

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

April 2, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Robertson, Vice-Chair Bach, Commissioners Ferris, Lai, Orrico, Sheffels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Mathews

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Emil King, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: Lori Peckol, City of Redmond

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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 Orrico, who arrived at 7:29 p.m., and Commissioner Mathews, who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram briefly reviewed the written comments received and the topics they address.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kathy Gwilym, 9436 NE 1st Street, spoke on behalf of the West Bellevue Community Club. She said there are no significant changes that would justify a CPA or geographic scoping change for either the Pazooki or VanderHoek properties. Jurisdictions have zoning to offer stability and continuity. It is not wise to rezone parcels piecemeal as it destabilizes the community. When the city set up the zoning for Old Bellevue and west Bellevue, the intensity of uses was stepped down from the core of the Downtown to the outer perimeter of the business community. As the zones change from business to residential, there is supposed to be a decrease in density. That fact is pertinent to both the VanderHoek and Pazooki CPAs. There is multifamily zoning to the south of the Pazooki site, but to the north and west it is all single family. So a piecemeal rezone of one piece of property would not destabilize the neighborhood. The proposed actions are for private gain only and will not enhance the zoning for either residential or business purposes. The Planning Commission should recommend denial of both applications.

Mr. Paul Measel, 9510 NE 5th Street, spoke in opposition to the Pazooki proposal. He said he has lived in his current home since 1969 and has enjoyed the neighborhood very much; its residential character has been protected by the current Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan has successfully provided for a vibrant, integrated community with appropriate locations for each land use. One key purpose of the plan is to protect single family neighborhoods from encroachment by higher density development. Many people prefer lower density zoning and vote with their pocketbooks to upgrade their properties. They are depending on the Comprehensive Plan to provide predictability. The proposed Pazooki rezone will significantly damage current property owners. The rezone was denied three years ago when the Council concluded that the proposal did not meet the requirements under the threshold review decision criteria; they particularly noted the lack of changed circumstances. It seems evident that local community circumstances have still not changed significantly. A large number of local residents oppose the rezone and would prefer to retain the current Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Joy Stewart, 107 94th Avenue NE, said she has been a resident of the Lochleven community for 16 years and spoke representing the West Bellevue Community Club Board. She said the Board of Directors is unanimously opposed to the proposed rezone of the Pazooki site. The same request made three years ago by a previous owner of the property was denied in due course. The Board is also unanimously opposed to any geographic expansion of the rezone. The existing zoning pattern should be retained. There have not been any significant changes since the current zoning was instituted that would warrant a rezone.

Ms. Anita Skoog-Neal, address not given, said she serves as an officer of the Meydenbauer Bay Neighbors Association, a fairly new organization. She agreed with the comments made by the West Bellevue Community Club regarding the Pazooki proposal. She said her organization does not support the application for rezone for the VanderHoek property which is in essence the same application the owner withdrew in 2007. There is no justification for the rezone request. The new application cites site context changes and uses as an example a property that was constructed in accord with the existing zoning; that cannot be considered a changed circumstance. The fact that a neighboring property owner also wants to redevelop is not a valid changed circumstance. The property is zoned R-30 and there is no evidence that there has been a zone change. The application refers to CBD buffers and perimeter design guidelines in making the suggestion that there was no reconsideration of the effects on the subject property; that information is immaterial. The applicant cites the Meydenbauer Bay Park planning process under way, but that is a work in progress. While the downtown area of Bellevue is experiencing rapid growth, the perimeter areas are to serve as transitions to lower densities. Changing the zoning in order to provide connectivity to Meydenbauer Bay Park is a non-starter. The zoning request absolutely negatively impacts the goals of the Southwest Bellevue Subarea which calls for maintaining the borders of the downtown subarea as established in 1979 to prevent the spread of the downtown into adjacent residential neighborhoods. If granted, the proposal would impact the surrounding areas and would encourage future geographic scoping to spread the zone change, and the character of the surrounding neighborhoods would change to match the character of the downtown. Increases in density will impact traffic congestion and parking issues. The proposed rezone should be denied.

Mr. Marvin Peterson, 9840 SE Shoreline Drive, said he also serves as a member and officer of the Meydenbauer Bay Neighbors Association. He noted that the application suggests Wildwood Park is not an efficient use of land and offers the possibility of drug use. The fact is the park does not offer any problems for the local community; it is used by senior citizens and local residents every day. The setting is serene and beautiful. To allow a large building to be

constructed adjacent to it would create a negative impact. The Meydenbauer Bay Park planning group has proposed closing 100th Avenue SE to the west of Main Street. The only other signalized intersection is on 102nd Avenue SE. If 100th Avenue SE is closed, all of Medina, Clyde Hill and West Bellevue will use that roadway and there will be tremendous congestion. Redevelopment of the VanderHoek parcel will only create more havoc for the area.

