

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

October 4, 2004
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

Mayor Marshall opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of pending litigation and one item of property disposition.

The meeting resumed at 6:20 p.m. with Mayor Marshall presiding. She announced that a third Executive Session item will be discussed upon completion of the Study and Regular Sessions.

2. Study Session

(a) 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update and Land Use Code Amendments

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened discussion regarding the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code update, which was briefly introduced to Council on September 13.

Marcelle Lynde, Planning Commission Chair, noted the presence of Doug Mathews, Planning Commissioner, in the audience. Chair Lynde explained that other boards and commissions have reviewed portions of the Comprehensive Plan and their recommendations have been incorporated into the Planning Commission's proposed update. Recommendations from the Downtown Implementation Plan Citizen Advisory Committee and the Critical Areas Citizen Advisory Committee have been reviewed and partially incorporated as well. More than 100 substantive changes are proposed for the plan in response to all of the public input.

Ms. Lynde described the Planning Commission's discussions regarding neighborhood preservation and shopping center revitalization. The Commission discussed the expansion of electrical services facilities, particularly in reference to the proposed expansion of the Lochleven Substation. The Commission heard considerable public comment in favor of the development of

green space south of Main Street between Bellevue Way and 108th Avenue SE and therefore disagreed with the CAC's recommendation to not include plans for open space at this location in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Lynde explained that some residents in the neighborhood south of downtown are advocating for the creation of a green space on Main Street between Bellevue Way and 108th Avenue SE, in addition to plans for a park/open space between 110th and 112th Avenues.

Kathleen Burgess, Comprehensive Planning Manager, said the purpose of tonight's discussion is to present the first of two sets of Comprehensive Plan elements. The remaining elements will be discussed on October 11, followed by additional sessions on October 18 and November 8. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan update is scheduled for November 22. The goals of the current update are to meet legal requirements, provide a more visionary plan for the next 20 years, and address emerging issues and challenges.

This is the first major update of the Plan since its original adoption in 1993. The state Growth Management Act requires an update of the plan by December 2004. In preparation for this update, Council appointed the Downtown Implementation Plan and Critical Areas CACs to review issues and develop recommendations. In January 2004, Council approved the work program and public participation program associated with updating the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Burgess explained that Land Use Code amendments will accompany the Plan update including one addressing minimum density scheduled for 2004, critical areas and early downtown planning amendments to be implemented in 2005, and future amendments regarding the downtown, housing, and design guidelines for designated boulevards.

The three groups of elements to be presented tonight are:

- Introduction (Vision), Land Use, Economic Development, and Citizen Participation Elements,
- Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Transportation Elements,
- Urban Design and Downtown Subarea Plan Elements.

Ms. Burgess said the Vision outlined in the Introduction Element addresses new challenges including the revitalization of neighborhoods, growth strategy outside the downtown, affordable housing, and changing community demographics as well as new ideas for Bellevue through 2025 including expanding the city's role as a regional economic center, additional housing options to meet new needs, leadership in regional challenges (water supply, transportation, environmental protection), and becoming a center for arts and culture.

The Land Use Element has been completely rewritten and reorganized and maintains an emphasis on neighborhoods. New topics include studying the long-term use of light industrial areas, the potential for allowing new areas for office uses, and minimum density standards. The Economic Development Element provides a broader framework encompassing community livability, planning and infrastructure, marketing, business retention and recruitment, and overall

city strategies. Revisions to the Citizen Participation Element eliminate the confusion between Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code decision criteria.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Planning Director Dan Stroh explained that amendments regarding minimum density standards are in response to Countywide Planning Policies. The Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code update proposes the City adopt minimum density standards under existing zoning. The policy changes are intended to ensure land is used at its maximum zoned capacity because Bellevue's growth targets and land use projections are based on current zoning.

Mr. Stroh described correspondence from a group known as 1000 Friends of Washington suggesting the City significantly increase zoning densities in many single-family neighborhoods to reflect urban densities. City staff reviewed densities below four units per acre, as requested by 1000 Friends. Mr. Stroh noted the R-3.5 designation tends to produce four units per acre. Staff found that the lower density designations primarily fall into one or more of the following categories: equestrian areas, environmentally sensitive areas, public facilities or open space, and fully developed areas. Staff identified three small areas within the city that do not fall into these categories and have forwarded this information to the Planning Commission for review. Overall, staff concluded the City is meeting its density and growth targets.

