

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

September 12, 2007  
7:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Robertson, Commissioners Ferris, Lai, Mathews, Sheffels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Vice-Chair Bach, Commissioner Orrico

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Mary Pat Byrne, Cheryl Kuhn, Matthews Jackson, Stephanie Hewitt, Department of Planning and Community Development; Mike Ingram, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: Bill LaPatra, Craig Skipton, Lee Copeland, Mithun Architects

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chair Robertson who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Mathews, who arrived at 7:05 p.m., and Commissioners Bach and Orrico, both of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram reported that an open house on the light rail project is scheduled for September 13 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. An open house for the Meydenbauer Bay park project is scheduled for September 25.

Mr. Inghram said the Bel-Red steering committee finalized its recommendation to the City Council on September 6. The next step will be drafting the necessary policy and code amendments. The steering committee recommendation will be before the Council on September 24 which will discuss it and hand it off to the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission, Parks and Community Services Board and the Environmental Services Commission. The Planning Commission will be asked to have relative Comprehensive Plan and code amendments in the early spring of 2008. On October 10, all four commissions will meet jointly beginning at 6:00 p.m.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Erin Powell-DiLou, 1015 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, said she read with great interest the neighborhood character code amendment proposals. She proposed that there are some holes in both Phase I and Phase II. Single family neighborhoods that border multifamily zoned areas also need to be included in the tree retention policies. There is no mention of planned unit developments with regard to tree retention, and there is somewhat of a glossing over of subdivisions. The city should honor all Comprehensive Plan policies regarding tree retention, particularly policies S-SW-2 and S-SW-9 as they relate to the Southwest Bellevue and West Bellevue areas. The should encourage the retention of trees throughout the city, including between single family and multifamily areas.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Sheffels said the two-years of work by the Bel-Red corridor steering committee culminated in a very comprehensive plan that takes into consideration a variety of details covering both the short term and the long term.

Commissioner Mathews added that getting the Bel-Red steering committee recommendation completed is certainly a milestone. He said the process was very thorough and included a great deal of input from those who will be most affected.

Chair Robertson encouraged everyone to attend the open house on September 13.

Commissioner Ferris reported that the city has purchased the Bayview Apartments property needed to connect Main Street to the marina. The committee meetings are very well attended. The local community continues to be very concerned about the noise the list of possible uses in the park could generate, about transient boat traffic, and development that may block views. The committee will conduct an open house on September 25; the anticipation is the full list of potential park uses will be presented at that event.

Mr. Inghram said the notion of allowing a seven-story building and a hotel on the park site generated a great deal of angst among the local residents. He pointed out that on Main Street within the study area the current zoning allows for the construction of ten-story buildings and hotels. There are no plans to construct tall buildings on the edge of the waterfront.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Great Streets Project

Senior Transportation Planner Mike Ingram said the Great Streets project was launched in the spring of 2007, then over the course of the summer there were six public meetings focused on gathering input and presenting concepts. The goal is to develop a plan for street treatments in the downtown by early October. The underlying purpose of the study is to carry forward the urban design vision sketched out by the downtown plan, including the notion of identifying distinct identities for each subarea of the downtown.

Mr. Ingram said the project encompasses most, but not all, of the streets in the downtown. The project will provide guidance for the buildout of the street corridors for all of the streets that do not currently have guidance. What is currently in place are standards that say how wide a

sidewalk should be, the sorts of street trees to be planted, and how far apart street trees should be planted. The project is focused on five specific corridors: Bellevue Way, 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street. All other streets will be covered by the development of a toolkit of options.

Bill LaPatra, principal with Mithun Architects, said three primary planning principles have formed the basis for the Great Streets project. The first principle is to provide street solutions in the downtown for a 2030 horizon that will accommodate an increasing number pedestrians while facilitating the movement of automobile traffic. The second principle is the overriding idea of a city in a park and how it plays out in an evolving downtown. The third principle seeks to infuse art into the fabric of the downtown streets, both integrated and sculptural.

Craig Skipton, also with Mithun Architects, suggested that there are some very real opportunities to introduce issues of sustainability and to meld landscape with streetscape in a way that will recognize downtown as an urban environment while celebrating the notion of a city in a park.

Mr. Ingram said downtown Bellevue has relatively few streets because of the superblock grid pattern. Where Portland has 42 percent and Seattle 37 percent of their downtown areas in street corridors, Bellevue has only 18 percent. With fewer streets, each must work harder at carrying more traffic and pedestrians.