Mr. Onid Pazooki, address not given, spoke on behalf of Paul Pazooki, the applicant for the Pazooki Comprehensive Plan amendment. He said the request is to change the zoning for the 17,300 square-foot property from R-3.5, which has a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, to R-4.0, which has a minimum lot size of 8500 square feet. The idea is that the lot should be able to fit in with the neighborhood scope; the majority of the lots in the area are 8,500 square feet in size. Thirty of the 53 parcels in the adjacent blocks (96, 97, 98 and 99) are not conforming with the current zoning of R-3.5, but are conforming to R-4. If the four-block area were to be rezoned to four units per acre, nearly all of the lots would become conforming. Under the proposal, only four lots would be able to subdivide, yielding a maximum increase of four residential homes. The current lot would accommodate a mega home, but if allowed to be divided would allow for the construction of two smaller homes matching those that exist around it. The property owner has reached out to the local community with emails, letters and attempted face-to-face contact; in addition, a question and answer session for the surrounding neighbors is scheduled for April 3 at 7:00 p.m. at the Bradford Center. The applicants have had positive feedback from surrounding property owners.

Mr. Todd Woosley, address not given, said he was pleased to see that the city of Redmond would be presenting later in the meeting information about their Overlake Neighborhood plan, which abuts Bel-Red. He said they have done a good job of looking at the FAR and densities necessary, and they have allowed for a significant increase in the types of uses permitted there which has improved tenancy rates in the existing buildings. The proposal to impose an FAR limit of up to 1.0 and heights up of 60 feet outside the Bel-Red nodes is too low. The economic feasibility of buildings fitting those restrictions is questionable. What is needed is building heights of 80 to 85 feet, which is more consistent with what they will be in Overlake. For the next several years, the proposed transit nodes will be bus stops and they will likely be on the existing arterials. The city should set the baseline level FAR and building height at what will be economically feasible; the incentive system should kick in above and beyond that mark.

Mr. John Ziac, 9726 NE 5th Street, said he has resided at his current address since 1974. He echoed the opposition voiced by the previous speakers to the Pazooki Comprehensive Plan amendment. He said he is opposed to more density in the area. West Bellevue is probably the best kept secret in the entire area. Nothing is broken and is in need of being fixed; the residents of the area are very happy and have been for many years.

Mr. William M. Palmer, a land use planning consultant, spoke representing the Oh and Lee site-specific proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment applications. He said it was his understanding that the Commission made a decision in February with regard to what the Comprehensive Plan amendment docket would contain. He was informed by Chair Robertson that all Comprehensive Plan amendments received by the deadline date are made the subject of a public hearing, following which a decision is made by the Planning Commission as to whether or not each should be reviewed. A recommendation is forwarded to the City Council who then makes the actual decision whether or not to include each proposal.

Chair Robertson announced that a public hearing for all of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments is tentatively scheduled for June 11.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None
7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS – None
8. STUDY SESSION
 - A. 2008 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz noted that five proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments were previously discussed by the Commission. He said the next five to be reviewed all have potential geographic scoping issues.

- VanderHoek Multifamily

Mr. Matz said the application is focused on the property at 117 102nd Avenue SE in the Southwest Bellevue subarea; the site is currently used as a parking lot. The privately initiated designation seeks a change in the designation for the quarter-acre site from Multifamily High (MF-M) to Downtown (DNTN), and asks that the site be removed from the Southwest Bellevue subarea and included in the Downtown subarea. If the Comprehensive Plan amendment is adopted, the subsequent rezone could allow development or expansion consistent with the land use provisions of the Old Bellevue zoning district and Perimeter Design District A.

Mr. Matz noted that the application was submitted in 2007 but was withdrawn by the applicant before the City Council could act on the Threshold Review recommendation of the Commission to initiate it into Final Review. The Commission in 2007 did not agree with the recommendation of staff to expand the geographic scope to include a portion of the Forum property to the west. Staff is not recommending expanding the geographic scope of the application this time; no changes in area uses since the application was originally filed in 2007 are evident that would warrant changing the recommendation made by the Commission in 2007.

Chair Robertson asked what could be built on the property under the current designation. Mr. Matz said the predominant land use would be residential, though at a much higher intensity than is allowed under R-30. The Perimeter Design District A allows building height of up to 55 feet; under the requested change an additional 15 feet would be permitted.

