alternative 3. He noted the high traffic speeds on Bel-Red Road and questioned the feasibility of lowering the speed limit. Mr. Sparrman feels the project will lower traffic speeds by changing the profile of the road.

Mr. Lee suggested adding an entrance treatment into the neighborhood at NE 30th Street. Mr. Sparrman said staff will look at these and other elements during the design process.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Noble, Mr. Sparrman said the rationale behind preventing left turns to and from Microsoft is to avoid attracting higher traffic volumes to this intersection. Residents prefer to keep traffic capacity concentrated at the intersection of Bel-Red Road and 156th Avenue NE.

➤ Councilmember Balducci moved to approve Alternative 3 for the intersection of Bel-Red Road and NE 30th Street, and Mr. Lee seconded the motion.

➤ The motion to approve Alternative 3 for the intersection of Bel-Red Road and NE 30th Street carried by a vote of 7-0.

(b) Wrap-Around Services Pilot Project Update

Mr. Sarkozy opened discussion of the Wrap-Around Services Pilot Project. Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran introduced Vicky Murray, Deputy Superintendent of Bellevue School District; Judy Buckmaster, Principal at Lake Hills Elementary School; and Judy Clegg, consultant and facilitator for the project.

Mr. Foran said the Wrap-Around Services project encompasses the health, human services, and recreation programs for children and families that utilize schools as a focal point for communication, service delivery, information, and referral. These services round out the academic curriculum and are strategically integrated into the educational system through a model of collaboration between Bellevue School District, the City, and community organizations. Mr. Foran said the project responds to public expectations and is consistent with the City's focus on neighborhood strategies and quality of life issues. The pilot project will take place at Lake Hills Elementary School and it is hoped the program will be expanded throughout the school district.

Ms. Murray expressed the District's commitment to the Wrap-Around Services Pilot Project. She noted previous efforts by Lake Hills Elementary staff to reach out to the community and bring resources into the school. The project provides an opportunity to expand these activities and to implement a new program in a newly rebuilt school.

Ms. Buckmaster said diversity within Lake Hills Elementary continues to expand and the need for services continues to grow. The number of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches has increased significantly in the past four years. Approximately 33 percent of the students qualify for the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program, 50 percent speak a first language other than English, and 39 languages are represented at the school. Ms. Buckmaster said scores on the WASL test, one measure of student success, are not where school faculty and staff would like them to be. She described the increased emphasis on writing skills in recent years, which contributes to students' success in other subjects.

Ms. Buckmaster noted existing partnerships with Youth Eastside Services, Seattle Mental Health, Hopelink, and the Eastside Literacy Council. ESL classes are available for students and parents. Before- and after-school academic support programs are provided by teachers for children in need. The school has had past partnerships with Bellevue Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA. Many volunteers work in the school as well.

Ms. Clegg described the objective to identify or create a model program that could be applied to any school with differing student populations and needs. An existing model is the SUN (Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) model in Portland, Oregon, which focuses on youth, families, and community. The program integrates academics, social and health services, and extended day activities and is overseen by an advisory committee of parents, teachers, community agencies, and elected officials. A nonprofit agency serves as the lead in coordinating the delivery of services and an on-site manager handles daily operations.

Ms. Clegg said it is critical for the principal of a participating school to be a champion for this project. She described the importance of building collaborative relationships between the City, School District, school staff, parents, and social service agencies. Ms. Clegg said a Work Group will develop the model for Wrap-Around Services at Lake Hills Elementary by the end of June.

Mr. Foran noted the membership of the Oversight Committee which includes Ms. Buckmaster, Ms. Clegg, and representatives from Bellevue School Board, Bellevue School District, City of Bellevue, and the United Way Board. The committee would like a City Councilmember to participate as well.

Mayor Marshall expressed strong support for Ms. Buckmaster and the selection of Lake Hills Elementary for the pilot project.

Mr. Chelminiak suggested including a Parks and Community Services Board member on the Oversight Committee.

Mr. Lee expressed support for this community-based project.

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Mr. Noble feels this collaborative effort represents the best use of City and Bellevue School District resources.

Ms. Balducci praised the implementation of an overall strategy to coordinate community-wide programs and services. She feels this is the best way to identify unmet needs and avoid the duplication of efforts. She volunteered to serve on the Oversight Committee.

Mr. Degginger is impressed with the ability of the school district to work with students representing so many different languages. He looks forward to the implementation of this worthwhile program.

Mayor Marshall thanked everyone for their work and participation.

At 7:54 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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