Mr. Ingram said during the public meetings it became clear that the local community likes the improvements to the streetscape near Lincoln Square. Maintenance is handled through a cooperative arrangement involving the property owner and the city. The public also highlighted the need for better visual access to the park from Bellevue Way; the lack of pedestrian friendliness of Bellevue Way; and the lack of accessibility to the pedestrian skybridges from the sidewalk level.

One of the standard concepts includes an eight- to ten-foot clear walk zone and a more extensive landscape area of up to six feet punctuated with useful elements such as bike racks, benches and seating areas, and public art installations. In order to handle the proximity of a seating area to moving traffic, a vertical element about four feet high would be introduced, either as an artistic feature or a lattice on which vegetation can grow.

Commissioner Ferris asked why four feet high and not three feet high. Mr. LaPatra said more study will be needed to determine what the right height should be to provide a sense of protection from moving cars without giving the impression of a wall.

Mr. Ingram said a variation on the standard segment would allow for some uses along the building zone, such as planting boxes or informal seating. Another variation involves residential units that have direct access to the street and areas where there are steep slopes in which an elevated terrace area above a sidewalk would be permitted.

Commissioner Ferris observed that anything that gets planted in at-grade planters adjacent to parking areas seems to get trampled by people getting in and out of their cars. Mr. Copeland said no on-street parking is envisioned on the primary arterials, which makes the need for a barrier between pedestrians and moving cars even more critical. Commissioner Ferris stressed the need to include more green on all of the streets, and even raising a planter by one foot would keep them from being trampled.

Mr. Ingram said another concept is the neighborhood retail segment, which requires more than 16 feet. The approach allows for uses such as sidewalk cafés, especially those that serve alcohol and

must by law be fenced off. The development community may require an incentive of some sort to bring that about.

Commissioner Ferris asked if additional sidewalk width is required before café seating can be permitted. Mr. Ingram said the city could allow the use in some locations where there is only twelve or sixteen feet of sidewalk, but the broader goal is to have the wider sidewalks.

Mr. Ingram said some unique typologies along Bellevue Way have been identified, all of which relate to the art element. One of the key goals for the art program is to identify a route and flesh out the vision for an art walk from City Hall to the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront. The identified route follows NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street to Bellevue Way, down to NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and then through the Downtown Park to Main Street and the waterfront. The artist associated with the Meydenbauer Bay park project is working closely with the artists tasked with focusing on the art walk to assure cohesiveness. The art walk concept applies to both sides of Bellevue Way between NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The idea is to maintain a significant clear walk zone and to introduce a water element theme expressed through a variety of ways. For the segment along Bellevue Way the idea is for a runnel between NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street into which water coming off the buildings would empty. Glass blocks in the sidewalk could give visual access to the water running beneath to the runnel. Ideally, the water would then feed rain gardens in the planting zone. There could also be a fountain at the south end of the block.

Commissioner Sheffels said the notion of adding water features to the downtown have been discussed for many years. Mr. Ingram said there are quite a few of them situated on private properties in the downtown. Water features are bonusable for density.

Mr. LaPatra allowed that there will need to be cooperation on the part of Public Works to find ways to use the storm water from the roofs for the rain gardens rather than channeling it into detention ponds.

There is an existing pedestrian bridge over Bellevue Way (as well as NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street), and a second is likely to be constructed. Elements suggested for the Bellevue Way corridor that are not currently in the Land Use Code include pocket plazas at the interface of the midblock pedestrian routes with the street.

Commissioner Ferris asked if the pedestrian bridges to be constructed over Bellevue Way will go from building to building or from the sidewalk on one side of the street to the sidewalk on the other side of the street. Mr. Ingram said they will connect buildings but must have easy and legible access from the street. The two existing pedestrian bridges admittedly do not provide easy access from the street, but both of them were retrofits. The second bridge in the works for Bellevue Way will be designed to include convenient access from the street level.

Commissioner Ferris cautioned that a proliferation of elevated pedestrian bridges could ultimately kill activity at the street level. Mr. Ingram explained that the code allows for pedestrian bridges only in specific locations on the auto-biased streets. Through the Great Streets process the public voiced support for the bridges. The bridges are allowed only in midblock locations where there is no other option for crossing the street. The policies regarding where the bridges are allowed were formulated specifically to address the need to keep the street level active and vibrant.