- Newport Professional Buildings

Mr. Matz said the .62-acre site in the Factoria subarea is at the intersection of Factoria Boulevard and SE Newport Way. The application involves two of three small office buildings. The privately initiated application seeks to amend the current designation from Professional Office (PO) to Community Business (CB). The applicant is desirous of constructing a mixed use development with ground-floor office/retail and residential on the upper floors.

Mr. Matz said the recommendation of staff is to expand the geographic scoping to include the third parcel at 4301 Factoria Boulevard SE; the third parcel is similarly situated and shares characteristics of access, use and scale of development.

When the site was annexed in 1994 it was designated Single Family High (SF-H). In 1996 the Factoria Inconsistencies Comprehensive Plan amendment resulted in the current Professional

Office (PO) designation.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Sheffels, Mr. Matz explained that for some reason the description of the Professional Office designation includes the right-of-way along Factoria Boulevard adjacent to the subject property. He said should the application advance, that issue can be addressed.

Chair Robertson asked if the owner of the third parcel has been asked about the possible expansion of geographic scoping. Mr. Matz said staff will contact the owner if the recommendation to expand the geographic scope is accepted and if directed to do so by the Commission.

Chair Robertson suggested the proposal to expand the geographic scope makes sense and should be recommended.

- Pazooki

Mr. Matz said the .40-acre site in the North Bellevue subarea but in the West Bellevue neighborhood at the corner of NE 5th Street and 98th Avenue NE. To the east and south of the property is Multifamily Low (MF-L) and Multifamily Medium (MF-M), while nearly everything west of 99th Avenue NE and north of NE 5th Street is Single Family Medium (SF-M). The proposal would amend the designation on the site from Single Family Medium to Single Family High. The site has a single family house on it currently, as do the areas immediately to the east and generally to the northwest and southwest.

The applicant would like to rezone the property to R-4. This district's 8,500 square-foot minimum lot size would allow the single parcel to be short platted into two single family parcels. The Comprehensive Plan designation of Single Family High would also allow a rezone to R-5, though the minimum lot size under that zone would not yield a third lot.

Mr. Matz said the site was the subject of a 2005 Comprehensive Plan amendment application; at that time it was called the Wuhrman site. The Planning Commission at that time recommended not initiating the application into the annual work program, concluding that the Comprehensive Plan had already appropriately anticipated growth in the area. In its recommendation to the Council, the Commission added that if initiated, expansion of the geographic scope should be considered to include other lots in the area that are not consistent in size with the majority of existing lots. The Council chose not to initiate the amendment, noting the importance of the plan in providing predictability; the Council concluded the application did not meet the criteria, particularly changed circumstances.

Mr. Matz said staff was not recommending expansion of the geographic scope if the application is advanced. If the proposal is advanced, the larger area question of appropriate designation based on historical lot size is something that could be folded into the next seven-year update to the Comprehensive Plan which will be in 2011.

Commissioner Ferris asked about the history of zoning, noting that there are many lots that are smaller than what the existing zoning allows and some lots that are clearly larger. Mr. Matz said the area is an older part of the city. The area was platted into a very traditional grid. He said staff has not been able to determine yet why some lots are larger than others.

Mr. Inghram said staff will provide more information about information about the lot sizes in the

area in the staff report.

Commissioner Lai asked if the application cites any factors other than growth in the Downtown that have occurred since the 2005 review. Mr. Matz said he is not aware of any in the application.

Chair Robertson said when the Commission previously looked at the site the conclusion they reached was that there were not sufficient changed circumstances to warrant initiation. The Commission did recommend expanding the geographic scope should the Council elect to initiate the application. She suggested that should still be the case.

Mr. Matz said the applicant has identified the fact that there a number of lots that are nonconforming to the minimum lot size for R-3.5. Four properties have been identified by the applicant that are large enough to permit splitting them in two.

Chair Robertson said she saw no significantly changed conditions since the 2005 review. She suggested a note should be made to look at the greater issue during the next seven-year Comprehensive Plan update.

- Oh

Mr. Matz said the proposal for the onethird-acre site at the south end of the Woodridge neighborhood along SE 30th Street is to change the designation from Single Family High (SF-H) to Multifamily Medium (MF-M). The purpose of the application is to allow a rezone up to R-20 density which would permit about six dwelling units on the site. There is currently a single family home on the site. Other single family properties exist to the east, north and northwest; to the south is Multifamily Medium and Multifamily High.

Mr. Matz said staff is not suggesting expansion of the geographic scope. The property sits on an edge between single family and multifamily designations. It appears there are some historical lot patterns that were grid-like in nature that have been adapted to the multifamily uses within the existing lot patterns, but there is no evident need to raise the same question regarding any other than the subject property.

