

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

May 1, 2006  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor Degginger, who presided. There was no Executive Session.

2. Study Session

(a) State of the County Report

Jane Hague, King County Council, provided an update on County activities as they relate to Bellevue and the Eastside. Ms. Hague is the Policy Chair of the Natural Resources, Parks & Utilities – Growth Management & Natural Resources Committee. She looks forward to working with Bellevue regarding future planning for solid waste intermodal export and the Factoria Transfer Station. King County is updating its Comprehensive Plan and revising its critical areas ordinance.

Ms. Hague noted redistricting discussions regarding King County District Court. She thanked Mayor Degginger for attending the redistricting meeting. With the East District carrying 83 percent of the caseload, she does not support the proposal to eliminate an East District judge. Ms. Hague advised the Bellevue City Council to send a letter and Resolution to the King County Council as soon as possible asking them to review the caseload before deciding on District Court redistricting. She feels the designation of Shoreline as a separate district does not make sense.

Councilmember Balducci thanked Councilmember Hague for her support of Bellevue's priorities. Ms. Hague commended Ms. Balducci for her leadership with the Eastside Transportation Partnership.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak thanked Ms. Hague for her involvement in developing Bellevue's bus layover facility. Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. Hague said she is interested in ensuring that new Metro bus routes are implemented equitably throughout the region.

Councilmember Lee encouraged Ms. Hague to support infrastructure improvements in the Eastgate area, which will likely eventually be annexed into Bellevue.

Ms. Hague said the County has worked closely with Bellevue on the 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue interchange project. She has heard from many Eastgate constituents about their desire for sidewalks. She noted the state legislature passed a sales tax incentive to encourage cities to annex major pockets of unincorporated urban county areas. Ms. Hague suggested Bellevue negotiate a preliminary annexation agreement with King County addressing sidewalks and other items of interest.

Mr. Lee spoke to the importance of bus shelters as a factor in encouraging transit use. Ms. Hague suggested that ETP or another regional transportation group develop criteria for determining appropriate locations for bus shelters and prepare a map to accompany a request to King County and the County Council.

(b) DARE Program Review

City Manager Steve Sarkozy recalled that this item was placed on the agenda at Council's request. The Police Department recently recommended discontinuing the Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education (DARE) program and transferring the officer position to the School Resource Officer (SRO) program in middle schools.

Police Chief Jim Montgomery introduced Mike Riley, Superintendent of the Bellevue School District. Chief Montgomery and Dr. Riley have discussed the SRO and DARE programs over the past few years. The DARE program was started approximately 25 years ago by the Los Angeles Police Department. It was initially a 17-week program taught by police officers in elementary schools around the country. In the early 1990s, a series of studies suggested that DARE programs were ineffective. Chief Montgomery acknowledged, however, that the program provides vital information and assists children in making good decisions as they get older.

Chief Montgomery commended Officer Bob Oliver's work in Bellevue's DARE program for approximately 17 years. He noted a summary of studies beginning on page SS 2-3 of the meeting packet indicating the DARE program has not been effective in deterring the use of alcohol and drugs among youth. Many communities have eliminated their DARE programs since the mid-1990s and have shifted resources to middle school programs.

Dr. Riley commented on his ongoing discussions with Chief Montgomery. Shortly after the SRO program was initiated in high schools nine years ago, the school district began receiving an increasing number of requests from middle schools for an SRO officer. One SRO officer was added to work with middle schools. However, Dr. Riley and Chief Montgomery have discussed expanding the SRO program in middle schools for several years.

Dr. Riley said discussions with middle school principals indicated some would like to continue the DARE program while others felt the information could be incorporated into the school's regular curriculum. Dr. Riley is working with principals and parents to ensure drug and alcohol education is continued in elementary schools. There will continue to be a police presence in elementary schools as well. Dr. Riley feels an additional SRO officer for middle schools will be of more benefit to the school district than continuing with a DARE officer.

Chief Montgomery summarized his recommendation to transfer the full-time equivalent (FTE) position within the DARE program to the middle school SRO program this fall. He noted there have been police responses to Bellevue's middle schools more than 400 times during the past five years. Chief Montgomery and Dr. Riley have discussed the potential for implementing teacher-based ethical character-building instruction with an anti-drug and alcohol abuse component.

Responding to Councilmember Marshall, Dr. Riley reiterated that elementary school principals feel drug and alcohol education can be incorporated into their curricula. Mrs. Marshall feels one important benefit of the DARE program is its practice of recognizing and engaging students who often go unrecognized in other areas of school life. She has heard a great deal of concern from PTAs about the proposal to eliminate the program. Mrs. Marshall suggested the Council consider both retaining the DARE program and adding another officer for middle schools.

Councilmember Balducci concurred with Mrs. Marshall's suggestion to consider other options. Ms. Balducci suggested identifying future needs as well as the best overall way to address these needs.

Dr. Davidson respects and appreciates the input of Chief Montgomery and Dr. Riley. He looks forward to additional discussion during the budget process.

Mr. Noble noted that while national data implies a lack of effectiveness of the DARE program, local support for the program is strong. He is open to identifying additional resources to maintain the program and add a SRO officer, as suggested by Mrs. Marshall.