Mr. Ingram said the public outreach process include participation from residents living on the north side of the downtown and beyond. Many noted that they enjoy walking from their residences to the downtown. Many use the pedestrian bridge across NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street, the walkway

adjacent to the library, and the midblock crossing at NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Upon reaching NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, however, there are no appealing options for crossing the street. Clearly the street serves as a barrier to pedestrians. The thinking is that the roadway should have the standard frontage treatment, with medians introduced where feasible. The downtown plan calls for the elimination over time of all midblock left-hand turns on Bellevue Way, NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if the midblock crossings are anticipated to be similar to the one that exists in front of Bellevue Square; it has a signal activated by the pedestrian. Mr. Ingram said current city policy is opposed to introducing new midblock pedestrian crossings on auto-biased streets to avoid impeding traffic flow.

Commissioner Lai asked if the traffic and pedestrian signals could be synchronized in a way that would not restrict the vehicular flow. Mr. Ingram said that can be done and is in fact the goal of the signals department.

Mr. LaPatra said the intersections of Bellevue Way at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street are proposed as all-way walk intersections as part of the project. All-way intersections offer great advantage for eliminating right-turn crossing conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. The Department of Transportation is analyzing the cycle times that would be necessary.

Mr. Copeland pointed out that the standard turning radius in downtown Bellevue is 35 feet; in Seattle the standard is 25 feet. The larger turning radius is much less pedestrian friendly; some people find it difficult to make it all the way across the street before the light turns again.

Mr. Copeland said the plan includes gateway opportunities near the I-405 freeway on both NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

The terrace segment concept for NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street includes an upper level seating zone and a clear zone down below. A sidewalk section of more than 16 feet is required. The inspiration for the concept was the One Bellevue Center building that has an upper terrace level.

With regard to 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Mr. Ingram noted that the area is used for programming events at least once per year. It is identified in the downtown plan as an entertainment street and it is one of the few streets in the downtown area where full closure is relatively easy to accomplish to allow for special events.

Mr. Copeland noted that the landmark tree is unique. It is hoped that as properties develop additional landmark trees will be planted so that over time they will become a symbol of Bellevue. He also commented that the consideration has been given to enlarging the area where NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE meet to allow for something like a major water feature or an art installation.

Mr. Ingram observed that 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is the connection for bicyclists and pedestrians into the downtown. He said that fact needs to be recognized and included in all thinking about the roadway. The notion of planting conifer landmark trees is apropos to 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, especially along the ridgeline where they would be clearly visible.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ferris, Mr. Ingram said the Great Streets project has raised the issue of whether or not a standard of 12-foot sidewalks is sufficient to activate the downtown core. Either through incentive or requirement, the preference is for 16-foot sidewalk sections.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if the idea of developing a system of one-way couplets has been abolished. Mr. Ingram said the idea is not completely dead but has been put on the shelf. A lot of analysis and modeling has been done on how the couplets would work, and the kind of operational traffic advantage expected did not materialize. The downtown community never was fully behind the notion anyway.

Mr. LaPatra said one-way couplets are wonderful from an urban design standpoint because they allow five-lane roadway cross sections to be reduced to three-lane cross sections and yield more room for bike lanes and sidewalks without impinging on adjacent properties. From that standpoint, the notion should not be tossed out entirely.

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne said the consultant Mithun was asked to include planning artists as part of their team, which they did. The artists were charged with identifying a route for an art walk between City Hall and the waterfront, a concept that was developed for the public art program and approved by the Council. In addition to a route, the artists were asked to identify locations for art throughout the Great Streets project, establishing a hierarchy and priority system for locating art, and opportunities to integrate art into functional aspects of the streets. In addition, the planning artists were directed to coordinate with the planning artist onboard for the Meydenbauer Bay park project.

The primary portion of the art walk connects City Hall with Downtown Park. Ms. Byrne noted that a loop route is shown on the Great Streets map connecting Downtown Park and the waterfront, but she allowed that it is too early to establish any particular route with any degree of certainty.

When the artists were looking at an overall theme for tying all of the artworks in the downtown together, they came up with the concept of flow. The concept is particularly well suited to the downtown because it encompasses an engagement in high technology, the flow of information, the flow of electricity, the flow of pedestrians and traffic, and the flow of nature. Within the theme, the artists identified a series of routes within the downtown that they are calling circuits, each having a different theme.