Dr. Davidson expressed concern that the state Growth Management Act is impinging on local authority.

Mr. Chelminiak questioned whether an individual owner of a lot zoned R-3.5 would be required to develop to the maximum level. Mr. Stroh said staff would work with the property owner to achieve the maximum development capacity. More information on proposed policies regarding minimum density standards will be provided during the November 8 discussion with Council.

Mayor Marshall noted Council's longstanding commitment to preserving single-family neighborhoods and deliberately concentrating higher density development in the downtown. Council and staff have done a good job of planning for the community's growth and managing growth targets, which cannot be said for all cities in the region. Mrs. Marshall is committed to preserving existing Bellevue neighborhoods with a range of lot sizes and types of housing. She observed that some groups and citizens might not fully understand the complexity of urban planning. Advocates of higher development densities must also take infrastructure needs, such as transportation and transit services, into consideration.

Mr. Chelminiak said specific industry groups, including realtors, are interested in minimum density standards. He noted the Growth Management Hearings Boards are essentially creating law on issues that need to be discussed by the state legislature. He is not convinced that minimum density standards will meet the stated goals, that downtown housing development will be supported by buyers, or that citizens will support associated infrastructure investments in the downtown.

Responding to Mr. Degginger, Ms. Lynde said the Planning Commission received public comment suggesting a park or green space on Main Street closer to Bellevue Way rather than closer to 112th Avenue. Some felt this would provide a nice transition to Old Bellevue.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Noble, Mr. Stroh said the new education component within the Citizen Participation Element is based on the concept that citizens can participate more effectively if they are informed about the issues and implications. Ms. Burgess said the intent is to provide additional opportunities for education such as providing information via the Internet. Ms. Lynde feels it is important to educate citizens about the City's processes and how and when they can provide input.

Ms. Balducci suggested the Citizen Participation Element should include measures to encourage as much public input as possible, particularly through the use of cost-effective technologies. She suggested providing criteria regarding the establishment of citizen advisory committees as part of policy CP-6.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Stroh and Ms. Lynde explained that the Planning Commission deleted CP-5 because the criteria are provided in the Land Use Code. Ms. Balducci would like to retain some statement in the Comprehensive Plan regarding the concepts covered by CP-5.

Ms. Burgess moved to describe the Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Transportation Elements of the Plan. The Utilities Element updates policies regarding the regional water supply, watershed planning, and electrical service planning. Staff has been working with residents and Puget Sound Energy to mitigate the impacts of expanding the Lochleven Substation. The Planning Commission recommends a policy stating that non-residential areas should be considered first for the future expansion of substations and electrical capacity serving the downtown. The Transportation Element includes the results of planning studies and updates the Bel-Red/Overlake Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) and the East Bellevue Transportation Plan to include new projects.

The Urban Design Element provides design guidelines and designates the following streets for boulevard treatments: Richards Road, Lake Hills Boulevard, and 116th Avenue. The Downtown Subarea Plan reorganizes the urban design and transportation framework based on recommendations of the Downtown Implementation Plan Citizen Advisory Committee.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. Lynde said the segment on Main Street between 108th and 110th Avenues is developed and therefore the Planning Commission did not consider it a feasible location for a park or open space. However, the area between 108th and Bellevue Way provides the option for a small open space.

Responding to Mayor Marshall, Mr. Stroh said Main Street is designated as a neutral street with the intent of providing a greener, less intensely developed transition between downtown and the neighborhoods. Mrs. Marshall suggested more specific language in the Comprehensive Plan regarding the development of public open space along Main Street.

Mayor Marshall thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work.

(b) 2005 State Legislative Priorities

Mr. Sarkozy opened discussion regarding policy issues and priorities to include for the 2005 State Legislative Agenda.

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, noted Council will have additional opportunities to discuss the State Legislative Agenda. Final adoption is scheduled for late November. Ms. Carlson referred to the legislative issues matrix beginning on page SS 2-37 of the Council packet and requested Council feedback.

Councilmember Lee commented on the importance of fostering economic development and suggested approaching transportation priorities as critical to economic development goals. Ms. Carlson said staff will provide a briefing on regional economic development strategies in the near future. Mr. Chelminiak noted Bellevue is home to many professional services providers serving businesses throughout the region.

Deputy Mayor Noble expressed support for an additional state gas tax to fund highway projects on I-405, SR 520, and I-90.