- Lee

Mr. Matz said the half-acre Lee property is located on 148th Avenue NE. The property is an older, larger, irregularly shaped lot that has its access directly from 148th Avenue NE. Application seeks an amendment of the designation from Single Family Medium (SF-M) to Office (O).

Mr. Matz said staff is not recommending expanding the geographic scope. The interest in an Office designation is specific to the subject parcel.

Commissioner Ferris asked where the nearest Office-zoned property is in relation to the Lee property. Mr. Matz said there is a narrow band of office at NE 8th Street and 148th Avenue NE, which is about four blocks south. There are no Office parcels to the north until closer to the Overlake area.

Mr. Matz said staff will have a recommendation for all eleven applications in time for the public hearing.

B. Bel-Red Corridor Study Project

1. Redmond Overlake Presentation

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King introduced Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager for the city of Redmond. He noted that there has been a good staff-to-staff working relationship between Bellevue and Redmond during the development of the Bel-Red corridor and Overlake Neighborhood plans.

Ms. Peckol located the Overlake Neighborhood on a map and explained that it includes three subareas: a residential area to the north, the employment areas of Microsoft and Nintendo, and the Overlake Village area. She said the vision for Overlake was adopted in 1999 and included the notion of having the area be a focus for jobs and employment and an attractive location for people to live, recreate and shop.

Ms. Peckol said there were four primary reasons for updating the Overlake Neighborhood plan: there was a need to refine and clarify the vision; there was a need to account for change; there was a need to extend the planning horizon to 2030; and there was a need to determine how investments and other actions can help achieve the 1999 vision.

There are six main goals that underlie the plan, and four components for how to achieve those goals: policy updates, regulatory updates, updates to other documents such as the transportation master plan and the park plan, and public investments. It was understood that all of the pieces would need to work in concert.

In 2007 the Redmond City Council adopted the updates to the policies and regulations along with the master plan and implementation strategy. The city has also been working with Bellevue on updating the BROTS agreement. Redmond has Phase II work to be adopted in 2008; it includes bringing the transportation projects into the transportation master plan, updating the impact fees, updating the planned action for Overlake, and any additional updates needed to reflect the joint work between Redmond and Bellevue.

Ms. Peckol noted that the Overlake area is largely developed with one-story buildings, expansive parking lots, and very little open space or pedestrian amenities. The plan calls for a much more vibrant place with multistory buildings, wide sidewalks, trees, and all the amenities that make a place pleasant.

The Overlake planning process unveiled a number of goals seen as essential to achieving the plan for the area. It was recognized that Overlake Village needed to be a place where people would want to live, work, shop and recreate. The parks and open space component was understood to be critical to the mix. It was also noted that the area needed a sense of place, something that can be accomplished through streetscapes, building design, and a neighborhood core with public gathering places.

Overlake Village as it currently exists has very little in terms of stormwater treatment facilities. The idea is to develop a regional system in which all of the property owners can participate. The plan calls for encouraging green building and low impact development.

The notion of a system of connected open spaces will include a larger park, which is envisioned for the Group Health property, as well as a system of plazas associated with retail development,

and trail connections.

On the transportation side, the idea is to make it much easier for people to travel within the neighborhood and to get from Overlake to nearby areas and other locations in the region using a variety of travel modes.

Ms. Peckol said the existing regulations for the area has structured the zoning, FARs and allowed uses to emphasize residential primarily. The update clarifies that stance on the map and development regulations. The area to the east and west of 152nd Avenue NE emphasizes residential as part of any new development; the standard requires any new development in the area to devote a minimum of half the floor area to residential uses.

Commissioner Ferris asked if the fifty percent residential rule applies to every building or to the overall mix within the area. Ms. Peckol explained that for every new development, a minimum of half the total floor area must be in residential. In the area ((shown as yellow on the map)), the requirement is for a minimum of 25 percent of the floor area of all new projects to be in housing.

Ms. Peckol said the approach with regard to design standards for the Overlake Neighborhood is to use the citywide design standards as much as possible. For Overlake Village, however, the standards were added to or strengthened as needed. Particular focus was given to parking lots and parking garage design, the location of access, the design treatments, and all the standards related to building form, building materials, articulation, interesting rooflines, and the design of interior courtyards and landscaping. Plazas and open spaces must be designed to be welcoming and accessible.

The plan for 152nd Avenue NE does not depart from the former vision but offers clarification and increased emphasis. The area is envisioned as being the heart of Overlake Village. It is the place where neighborhood-scale retail is emphasized in mixed use developments. The intent is to see the area evolve over time to have a unique character and serve as a hub of activity. The area is also a node for bus rapid transit and light rail. Some design standards have been adopted specifically for 152nd Avenue NE. They include ground floor uses that are pedestrian oriented; the list of uses includes restaurants, retail, personal services and hotels. The code allows for a minimum of 50 percent of the length of a development to have those kinds of uses, and also allows up to 50 percent to be converted over time.