The water circuit fits very well with the motion of connecting City Hall to the water. The idea of celebrating water in some imaginative way has been tossed around for years in relation to the downtown. The art walk concept offers the best chance to date to take a stab at implementing the ideas in a coordinated fashion.

The landscaping circuit allows for opportunities to use art to coordinate with the landscaping to create unique forms. Other circuits coincide with the themes given to the major streets, including the shopping street, which incorporates the idea of display; the entertainment street, which incorporates the notion of street life as a stage with everyone acting as a performer or something watching a performance; and the commerce street, which envelopes the concept of ebb and flow throughout the day.

The entertainment street concept extends around the corner to include the emerging cultural corridor on NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street where a performing arts center is being developed along with a black box theater in the base of the Hanover project and Open Satellite, a new arts studio in a John Su development.

The notion of a civic circuit is still being developed. The idea is to connect City Hall with Meydenbauer Center and the library.

Ms. Byrne shared with the Commission a number of images showing how the concept of flow could be implemented, both in actuality and conceptually. She noted that in addition to using real water to express flow, light, paving patterns and art forms can be used to evoke images of water. Real water could be used in artistic forms to create rain gardens and be put to new uses

The Commissioners were told that there are a variety of ways to merge art and landscaping. Rails separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic could have an art application. Earthworks can also incorporate artistic patterns formed by vegetation. Entertainment can easily be expressed through the artistic use of lights and temporary art, the latter of which can often be a bit more edgy and more easily tolerated given that they will not be there forever; the entertainment street could be something that is always interesting and always changing.

The idea of display and seeing and being seen along the shopping street could utilize a reflective experience and allowing artists to utilize storefront windows for displays when they are not being used for other purposes. Special paving could be used along the shopping street as well. Because of the elevation of 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, it can be seen as the headwaters of the flow of water.

Ms. Byrne said the places where the circuits intersect are referred to by the artists as an interface. At the interface locations the themes of the intersecting circuits can be combined, creating interesting opportunities. Another opportunity highlighted by the planning artists is the pedestrian bridges which they have termed synapses. The bridges are prominent architectural features in the downtown, and as they are built they should be viewed seriously as art opportunities.

Mr. Ingram said one outcome of the project will be the development of a toolkit with parts that can be used along the downtown streets. Artistic elements will be one of the tools in the kit. Other tools will include benches of various stylings. Lighting is one method that could be used to distinguish corridors, especially pedestrian-scale lighting. No attempt to be overly prescriptive will be made; the focus will be on the development of guidelines and allowing for flexibility.

Mr. Ingram said the next step will be to use the input from the city's boards and commissions to further refine the design concepts, do more feasibility analysis, and have the package in final form by early in October. The Council will be briefed regarding the concepts on November 19. If they are comfortable with them, the issue will flow back to the Commission for the development of specific land use implementation elements.

Chair Robertson asked if future transit services such as light rail in the downtown is being considered as part of the process. Mr. Ingram said it will not be known for another year what routes light rail will take in the downtown. It is known that one of the primary station locations is near the existing transit center, but it is not known whether it will be at-grade or below ground. The implementation program will certainly take into account possible light rail routes.

Commissioner Ferris asked if a preferred route for the downtown circulator has been identified. Mr. Ingram allowed that a route has been highlighted. The implications for the Great Street project are mostly limited to accounting for additional bus stop locations.

## B. Neighborhood Livability Phase I

Neighborhood Outreach Manager Cheryl Kuhn said the largest part of the Neighborhood Outreach work is responding to the issues and concerns residents raise about the quality of life in the neighborhoods. Usually it is possible to find timely answers to the questions raised, but every

now and then an issue is raised which defies immediate resolution. The impact of neighborhood infill and redevelopment has proved to be just such an issue. The matter was raised by the citizens, not the staff. Since January 2007, the Neighborhood Outreach staff have spent hundreds of hours meeting with folks in neighborhoods, taking photos, reviewing development statistics, and reviewing the input received. From all of that work has developed a picture of infill and redevelopment and the associated impacts.