Mayor Degginger congratulated Bellevue School District for having several schools ranked within the top 100 and top 50 schools in the country. Mr. Degginger suggested that if the DARE program is not effective, perhaps an alternative updated program is needed to enhance a connection with students and influence them to make good decisions.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Dr. Riley said the curriculum to replace DARE is still under development.

Mayor Degginger thanked Dr. Riley and Chief Montgomery for their presentation.

(c) I-405 Renton to Bellevue (SR 169 to I-90) Environmental Assessment

Bernard van de Kamp, Regional Transportation Projects Manager, recalled previous discussion with Council on April 3 regarding the expansion of I-405. He introduced Kim Henry, project

director for the I-405 corridor project; Stacy Trussler, corridor manager for the segment between SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the south end of I-405; and Mia Waters, the State's noise expert.

Mr. Henry noted that early discussions about the I-405 project generated concerns and issues in the following areas: 1) Freeway alignment, 2) Stormwater sedimentation, 3) Endangered species, 4) Noise, and 5) Bus rapid transit.

Ms. Trussler said development of the I-405 master plan was initiated in 1999 with the involvement of cities along the corridor, including the City of Bellevue. A consensus was reached in October 2002 following release of the final environmental impact statement (EIS) and a Record of Decision to guide future development of I-405. The master plan adds two new lanes in each direction and local arterial improvements, bus rapid transit, nine new transit centers, HOV direct-access ramps and flyer stops, 5,000 new Park and Ride spaces, and 1,700 new vanpools. The state legislature designated funds for the I-405 project in 2003 and 2005. The 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street segment of the project is fully funded. Construction will begin in the summer of 2007, and the project will be completed during the summer of 2009. The next phase of funding is likely to come from the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID).

With partnership funds from the City of Renton, WSDOT studied the eight-mile section of I-405 from SR 169 to I-90. The resulting plan adds two general-purpose lanes, realigns I-405 to current freeway standards, reconstructs eight interchanges, adds HOV direct-access at N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Renton, and adds a transit flyer stop at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE in Bellevue.

Ms. Trussler reviewed the bus rapid transit plan, which is detailed in the I-405 South Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Pre-Design study released in June 2005 by WSDOT. It confirms the need for bus rapid transit from Lynnwood to SeaTac. The majority of trips will be routed through the Bellevue Transit Center. The Newport Hills transit station to be located at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is expected to have the highest ridership demand.

Noting suggestions to locate a transit stop in Factoria, Ms. Trussler explained that the master plan for the I-405 and I-90 interchange calls for system-to-system HOV ramps, general purpose ramps, and additional features. With limited space available for transportation facilities, it is not possible to also locate a transit stop in the Factoria area.

Ms. Trussler said the Newport Hills station will be a flyer stop located in the median of I-405 with access via a pedestrian crossing and expanded Park and Ride spaces. She described the challenge of designing the project to fit into the natural and built environment and showed a diagram of the project adjacent to Newcastle Beach Park and Newport Hills. Ms. Trussler explained how widening I-405 to the east, as desired by residents, is not feasible due to the unstable hillside. The best fit alternative is to widen to the east on the north end of the project, which will require geotechnical engineering and wall designs that accommodate the unstable hillside. WSDOT shifts the project to a more western alignment in the vicinity of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, which brings the highway closer to the surface arterial and bike path.

WSDOT held a public hearing on alignment alternatives and more than 20 environmental elements on March 22. Residents expressed concern about the alignment to the west. Ms.

Trussler acknowledged that the plan moves I-405 closer to Lake Washington Boulevard. Retaining Lake Washington Boulevard with its current alignment requires moving I-405 into the unstable hillside 79 feet to the east. Ms. Trussler briefly reviewed options for landscape and walls between residences and the freeway.

Moving to concerns about stormwater sedimentation, Ms. Trussler said an existing pond is not functioning well. WSDOT would like to work with the City of Bellevue and King County to discuss stormwater issues between the highway and Lake Washington. WSDOT is investigating the stormwater culvert system in the area to identify any problems requiring attention.

To mitigate noise, the I-405 Renton to Bellevue project identifies nine sound walls, four of which are in Bellevue. Two existing noise walls between Coal Creek Parkway and I-90 will be relocated and expanded. Two new noise walls will be added south of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Ms. Trussler said WSDOT conducted additional noise level measurements at the request of residents. These measurements validated the previous test results of 64 decibels for one location, while noise levels at five other locations were below 64 decibels. Ms. Trussler said the need for noise walls is based on projected future data in a transportation model. WSDOT is still evaluating the noise analysis and results will be provided to Bellevue when available.

Regarding concerns about endangered species (salmon and eagles), Ms. Trussler said WSDOT is working closely with the federal agencies responsible for protecting endangered species. WSDOT will work cooperatively with the federal government to avoid harming the species and their habitats.

Ms. Trussler noted residents' concerns about the footprint of the bus rapid transit system. WSDOT will continue to review the design and attempt to identify opportunities for a smaller, neighborhood-friendly design.

