

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

March 10, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Mike Bergstrom, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Sheffels who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brian Parks, 16011 SE 16th Street, said there is a lot of concern on the part of local residents about the quantity of water flowing into Phantom Lake via the inlet culverts. He asked the Commission to keep in mind not allowing any increased water flow into the lake when the Eastgate area is studied. Since the I-90 business park was put in, the amount of flooding in and around Phantom Lake increased substantially. The increased water level in the lake has resulted in the loss of many mature trees along the shoreline. The initial plans for the I-90 business park specified 19.2 cfs coming into the lake; that was increased in 1984 to 42 cfs.

Chair Sheffels asked who the specific concerns should be addressed to. Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said the upcoming Eastgate/I-90 planning study has the potential to affect the amount of impervious surface area that will drain toward Phantom Lake. For the short term, however, the issue should be brought to the attention of the utilities department.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda as submitted was approved by consensus.

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

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

7. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Inghram reported that headway was being made in selecting candidates to fill the two Commission vacant slots.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Eastgate/I-90 Land use and Transportation Project

Senior Planner Mike Bergstrom said the Comprehensive Plan includes a goal that calls for revisiting the city's major employment centers every so often to make sure they are up to date and forward looking. That is the impetus for the Eastgate/I-90 study.

The Eastgate/I-90 study area is a major employment center with more than 25,000 employees. It also serves as a major gateway into the city for westbound travelers. The study area represents a missing gap in the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway which extends from central Washington to Puget Sound.

Mr. Bergstrom stressed that except for the northern portion, the Factoria area will not be included in the study.

The Council initiated the Eastgate/I-90 study on February 1. On that date the Council established the principles to guide the project, the scope of work, the study area map, and a public involvement plan. While the study area extends to the east and incorporates the Lakemont Boulevard interchange. Changes in land use will be considered within the study area along I-90, but not in the Lakemont interchange area. The Potential Annexation Areas to the south of I-90 will be looked at as part of a separate study.

The planning horizon for the Eastgate/I-90 study will be 2030. The Council direction calls for the study to yield a preferred long-term land use and transportation vision for the corridor, with multimodal solutions and improvements. The study is also intended to promote a stronger identity and urban design image, and to recognize the area's prominent location on the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway. Bellevue College is striving to become a four-year institution, so the study will include looking at what opportunities that might present to the city.

Mr. Bergstrom commented that over the last few years several property owners have come to the city wanting to do something with their properties. Given the overall level of interest, it was decided it would be appropriate to take a holistic look at the area rather than to react to individual inquiries. The erosion of neighborhood services has risen as a concern in the area, though it is not specifically limited to Eastgate. There are still some neighborhood services operating in the corridor, though some have been lost in recent years. The study will look at what might be done to buttress the remaining uses.

There are several transportation chokepoints in the area. The study will focus on achieving system efficiencies, including local streets and WSDOT facilities throughout the corridor. Attention will be given both to existing issues and potential future issues. The lack of connectivity in the area is evidenced by several long streets and dead-end streets.

The study will contemplate the image for the corridor, including its place in the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway and the need for a more coherent image overall.

The study will include studying greenhouse gas emission measurements for the project and the

alternatives developed, and a grant has been applied for to conduct a health impact analysis, a land use planning tool that has not been previously used in Bellevue.

Mr. Bergstrom shared with the Commissioners a map showing the current zoning designations within the study area. He noted that the predominant zoning include Office/Limited Business, Community Business, and Light Industrial. There are some areas with single family zoning near Bellevue College, and there is some multifamily zoning. For the most part, the boundaries of the study area were drawn at the breakpoints between residential and non-residential properties.

Commissioner Ferris pointed out that the unincorporated area to the south of I-90 is a dominant land area relative to the study area and asked if there would be any way to look at that area as well. Mr. Bergstrom noted that the area is highly developed, mostly with single family uses. He said staff sees the potential annexation area as having an entirely different set of issues from those facing what has been called out as the study area. Transportation and connectivity are the main issues in common with the study area.

Chair Sheffels asked if Bellevue College owns property beyond its current campus boundary. Mr. Bergstrom said they own property that extends north into the single family area. However, most of their identified future development lies within the study area.

Mr. Bergstrom reviewed with the Commissioners some of the specific uses located in the study area. He allowed that for the most part the uses follow the zoning. There are, however, some uses that do not quite fit the zoning, though they are well established; they include the King County park and ride, Bellevue College, the Latter Day Saints Temple, the park area that is being planned for on the old airfield, the transfer station, and the Humane Society.

Commissioner Hamlin asked why some of the park area is shown extending outside of the study area. Mr. Bergstrom said staff did not want to send the signal that land use changes would be considered for the park. Mr. Inghram said the master planning process for the park site has concluded and there is no intention to reengage on that. The study boundary line generally follows zoning boundaries, primarily for the sake of convenience.

The Commissioners were shown a map showing some of the transportation chokepoints known to exist in the study area. Mr. Bergstrom said the list of contributors to these chokepoints includes the geography of the area, the I-90 freeway which has high traffic volumes and divides the corridor, and the relatively few means by which one can get under or over the freeway. Strategies are needed to address existing issues and future growth. Volumes on I-90 are projected to increase over the next 20 years as the region continues to grow; the city will need to continue working with the state to maximize the efficiency of that system. WSDOT has agreed to present information and talk to the public at the study's open house.