Ms. Kuhn said staff has pinpointed the specific issues that are of the most concern to residents. The Planning Commission, after study and review, has developed a list of ways to address those specific issues while striking a balance between preserving property rights and the legitimate concerns of those who are impacted by infill and redevelopment. The recommendations of the Commission were presented to the City Council in July 2007. The Council acknowledged the good work of the Commission and directed the staff and the Commission to begin work on code amendments based on the specific recommendations.

The proposed code language changes will come before the Commission in two phases. The amendments addressing building height measurement, portable carports, construction debris removal, transient lodging at construction sites, and neighborhood notification of construction activity are straightforward changes that will be before the Commission for consideration later in the month of September. The more complex code changes will come to the Commission in 2008.

Ms. Kuhn noted that the Commission will be asked to consider greenscape and tree preservation issues in both phases. The initial changes will be presented on September 26. Before the code language can be drafted, however, specific direction from the Commission is needed.

Community Involvement Coordinator Stephanie Hewitt set before the Commission the issue of establishing a greenscape front yard setback, and how to implement tree preservation on redeveloped lots. She noted that citizens are not too keen on further restricting driveway widths or the number of driveways permitted on a single family lot.

With regard to implementing greenscape front yard requirements, Ms. Hewitt offered two options: restricting driveway widths and requiring front yard landscaping. She said the research done by staff found that the majority of cities do restrict driveway widths to some extent, or the number of driveways permitted in front yards and single family lots. There are not many cities in the state, however, that require front yard greenscape. The transportation code does not normally permit a circular driveway on a single family lot that is less than 200 feet wide, but the Director has the discretion to approve them. For safety reasons, the Director has opted to allow them.

Chair Robertson asked what is the average driveway width. Ms. Hewitt said for a two-car garage the average driveway width is between 18 and 24 feet; for a three-car garage the average width is between 27 and 34 feet.

Senior Planner Matthews Jackson said a sample of permits issued between mid-2006 and the present showed average driveway widths between 25 and 30 feet. Ms. Hewitt said the majority of cities regulate front yard impervious surface problems through driveway widths rather than through the establishment of front yard greenscape requirements.

The options set before the Commission to consider were: 1) limit driveway widths to no more than 15 feet for a one-stall garage, 24 feet for a two-stall garage, and 34 feet for a three-stall garage; 2) permit one driveway per single family lot; and 3) permit only one driveway 16 feet wide per every 65 feet of street frontage.

With regard to front yard greenscape, Ms. Hewitt said the majority of cities require front yard setbacks. The options presented to the Commission for consideration were: 1) require front and street-side setback areas to be landscaped, excluding driveways, paved walkways and parking areas, provided that driveways are not permitted to cover more than 50 percent of the front and street-side setback areas, and that pervious or semi-pervious materials do not count as landscaping; 2) establish as a front yard greenscape requirement that: a, 50 percent of the front yard setback be landscaped, b, 50 percent of the front yard be landscaped, or c, 10 feet of the front yard landscape buffer be landscaped, applicable to each property line if on a corner lot; and/or 3) require street trees in the right-of-way every 30 to 50 feet of street frontage for short plats, plats and single family PUDs.

Mr. Jackson explained that corner lots face two public roads. In those cases, both street frontages are considered to be front yards. Properties that front three streets are considered to have two front yards; the third frontage is considered to be a back yard.

Ms. Hewitt pointed out that some property owners in the city have elected to screen their front yards with vegetation. The question in need of an answer is whether or not in such instances the city should care if there is an impervious surface behind the hedge.

Commissioner Sheffels said she could see someone with a vegetative screen having a deck or other impervious surface behind it.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that if everyone on a particular street were to have a vegetative screen, the result could be a loss of neighborhood feel.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ferris, Mr. Jackson said the code establishes impervious surface maximums. For most single family residential zones, the limit is 50 to 55 percent of the total site area. Most new single family permits are yielding about 70 percent green space. Staff is concerned that by establishing a maximum that is less than what is currently being achieved, property owners may begin decreasing their green areas and increasing their impervious surface areas.

Chair Robertson said it is her understanding that soft-set stone pavers are considered to be pervious or semi-pervious. She commented that when they are packed tightly, they are not all that pervious, though it still is a hardscape. She further commented that not all greenscape is equal. Where there is just flat grass the effect is not at all the same as where taller vegetation is included in the mix; the latter is far more effective at softening the view.