Ms. Trussler briefly reviewed the project segment north of I-90 and noted WSDOT is beginning discussions with residents in these areas. The public comment period for the entire Renton to Bellevue project has been extended to May 15.

Councilmember Davidson said he has lived in Woodridge, overlooking I-405, since 1971. He said the existing noise walls are not effective due to the topography of the area. Dr. Davidson suggested testing rubberized asphalt for the Renton to Bellevue project.

WSDOT staff explained that rubberized asphalt has been effective in Arizona and southern states. It is one type of open-grated asphalt which provides air pockets to absorb the noise. Open-grated roadways are not feasible where studded tires are allowed as they are in Washington state. The section of roadway to be tested through Lynnwood will measure noise both inside and outside of vehicles. Some areas of the highway are not conducive to the placement of noise measurement equipment. A polymer open-grated asphalt and a rubberized asphalt will be tested in the Lynnwood project.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak inquired about solutions to soften roadway noise and/or direct the noise back to the roadway. Ms. Waters said WSDOT has worked with absorptive barriers in the

past. However, they are not very durable and need repairs to replace the sound absorption pieces that fall off. New barrier types include plastic, perforated metal with absorptive materials, and perforated concrete. WSDOT is studying these materials to determine their durability, safety, and effectiveness. Mr. Henry said WSDOT is very interested in noise mitigation. However, the agency must balance the costs and product features.

Responding to Mr. Noble, Mr. Henry said WSDOT's analysis indicated that a Factoria transit station could not physically fit into the freeway interchange configuration.

Ms. Balducci expressed concern that as growth continues in this region, highway traffic will continue to become louder. She feels the region has not been as proactive as it could be in exploring innovative solutions. She encouraged state legislation to provide incentives for better noise mitigation.

(d) Bellevue Downtown Association "Great Place" Initiative

Leslie Lloyd, Bellevue Downtown Association, introduced Lisa Rowe, Chair of the BDA Board of Directors.

Ms. Rowe said the BDA was founded in 1974 and currently has 180 members including property owners, employers, and residents. The BDA's mission is to lead the continuing evolution of Downtown Bellevue as the economic and cultural heart of the Eastside. The BDA is involved in organizing and producing community events including Symetra Family Fourth and Bellevue's Magic Season at Downtown Park. In recent years, the BDA participated on the citizens advisory committee to update the Downtown Implementation Plan.

Ms. Lloyd briefly reviewed the history of Downtown Bellevue since 1975. The state Growth Management Act, passed in 1990, reinforced the approach of concentrating growth in urban areas. For the 2000-2020 time period, Bellevue chose to focus 70 percent of its job and housing growth in the downtown. There are currently 35,000 jobs downtown, which is projected to increase to 63,000 by 2020. The number of housing units is expected to grow from 3,850 to 11,100.

Ms. Rowe explained the goal of the "Great Place" initiative to fulfill the Downtown Implementation Plan, with transportation as the top priority. Ms. Lloyd congratulated the City for its work so far to move the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street overpass project forward. The project to widen and provide an overpass at NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is not funded but is also an important priority for the BDA. Ms. Lloyd said some elements considered for the DIP update were eliminated by the City Council. The BDA feels more projects will need to be funded to support its "Great Place" initiative.

Ms. Lloyd noted the following priorities of the "Great Place" initiative related to creating a livable downtown: 1) Complete master plan for parks, 2) Install mid-block crossing pilot projects, 3) Finish sidewalks as needed, 4) Complete design character studies, and 5) Create a wayfinding plan.

Ms. Lloyd briefly reviewed cost estimates provided by City staff for the components identified in the BDA "Great Place" initiative.

Ms. Rowe explained how a strong downtown benefits the overall community. The downtown area (1.8 percent of Bellevue's total property) generates 10 percent of the City's property tax revenues, 31 percent of all B&O (business and occupation) tax revenues, and 34 percent of total commercial property tax revenues. Additional benefits include cultural amenities, jobs, economic vitality, housing options, and concentrated growth to relieve pressure on neighborhoods.

Councilmember Marshall thanked BDA staff for the presentation. She encouraged the BDA to address future transit serving the downtown and to state a position regarding light rail or bus-convertible light rail.

Mr. Lee noted his ongoing interest in developing a downtown circulator system. Ms. Lloyd said this is also of interest to the BDA, as well as working with Metro to develop a free-ride zone in downtown Bellevue. Shuttle services have been effective during special events such as the art fair and the holiday season.

(e) Critical Areas

[Moved to Regular Session, Agenda Item 12(a).]

3. Discussion

- (a) Application of John Murphey to amend zoning Ordinance No. 4044 to remove a condition restricting density to one unit per acre to allow approval of a four-lot short plat at 16523 Cougar Mountain Way in the Newcastle Subarea (File No. 05-127874 LQ). *(This is a quasi-judicial matter; the item is scheduled for Council action on May 15, 2006. The appeal period for this item closed at 5:00 p.m. on May 1.)*

[Moved to Regular Session, Agenda Item 12(b).]

At 7:59 p.m., Mayor Degginger announced recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich  
City Clerk

/kaw