With regard to the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, Mr. Inghram said the concept extends beyond the idea of having a fully connected trail system. The greenway element is intended to provide drivers with an unbroken corridor of evergreen trees all the way up Snoqualmie Pass. There are still some trees in the Issaquah area, but the Eastgate area essentially has none.

Mr. Bergstrom said transit ridership has increased substantially over the last eight years. He said the main on/off movement locations in the Eastgate/I-90 corridor are Bellevue College, various city arterial streets, and the Eastgate park and ride. The 3800 daily boardings that take place at the park and ride account for 44 percent of the total ridership for the Eastgate/I-90 area.

There is one overarching principle handed down by the Council to guide the Eastgate/I-90 study,

which is to recognize that there are fiscal constraints facing the city that will affect the ability to fund new infrastructure. The specific principles established by the Council to guide the study are 1) enhance the Eastgate corridor's economic vitality without degrading mobility in other parts of the City, and ensure that it continues to contribute to the diversity of the City's economic mix; 2) retain and enhance neighborhood-oriented services and businesses, which are important to nearby residents of Bellevue and the adjacent Eastgate potential annexation area; 3) improve linkages with Bellevue College, which may include land use and transportation strategies, as well as a variety of partnerships that benefit both the College and the City as a whole; 4) better integrate land use and transportation across Eastgate, which may include consideration of transit-oriented development in portions of the area; 5) continue to evolve Eastgate's transportation infrastructure to a high performing, multimodal system, including coordinating with service providers on increased transit service to the area; 6) increase connectivity across the Eastgate corridor, addressing the area's numerous barriers such as its limited street and non-motorized (both pedestrian and bicycle) network, and stand-alone developments; 7) model environmental sustainability in planning for Eastgate's future, so that future plans for the area produce measurable environmental benefits; 8) improve the Eastgate Corridor's urban design quality and coherence, recognizing the area as a major City gateway and prominent location on the Mountain to Sound Greenway; and 9) work to improve the performance of state facilities in the area, I-90 and its access points, which today create major issues for the City's land use and arterial system.

Mr. Bergstrom said an economic and market analysis is already under way. It is looking at how the corridor is performing currently, what the possibilities are for the future, and what challenges are facing the area. A preliminary transportation screening analysis has been done. It is known that whatever the Sound Transit III improvements will be, they will be quite a ways off in the future but the possibilities should be taken into account in the planning activities.

The citizens advisory committee will develop a preferred alternative that will be subjected to the usual blessing process. It will possibly lead to Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code amendments, which would come through the Planning Commission. The SEPA review will kick off at the front end of the study and feedback regarding potential issues will be sought at the first open house.

Much of the study will be completed by the first half of 2011, but there will still be Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code amendment work after that. Overall, the study will take about two years and will include periodic updates for the Commission and the Council.

The citizens advisory committee will have roughly 12 members and will include board and commission representation, citywide interests, area stakeholders, and local residents. Technical advisors will be brought in to help inform the process. In addition to the CAC, the public involvement process will include community open houses, workshops, stakeholder panels, print and electronic media, and other measures. Flyers for the first open house are ready to be mailed out. An online survey is being developed and is about to go live.

Commissioner Lai asked to what extent unincorporated King County residents will be able to participate in the process. Mr. Bergstrom said the city is reaching out to those in the Potential Annexation Area the same as everyone else. The first flyer will go out to 25,000 addresses along postal carrier routes.

Commissioner Lai said one of the most interesting parts of the study area is the sliver of land south of I-90 where the Honda dealership is located. The uses there are bordered by residential to the south and are separated from similar uses to the north by the freeway. Getting in and out of the area is difficult and it will be interesting to see how the transportation issues get resolved.

Commissioner Ferris noted that across the country the transitions of two-year colleges to four-year colleges have been associated with residential uses supportive of the educational facility. He suggested the study should consider residential as a supportive use.

Commissioner Hamlin pointed out that the Eastgate area has some of the last remaining light industrial uses in the city. He said it will be interesting to see how that use is treated in the study. Mr. Bergstrom allowed that that will be a policy question to be addressed in the study.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Sheffels provided the Commissioners with copies of an invitation to the FutureWise reunion slated for March 20.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 18, 2009

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

B. December 9, 2009

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

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

12. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

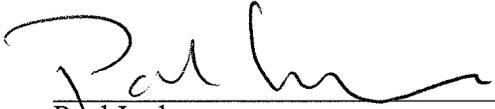
A. March 24, 2010

Mr. Inghram said the March 24 special meeting will be the opportunity for the Commission to hear from the Washington State Shorelines Association.

Commissioner Hamlin asked if after the presentation the same group or another group could come forward seeking an additional opportunity to make a presentation. Mr. Inghram said the same group or another group could make such a request and it would be up to the Commission to decide how to handle those requests. He said staff has had discussions with a lot of groups, but to date no additional requests to be allowed to make presentations have been submitted.

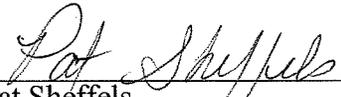
13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sheffels adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.



Paul Inghram
Staff to the Planning Commission

4/14/2010
Date



Pat Sheffels
Chair of the Planning Commission

4/14/10
Date