Answering a question asked by Chair Robertson, Mr. Jackson said where a multifamily zone occurs within 300 feet of a single family zone, the area between them is called a transition area. Within such areas there is a requirement to provide a 20-foot linear buffer with specific landscape plant densities and types. Furthermore, a PUD in a single family zone that has multifamily development is highly unusual and unlikely to be brought about in the future, but where they exist there is a requirement for 40 percent open space and superior landscaping.

Commissioner Ferris asked if rockeries are allowed in front yards, and Mr. Jackson answered that they are typically only allowed where there is a reason for them, and they cannot be more than 30 inches high unless there is a technical reason for a higher rockery. Rockeries would not qualify as greenscape. Commissioner Ferris said he would prefer to see a terraced rockery over a vegetated slope. Mr. Jackson said tiered rockeries are permitted where necessary to give reasonable access to or reasonable development of a lot.

Commissioner Sheffels suggested that Option 2(c) would be the easiest to administer.

Commissioner Mathews suggested that a 10-foot front yard landscape buffer might look odd if it were all that was required. He said he would prefer to see Option 2(b). He said he could also support Option 1 regarding driveway width, which would allow a driveway of up to 34 feet wide where there is a three-stall garage.

Mr. Jackson explained that in the R-5 zone there is a required 20-foot setback as measured from the property line to the face of the building. Under Option 2(a), 50 percent of that area would have to be greenscape. Under Option 2(b), 50 percent of the area between the building face and the property line would have to be greenscape, regardless of how far back a building is set.

Commissioner Ferris asked if the proposed regulations would apply only to infill and redevelopment in single family zones. Mr. Jackson explained that it would apply to all single family zones. Commissioner Ferris asked what approach would be taken in the case of a redevelopment where the previous development did not meet the new standard. Mr. Jackson said the city seeks to avoid making uses nonconforming. When the impervious surface standard was revised, the determination was made that previously existing developments that exceed the standard can be maintained, but not expanded. A similar approach would be taken in the case of the greenscape requirement.

Commissioner Ferris voiced support for Option 2(a). He noted that the approach could negate the need to limit driveway width.

Commissioner Lai suggested that a tightly cropped putting green in a front yard area would meet the Option 2 rule but would not serve as screening; the neighbors would still have to look at what amounts to an impervious surface. He asked if there are any tools available that would be easy to administer around screening requirements. Mr. Jackson said there are no such tools currently in place. Taking that route would require the development of specific landscape requirements.

Commissioner Mathews proposed that developing specific landscape requirements would be going too far.

Mr. Jackson explained that Option 3 would establish a new minimum standard for subdivisions and short plats relative to the planting of street trees. The option could work in conjunction with either Option 1 or Option 2.

Commissioner Sheffels noted that she lives in a PUD that has both single family and multifamily components. She suggested it would be very difficult to apply Option 3 to only the single family portion of the development. Mr. Jackson said the requirement would be applied to the entire development. Commissioner Sheffels said the language should reference PUDs generally and not just single family PUDs given that some are mixed.

Chair Robertson voiced support for Option 2(a). People who choose to set their homes back more than required should not be punished for doing so, which is what Option 2(b) would do. She said she could also support Option 3. The transportation code that is in existence with regard to driveways is fine; the greenscape requirement will tend to yield the same results, especially since there are limits on impervious surfaces. However, it should be possible to have some sort of edging requirement that would not require too much yard work.

There was consensus in favor of greenscape Option 2(a), and in favor of not utilizing any of the

listed driveway options.

Commissioner Mathews said he would support including Option 3. Commissioner Ferris disagreed, adding that he would not want to impose an approach that would require uniformity.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that because the street trees required under Option 3 would be in the right-of-way, it will be necessary to get buy-off from the Department of Transportation. It was agreed to put off further consideration of Option 3 until Phase II and pending getting the opinion of the Department of Transportation.

Moving on to the tree retention options, Ms. Hewitt said the proposed option under Phase I is to require the retention of 15 percent of the diameter inches of significant trees on redevelopment single family lots. She noted that the same standard is already in place for subdivisions and short plats.

Commissioner Ferris pointed out that for a lot with 10 significant trees, a requirement to preserve 15 percent of them would mean saving only one and a half trees. He suggested that prior to development the city should require a survey to determine the number and location of significant trees. The footprint of the proposed structure should then be determined, and all significant trees outside that footprint should be required to be preserved.