The code does not allow for any new surface parking along 152nd Avenue NE, and any structured parking must have more active uses along their fronts. In terms of building height, the upper stories of buildings along the west side have to be stepped back to maintain a pedestrian scale; on the east side the height is limited to six stories.

Ms. Peckol said having ground floor residential uses do not make sense on busy streets like 148th Avenue NE, Bel-Red Road, NE 24th Street and 156th Avenue NE. In those areas commercial or other non-residential uses are required on the ground floor. On the streets that will be created as part of redevelopment ground floor residences could work with good design.

Pedestrian standards are addressed in three ways. Cross sections have been adopted for each street in Overlake Village and the rest of the area. The code requires circulation systems to connect to the streets, internally, and to neighboring uses. The plan also calls for an urban pathway 12-feet wide with adjacent landscaping and pedestrian-scale lighting.

Commissioner Ferris noted that on the Bellevue side of 148th Avenue NE the plan calls for

residential uses up to 60 feet high and a 1.0 FAR. He asked what will be ((in the pink area)) on the Redmond side of the line. Ms. Peckol said the hope is that over time that property will redevelop to include more of a mixed use center. It could still have a larger retail presence, like a Sears, but added to that would be a minimum 25 percent residential development.

With regard to affordable housing, Ms. Peckol said the approach of Redmond is to talk with residents and property owners about housing goals and how to meet them. In each of the Overlake neighborhoods the residents have recommended, and the city has adopted, standards for a minimum amount of affordable dwellings as a part of new projects. The plan requires that a minimum of ten percent of any new dwellings in projects of ten units or more must be affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of the King County median income; even though those units are mandatory, a bonus is allowed for including them. Bonuses are offered throughout the city; in the Overlake Neighborhood the development standard is floor area, and the bonus is two times the amount of floor area provided for affordable dwellings. For example, a development of ten units that provides one affordable unit 1000 square feet in size would be able to add 2000 square feet of floor area to help offset the cost of the affordability requirement. In Overlake Village, the plan allows for the first 100 housing units that would otherwise be required to be affordable to be optional. A similar strategy was utilized in the downtown area of Redmond as a nod to the developing market. However, no development can waive more than 25 of the otherwise affordable units. Under the incentive program, any developer providing up to 20 percent of units as affordable qualify for increased residential floor area and an up to one additional story.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Sheffels, Ms. Peckol said Redmond has determined to use stories rather than feet as the measurement for height. She said the only property in the Overlake area that will use feet as the measurement is the Group Health property.

Ms. Peckol said the framework for the incentive program is predicated on the features identified as fundamental to the vision for Overlake Village. The existing bonus program in place for the downtown served as the base but was tailored to the Overlake goals. The incentives stress the partnership between the development community and the city. The list of incentives was intentionally kept short.

The incentive program has two tiers. An applicant who is seeking additional development capacity or uses through the program must first meet the priority bonus features. The stormwater facility and the park incentives are particular to specific properties. Other properties in the area would need to provide for an outdoor plaza space or pay a fee in-lieu. Master planning is required for larger sites and encouraged for others. Once those features are satisfied, applicants can select from among the items on the second tier list, including LEED silver, Built Green, providing more residential development than the minimum required, providing below-market cost space for existing retail businesses, providing below-grade or other significant structured parking where not already required, and providing more affordable housing than required. The incentives apply to both residential and commercial developments in the Overlake Village portion of Overlake; they are not available in the employment area.

Ms. Peckol clarified that the requirement for ten percent of all units in developments of ten units or more to be affordable is not an option.

Chair Robertson asked if there was an economic analysis done with regard to the incentive system. Ms. Peckol said Redmond did conduct an analysis, particularly as it relates to larger scale incentives.

Ms. Peckol said the Group Health site has two additional second tier features: provision of a full-service hotel or conference center, and transit-oriented development.

On the development side, the incentive program offers additional height, additional floor area, both residential and commercial, and expanded non-residential uses. The way the non-residential uses have been structured is with an emphasis on businesses that deal with the general public in contrast with companies that are more business-to-business oriented.

Ms. Peckol said for most sites the base height is up to four floors for commercial uses, and up to five floors for residential or mixed use developments. For most sites, the bonus system allows up to eight floors.

