

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

July 7, 2004
7:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Lynde, Vice-Chair Bonincontri, Commissioners Bach, Maggi, Mathews, Orrico, Robertson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kathleen Burgess, Mary Kate Berens, Steve Cohn, Nicholas Matz, Emil King, Heidi Bedwell, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kevin McDonald, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bach who arrived at 7:04 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS – None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. James Eder, 15422 SE 7th Place, spoke on his own behalf and not as a member of the East Bellevue Community Council . He commented that one ballot measure to be voted on in November deals with expanding opportunities for gambling. The Sunset Village Shopping Center recently was purchased by an auto dealer, and the grocery store was lost. It is possible that if the November ballot measure passes, gambling organizations could in the future buy up shopping centers, the result of which would be the loss of even more grocery stores. There are no safeguards in city policy or code to ensure that as the population grows there will be a sufficient number of grocery stores to serve everyone. The Planning Commission should consider establishing some method by which the city can guarantee an adequate supply of grocery stores for the future. There are formulas for determining how many schools are needed, and it should be an easy matter to quantify how many grocery stores the population needs presently and will need in the future along the lines of establishing a level of service standard. With the loss of the grocery store at Sunset Village, local residents must now drive further to get

their groceries, and that defeats certain policies in the Comprehensive Plan aimed at reducing the number of trips on the roadways.

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

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan

Motion to open the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan Update was made by Commissioner Bonincontri. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried unanimously.

Planning Manager Kathleen Burgess explained that the public hearing was called to hear testimony on the major update to the Comprehensive Plan that is required every seven years under state law. She said the Commission will be back in study session on July 21 and will at that time review all of the public comments.

Ms. Burgess called attention to a memo dated July 7 that was included in the Commission packet in which the changes to the Environmental Element previously directed by the Commission were outlined; she noted that the changes were included in the public hearing draft of the Environmental Element. She noted that there was also a memo in the packet regarding Citizen Participation Element policy CP-5. An updated version of the minutes for the June 2 Commission meeting was provided to the Commissioners.

Ms. Burgess entered into the public record the written comments received and included in the staff report and the July 7 Commission packet, as well as written comments received from the East Bellevue Community Council, King County Metro, the state Department of Ecology, Mr. David Plummer, and Ms. Carolyn Maxim.

Ms. Sydney McComas with 1000 Friends of Washington, a statewide public interest group working to protect rural and resource land while making cities and counties great places to live, applauded the city for its excellent planning, its variety of housing types, and areas of high density zoning. She said appropriate high densities are important for the efficient use of land and to avoid the negative impacts of sprawl. In order to address the requirements of the Growth Management Act, the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board has adopted a bright line rule that comprehensive plan and development regulations must have a maximum density of no less than four residential dwelling units per net acre of all lands within the urban growth area. There are limited exceptions for lands that contain environmentally sensitive systems that are large in scope, that have complex structures and functions, and which have a high rank order value. If all three criteria are met, local jurisdictions can apply densities of less than four housing units per net acre. The Commission was urged to review areas within Bellevue that are zoned for less than four units per acre, specifically the R-1, R-1.8, and R-2.5 zones. The 2002 King County buildable lands report identified 356 net acres of capacity for building in single family zones in Bellevue that have densities of less than four units per acre. That is 67 percent of the net single family buildable capacity in the city. The zones should be updated and all densities should be brought into compliance with the Growth Management Act as part of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan update, which must under state law be adopted by December 1, 2004.

Mr. Paul Klansnic, 17107 SE Cougar Mountain Drive, spoke on behalf of the Cougar Mountain

Residents Association (CMRA). He noted that often it is not the wording of policies but their application in land use decisions that lead to undesirable consequences. Policy LU-4 seeks to set a minimum density standard for each residential district outside the Downtown. CMRA has consistently argued in favor of a higher density on the lower parts of Cougar Mountain, and lower densities further up the mountain above 168th Place SE. Many of the annexed properties in the area were originally zoned R-1 and they should remain that way. Guidelines for establishing minimum density standards should be incorporated into the policy and should call for higher densities near the Downtown and in areas with easily available multiple transportation modes. There should be less density in environmentally sensitive areas, areas with problematic transportation issues, and areas that serve as buffers to green areas and parks. Policy LU-8 asks that commercial development be contained within carefully delineated areas. The speaker asked for a definition of “carefully delineated”. The application of Policy LU-10 seems to be arbitrary rather than rigorous. When high-traffic-generating land uses are approved on non-arterial roads, above average mitigation should be required to reduce impacts. The LOS and concurrency requirements for the intersection at SE Cougar Mountain Way and Lakemont Boulevard should be monitored by the city. The improvements currently being made to SE Cougar Mountain Way will enhance the road somewhat but will not increase traffic safety. The build-out of the tax lots and opening of the Open Window school will increase traffic significantly, yet there is still no plan for installing a signal at the intersection of Lakemont Boulevard or increasing the road capacity safety limits. There should be more guidelines and details included in the policies to prevent what has happened in the CMRA neighborhood does not happen in other neighborhoods. CMRA would like to see language clarifying the phrase “maintain stability and improve vitality” as used in Policy LU-19. The city permitted a private school to build on an existing residential/open space area, and the transportation impacts from the school will destabilize the neighborhood. CMRA would like to see stronger and more specific language in Policy LU-23 given that by permitting the Open Window school the city clearly has violated the intent of the policy. CMRA supports the application of Policy LU-26 to existing retail development on Cougar Mountain, but wanted to see clarification of the methods for determining local citizen acceptance.