Mr. Jackson commented that the option shown for Phase I is the approach with the fewest impacts. He suggested, however, that the Commission could elect to incorporate elements of the proposed Phase II options into Phase I. Based on feedback from the Council, a commitment has been made to bringing forward something related to tree retention in the first phase.

Ms. Kuhn said the proposal to focus tree retention only on redeveloped lots in Phase I is because there are currently no requirements for retaining trees on redeveloped single family lots. Fifteen percent is the minimum to start with; it is the percentage required for subdivisions and plats.

Commissioner Sheffels agreed. She said she would like to see as many trees retained as possible, but allowed that there are a lot of complexities involved. Not all trees are equally valuable for one thing, whether they are significant or not, and there may not be a compelling reason to save all significant trees. Mr. Jackson pointed out that alderwood and cottonwood trees are discounted by half; an eight-inch alder counts only as four inches toward a retention requirement, but it does still count.

Commissioner Ferris suggested that 15 percent is too low. He said he would advocate for a bigger percentage in Phase I.

Commissioner Mathews noted that because the current code has flexibility regarding scrub trees, a higher percentage of significant trees should be utilized. He proposed 30 percent.

Chair Robertson held the view that 15 percent is an adequate number to start with. It would be better to increase the percentage later than to start with a big number and have to decrease it later.

Commissioner Ferris reiterated his view that 15 percent is a very low number. For some properties, that may translate into saving only a single tree, which will not address the concerns raised by the public. Where redevelopment is the issue, the fact is that most already developed lots have very few significant trees to begin with, and requiring only 15 percent of those to be retained will not accomplish much.

Commissioner Mathews advocated requiring 30 percent of significant trees to be retained.

Ms. Kuhn proposed selecting a number to be included in the draft code language. She noted that the issue will be before the Commission again on September 26 for additional discussion.

There was agreement to use 30 percent.

Commissioner Ferris asked if there is already an ordinance in place that addresses tree preservation for infill development, noting that the proposed revision only applies to redevelopment. Mr. Jackson allowed that vacant single family lots not subject to the subdivision or short plat requirements can be cleared of all trees. Commissioner Ferris proposed having the proposal apply in both instances, and the other Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Lai asked if a property owner could clear a lot before declaring an intention to redevelop it. Mr. Jackson said that can be done under the current code; outside of Bridle Trails, no permit would be required to remove the trees. By applying the standard to include infill development, that issue will be addressed, though it will be necessary to change the triggers for clearing and grading permits on single family lots.

#### 9. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Inghram reported that the Council has initiated an additional Comprehensive Plan amendment for downtown mobility projects that includes the NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extensions through Wilburton as well as a number of intersection improvements along Bellevue Way and in other areas of the downtown.

#### 10. OLD BUSINESS – None

#### 11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### A. May 9, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Sheffels and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioners Commissioner Ferris and Commissioner Lai abstained from voting.

##### B. May 23, 2007

Chair Robertson called attention to Page 43 of the packet and the motion made to deny adding the Courter Enterprises amendment to the work program. She noted that the minutes incorrectly indicate who voted for the motion and who voted against the motion; those shown as voting for in fact voted against, and those shown as voting against in fact voted for the motion.

Commissioner Mathews called attention to Page 30 and noted that Mayor Degginger's report should include that Commissioner Bach was reappointed along with Chair Robertson and Commissioner Mathews.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Chair Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Mathews without dissent; Commissioner Lai abstained from voting.

##### C. May 30, 2007

Commissioner Mathews referred to the last paragraph on Page 51 and noted that "...is the approach the city should strive for..." should read "...is not the approach the city should strive for...."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Sheffels and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Lai abstained from voting.

D. June 13, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Sheffels and the motion carried unanimously.

E. June 20, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Mathews. Second was by Commissioner Sheffels and the motion carried unanimously.

D. June 27, 2007

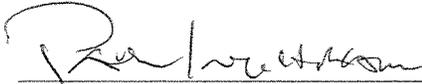
Commissioner Mathews called attention to Page 78 and noted that in the first sentence of the first paragraph under staff reports that "July 25" should read "June 25."

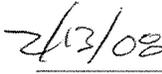
Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Sheffels. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried without dissent; Chair Robertson abstained from voting.

12. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

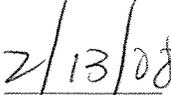
13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

  
Staff to the Planning Commission

  
Date

  
Chair of the Planning Commission

  
Date