Two cornerstone sites have been identified. They are the Sears/Regency property, and the PS Business Parks property. For those two sites, the base height is the same, but one additional floor can be achieved by aggregating incentives. On the Group Health property, the code allows up to ten floors for commercial and twelve floors for residential or hotel.

Commissioner Ferris pointed out that the maximum FAR on the Bellevue side of the line is 1.0, while in Overlake Village the base is 2.5 and can be as high as 4.0 with the incentives. Mr. Inghram clarified that Overlake Village is the equivalent of the nodes in Bel-Red, which have an FAR of 2.5.

Ms. Peckol explained that structured parking is not included in the FAR calculation in Redmond. If roads have not yet been dedicated, those areas can count toward the FAR as well. Redmond has a fairly low coverage ratio for the Overlake Neighborhood area of 80 percent for most sites and 85 percent for the Group Health site; that factor limits how much floor area can be attained on a site.

Commissioner Ferris pointed out that lot coverage restrictions have the greatest impact on commercial sites. For residential, the best-designed sites can only get to about 75 percent lot coverage.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Sheffels, Ms. Peckol said the location for a light rail station in Overlake Neighborhood will be tied to the alignment ultimately selected by Sound Transit. Redmond's preference is to have the station located on 152nd Avenue, the north of NE 24th Street, though not too far north to make it as accessible as possible to the center of the area. The same location is the preferred place for a bus rapid transit station.

2. Bel-Red Incentive System

Mr. Inghram said incentives will be needed to help transform the Bel-Red corridor from its current configuration of mostly light industrial uses and to obtain key features like open space, parks space, and other public features. The incentives will be generated by the increase in land values that will result from the upzone.

Mr. Inghram said the economic analysis to determine the value of incentives is not complete but is being developed. The study is looking at all of the market factors in place, including what the various incentives cost the developer, what the value to the public is, and what the actual monetary value, if any, there is for the developer in terms of marketing. Such economic analyses are not an exact science. It would be a very good idea to review the incentive system after the

first five years to determine how effective it is and if it is working as it should.

Mr. Inghram explained that upzone actions bring with them an economic lift. Some is offset by new impact or other fees which are used to build infrastructure and amenities. There must be balance between the two; should the Council decide to be very aggressive with the impact fees, the incentives will need to be calibrated in a way that will match. There will be more room for aggressive incentives if the impact fees are lower.

Commissioner Sheffels said it is far easier for her to contemplate building height in terms of stories rather than feet. She asked how difficult it would be to use that approach in the Bel-Red corridor in talking about incentives.

Commissioner Ferris said a story in a commercial building is typically 15 feet; for residential buildings a story might be only nine feet. A six-story commercial building may be 90 feet tall, whereas a six-story residential building would only be 54 feet tall.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if there could be a differentiation made between commercial and residential in the number of floors allowed. Mr. Inghram said that approach can be studied. He said there are some concerns, however. Mr. King added that in Bellevue all height is measured in feet rather than stories. In some areas of the city 10 or 15 feet can make a significant difference. The FEIS analysis was all based on feet. It is not difficult to translate feet into stories to help gain a mental picture of what an area might look like.

Commissioner Lai asked if the impact fees and incentives will be recalculated periodically as reviews are conducted. Mr. Inghram said that could potentially be the result of the periodic reviews. He suggested, however, that there is benefit in not making adjustments too often because the development community needs predictability. Economic conditions do change over time, and so tweaks to fees and incentives are sometimes necessary.

Mr. Inghram shared with the Commissioners a chart comparing incentives for commercial projects and residential projects. He noted that for residential projects, the first tier of incentives includes affordable housing and key neighborhood amenities such as parks and stream restoration. On the commercial side, the incentives will be similar but would not put affordable housing at the top.

Commissioner Orrico said the approach Redmond has to incent the critical pieces first is a good idea. She asked what other sorts of amenities could be added to the list. Mr. Inghram said in theory there could be a very wide range of different things to include on the list. The anticipation with regard to streets is that local streets would be developed as development occurs. There are a variety of tools that can be used to fund transportation projects, including impact fees, that are not available for open space and park amenities.

Commissioner Sheffels suggested that the natural drainage features should be part of the parks and streams category. Mr. Inghram explained that they were included in the other category primarily because of the huge difficulty of the cost of land. The more the city can use a combination of incentives and property rights to encourage land dedication and development for natural drainage features, the better it will be.

Mr. King allowed that natural drainage features can be incorporated on sites away from streams. Rain gardens, pervious pavement and vegetative roofs do not necessarily have to be next to a stream. Commissioner Sheffels agreed but said she would like to see natural drainage given a

similar value as parks and streams.