Dr. Davidson is concerned that the regional Growth Management Hearings Boards are interfering with local authority. He would like to see a refined definition of the role of the boards as a facilitator rather than a separate authority on land use planning. Dr. Davidson recalled that the original intent of the Growth Management Act was to facilitate and coordinate planning.

While generally supportive of the local options for transportation funding, Mr. Chelminiak wondered whether adequate funding would be generated to implement effective projects.

Mr. Degginger recalled previous Council interest in establishing a downtown circulator service, which apparently conflicts with Metro's role as the transit provider in King County. He suggested working toward legislative changes to allow flexibility for local governments to develop their own solutions to transportation demands. Responding to Mr. Degginger, Mr. Noble said the Eastside Transportation Partnership's next meeting is October 8. The ETP is interested in taking a more active role in legislative matters.

Ms. Balducci would like to see legislated identity protection for law enforcement personnel.

Mayor Marshall is in favor of supporting the streamlined sales tax proposal for a specific time period in anticipation of the federal government implementing an Internet sales tax, which would ultimately recover at least some of the revenue lost by Bellevue under the streamlined sales tax approach.

If the legislature expands public disclosure requirements, Mayor Marshall would like the state to provide funding to assist local governments in complying with the requirements.

Mr. Chelminiak shares Dr. Davidson's concern about the role of the regional Growth Management Hearings Boards, which are comprised of laypersons appointed by the governor. Mr. Chelminiak said alternatives such as a judicial land use board will likely be considered by the legislature.

At 8:02 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared recess to the Regular Session. The Study Session resumed at 8:30 p.m.

(c) Regional Transportation Vision

Ms. Carlson explained that the Regional Transportation Vision adopted by Council in September 1999 has assisted Council and staff in communicating with residents, governments in the region, the state legislature, and federal lawmakers.

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman noted the multi-modal strategy outlined in the vision statement focusing on four areas: 1) freeways, 2) regional bus service, 3) HOV lanes (transit, carpool, vanpool), and 4) high-capacity transit (HCT). Staff proposes revising the vision statement as a Regional Mobility Interest Statement.

Mr. Sparrman explained that projected population and employment growth in Bellevue reflects the need for an enhanced transportation system over the next 15 to 20 years. Growth is anticipated in Bellevue's four main employment centers: 1) Downtown, 2) Factoria/Eastgate, 3) SR 520 and Bel-Red Road area, and 4) 116th Avenue and Bellefield area.

The full build cost of the 1999 transportation vision was estimated at \$23.5 billion in 2001 dollars. Transportation accomplishments under the 1999 vision include the Access Downtown/Bellevue Transit Center project, which is approximately one year ahead of schedule and \$30 million under budget. The Eastgate Park and Ride direct access project was completed earlier this year, and Sound Transit express routes carry approximately 30,000 passengers daily. Funded and partially funded road improvements include adding one general purpose lane in each direction on I-405, adding one general purpose lane in each direction on SR 520, and adding one HOV lane in each direction on I-90.

Mr. Sparrman reviewed regional planning efforts. The I-405 implementation plan includes general purpose capacity improvements and bus rapid transit along the corridor. Work is ongoing to define a bridge replacement project for SR 520 and a HOV project on I-5 to 124th Avenue NE. High-capacity transit planning (Sound Move Phase 2) is underway for I-90.

Highlights of the City's transportation planning efforts since 1999 are the Downtown Implementation Plan update (including the Downtown transportation plan), NE 10th Street and I-405 interchange (associated with Overlake Hospital Medical Center expansion planning), implementation of the Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) agreement with the City of Redmond, Eastgate/I-90 corridor study, 148th Avenue study, and the Factoria Area Transportation Study (FATS).

October 4, 2004 Study Session

Mr. Sparrman summarized the key transportation projects and highlighted the need for funding of large projects. He noted it is important for transportation investments to be linked to economic and land use objectives.

Mr. Degginger praised staff for the significant improvement in the delivery of transportation projects over the past five years. Mr. Sparrman commended the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Sound Transit, King County/Metro, and Atkinson Construction for their roles in the Access Downtown project.

Mayor Marshall suggested highlighting the numerous transportation accomplishments over the past two years on the City's web site.

At 8:55 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared recess to Executive Session to discuss one item of property acquisition and disposition.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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