Commissioner Sheffels suggested that one of the parks and active recreation areas amenities could be indoor recreation areas, but agreed that for a variety of reasons they would need to have a charge for using them. Mr. King said in the opinion of staff, any amenity achieved as a result of an incentive offered as part of the economic lift should be available for public use. A developer may for one reason or another choose to provide their own active recreation area.

Chair Robertson pointed out that not even city of Bellevue indoor recreation facilities are offered to the public for no charge. Mr. King allowed that reasonable charges might be the better way to think about such amenities.

Commissioner Orrico noted that the bonus measurement for parks and recreation is listed as per square foot of amenity provided. She commented that if Development A provides green space and Development B provides the same amount of green space and includes a play structure, Development B will not realize the same value as Development A. Mr. King said there is the potential to have independent bonuses for each one of those types of park facility. He allowed that mini parks often have more activity per square foot than a larger neighborhood or community park, so there may need to have multiple levels to the ratio calculations for different types of facilities.

Commissioner Sheffels referred to the incentive for artwork located outside of a building and fully accessible to the general public and suggested it should include artwork affixed to the outside of a building.

Commissioner Ferris commented that rain gardens and stormwater treatment systems require very technical engineering solutions. He suggested that they may be too complicated to include in the Land Use Code. Mr. King agreed that putting the specific criteria in the table would not be the way to go; rather there will be a reference to the city's natural drainage practices manual. Consideration has been given to each amenity on a square-foot-by-square-foot basis to determine the order of magnitude; those figures will be brought to the Commission at a future meeting.

Mr. Inghram said the steering committee was very clear in voicing an interest in including natural drainage options as bonusable amenities. Outside of incentives, the city does not currently have a tool for implementing natural drainage practices.

Commissioner Lai suggested it should be the beneficial impact of a natural drainage solution should be the standard for determining the bonus rather than a technical solution. Mr. King said the Utilities Department has the lead in measuring the effectiveness of such systems. He said they have been looking at the Bel-Red corridor as a whole as well as specific subregions to gain a better understanding of how natural drainage practices will benefit the stormwater system. Much will depend on how many systems get constructed and what the underlying soils are. It will not be possible to totally eliminate other stormwater requirements; there will always need to be a safety valve to handle surge events.

Chair Robertson asked if all Bellevue parks are required to include public restroom facilities. Mr. King said there are a number of existing neighborhood parks that do not have restroom facilities. He agreed that the requirement should probably apply to the larger neighborhood and community parks, but not for the smaller parks.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Sheffels, Mr. King said land set aside for park and

open space as part of the bonus system should be dedicated to the city. He said the staff are not suggesting that a new Comprehensive Plan designation for parks be created and applied to each site. Mr. Inghram added that the parks dedicated to the city would have to be consistent with the adopted plan for parks in the area.

Commissioner Sheffels suggested that there may be places where the provision of weather protection would not be desirable. Mr. King said staff will think about the right way to word the criteria. He agreed that access to sunlight is just as important as weather protection depending on the time of year.

Calling attention to the requirement for all publicly accessible space to be visible from public sidewalks, Chair Robertson asked if the reference is to the entire plaza or only part of it. Mr. Inghram agreed it could be written to mean at least part of the area must be visible from the sidewalks.

Mr. King said there is a policy issue tied to the community/non-profit space, child care services, and arts/cultural district uses. He explained that a developer can be given a bonus for one of those uses, which is then brought in per the requirement, but then over time the tenant leaves and another similar tenant cannot be found. No one wants to have a bunch of vacant spaces that were bonused for a particular use. In those cases, there should be some method for buying out of the bonus.

Chair Robertson agreed that there should be a buy-out provision, but suggested there should be a waiting period. Another option would be to allow conversion from one bonused use to another.

Commissioner Orrico noted that nothing is said about who the child care services would be open to; she observed that some centers give priority to people who work in the building. Facilities that are brought about through the bonus system should be open to the general public. Mr. Inghram suggested that any requirement of that sort would be difficult to enforce.

Chair Robertson pointed out that even if a child care center were to offer services only to employees in the building, there would be a public benefit. If nothing else, it could serve to reduce the number of trips on the roads.

Commissioner Ferris said finding child care is very difficult for many. A child care provider could not afford to pay the same rent a commercial tenant could, so the developer should be required to provide the space at a much lower cost in exchange for the bonus commercial space obtained for providing the space.

Commissioner Sheffels observed that in the Boston area the developers of tall buildings are including space for child care services and finding that in addition they need to subsidize it as an amenity for the workers in the building.

With regard to the second item under the arts/cultural district incentive, Chair Robertson suggested the annual operating budget restriction should be tied to the Consumer Price Index.

Commissioner Ferris asked why there should be any reference to the size of the budget of an arts organization at all if rehearsal space is to be bonused. Mr. King said that criteria was developed by the Arts Commission. The fact is that smaller groups with smaller budgets often have a more difficult time finding rehearsal space they can afford. He said he would ask the arts experts if there is anything magic about the one million dollar mark.

With regard to public restrooms, Mr. King commented that for the most part they are privately maintained but accessible to and signed for public use.

Chair Robertson asked what the market is providing currently with regard to LEED certification. Mr. King said the LEED levels for buildings are certified, silver, gold and platinum. The proposal is to bonus the gold and platinum levels given that the market is on its own providing certified and silver buildings. There is a different standard associated with LEED for Neighborhoods, and no new applications will be accepted until 2009 when they can figure out all the details and the calibrations.

Commissioner Ferris said his company has developed two gold projects and is working on a platinum project. He suggested that the things added to a project to get the gold and platinum ratings would not be perceived by the public as benefits; they include more sophisticated mechanical systems that will lower operating costs and benefit the tenant. Most of the LEED benefits the city would want to incent are captured in the drainage features and stream restoration provisions; in getting to certified or silver, most of the public benefit elements will be captured.

Commissioner Lai asked if there are any benefits the city reaps from having buildings with the higher LEED ratings that could be perceived to be a public benefit. Mr. Inghram said there could be some.

It was agreed to keep the issue on the list but with a much lower bonus level.

Commissioner Orrico asked why the transfer of development rights as a bonus should be limited to a regional system. Mr. Inghram said there are two different types of systems. One would apply locally and is referenced under the stream restoration category. The second would be a regional system that would work within the county. He said in the thinking of staff parks and open space might be counted in the mix. The receiving sites would be within the Bel-Red corridor, while the sending sites could be outside the area.

Commissioner Orrico said she is a fan of TDR programs. She suggested, however, that since King County has not finished crafting its TDR program, the regional approach should not be the only one kept on the list of incentives. It could be a regional or city TDR program.

Commissioner Lai concurred, especially if the transfers within Bellevue are to be limited to the Bel-Red corridor alone.

It was generally agreed to keep the item on the list at least through the public hearing process.

Commissioner Ferris reported that he spoke recently with the Sound Transit representative who indicated that Sound Transit is only considering one node in the Bel-Red corridor, not two. The suggestion was made that the city should consider as an incentive funding that might help to create the other one. Mr. Inghram said staff has had a number of conversations with Sound Transit.

Commissioner Sheffels said during the Bel-Red steering committee process the Sound Transit agreed that the city will not receive any more nodes than it asks for, so the decision was made to show two nodes on the map in addition to the one near the hospital.

3. Bel-Red Off-Street Parking

Chair Robertson voiced a concern with having maximums that are lower than throughout the rest of the city. She said how much parking to be included should be a developer decision; they are the ones who know what it will take to make a project pencil out. Mr. King said in the thinking of staff the maximums should be somewhere in between the downtown zones and the citywide standard, at least within the nodes.

Commissioner Ferris commented that lowering the maximums will require a shift in thinking. Certain kinds of uses have set parking requirements they have lived by for many years. If the city steps up and says the maximum number of parking will be limited below those standards, anyone wanting to locate in the area will have to find a way to live with the restrictions. That is the only way the city will be able to change the paradigm that is driven by the use of automobiles. With lower maximums more people will choose to leave their cars behind when going to the store.

Mr. Inghram briefly reviewed with the Commission the schedule for the Bel-Red subarea plan study.

Motion to extend the meeting to 10:10 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ferris. Second was by Commissioner Lai and the motion carried unanimously.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None
10. OLD BUSINESS – None
11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None
12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Todd Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties praised the Commission for asking pertinent questions and making informed suggestions regarding the Bel-Red corridor. With regard to the presentation regarding Redmond, he noted that the Overlake Village densities were adopted in 1999 and other than a small hotel no development occurred under the rules. The FARs and the requirements for the housing ratios, while good public policy, are very restrictive. For the PS Business Parks Overlake Business Center site, a commercial building would end up with 4000 square foot floorplates on the one-acre parcel, and that makes no sense from a market standpoint. Currently, it costs about 20 percent more to construct a condominium project than what the market will bear; the sale price would have to be similar to what downtown Bellevue is experiencing. In creating a list of incentives and requirements, what is feasible must be taken into account. He agreed that projects need to be allowed to construct an adequate amount of parking; without enough, people still drive, they just drive around looking for parking elsewhere.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 10:07 p.m.


Staff to the Planning Commission

7-9-2008
Date


Chair of the Planning Commission

7/9/08
Date