Mr. David Plummer, 14414 NE 14th Place, suggested that the efforts of the city to contact citizens about the Comprehensive Plan update have been a failure due to low turnout. He noted that about 25 citizens were present at the public hearing, a very low percentage of the overall city population. The City could have done a better job, and staff and the Commission should reflect on that for the future. A more efficient way to obtain citizen comment would have been to group elements of the overall Comprehensive Plan together and hold several public hearings rather than a single public hearing on what is an imposing document. The Comprehensive Plan and other city documents lack an understandable format and structure. There are no paragraph or document numbers, and there are no revision dates; there is no consistent editorial effort evident in the proposed revision to the Comprehensive Plan. Too much emphasis has been placed on the proposed revisions to the plan to encourage and adopt biases in favor of business and development. There are many policies in the plan that advocate city expansion of policy efforts into areas that should be left alone. There are many proposed actions without opportunity for citizen participation. The biggest failure of the document is that it does not make clear that the Growth Management Act, King County and the Growth Management Planning Council have locked everyone into a closed-loop cycle where it is virtually impossible to venture outside the strictures. The purpose is to focus development and business intensity in the cities, the result of which is unaffordable housing and increased traffic congestion. If the city would forthrightly acknowledge that fact and try to come to some accommodation, citizens would better off.

Mr. James Eder, 15422 SE 7th Place, suggested that the Urban Design Element is lacking completeness in that it says nothing about the area originally being home to coal mining

activities. On SE 16th Street to the east of 148th there is a small building that served as the original Lake Hills school house; some effort should be made to preserve it. On 112th Street to the north of 12th on the west side of the road there is an old log cabin; it should be preserved. On 108th Street there is a very old house that should be preserved as well. More should be done to preserve Bellevue's history; no one seems to be doing that diligently.

Ms. Carolyn Maxim, 12405 NE 2nd Street, said her concern is with what is not in the Comprehensive Plan but should be. Design review does not apply to large sections of the city, including General Commercial (GC), Light Industrial (LI), the edges of freeways, major arterials, designated intersections and boulevards. As a result, when a redevelopment application comes in that meets all applicable criteria for a site, the application must be approved. A number of amenities that could be obtained are thus lost by not having design review. She recommended that design review should be expanded to include GC and LI. At the very least staff should be directed to consider the development of criteria to be used when GC abuts residential areas, or major arterials the city would like to beautify, or view areas and major public spaces. The language of the development code should be tightened; there should be a balance to bring about fairness for the residents and the interests of the city. She noted that in her memo sent earlier to the Commission there are suggestions for ways to snug up the code. The language of the Comprehensive Plan should be tightened. Currently the language adjures staff to "encourage" and to "consider." There is nothing said about how that should be done. It is quite subjective to "encourage excellent design."

Ms. Leslie Lloyd with the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) , 500 108th Avenue NE, Suite 210, said the BDA worked with the city and a large group of stakeholders for over three years in updating the Downtown Implementation Plan (DIP). The citizen advisory committee (CAC) had a wide range of participants, including businesspersons, property owners, and homeowners. The plan was worked out through frank discussion and compromise which has been threaded into the proposed Comprehensive Plan update. One major effort of the plan is to concentrate growth in the Downtown neighborhood to minimize the effort for growth in other areas. There is no need to upzone the single family areas in order to handle the anticipated growth of the city. The DIP CAC agreed not to expand the boundaries of the Downtown core; there are very few places in North America where high-end single family homes can be found cheek-by-jowl with dense urban development such as occurs in Downtown Bellevue, and the CAC agreed that attribute should be preserved. The growth strategy is the single most important element of the Comprehensive Plan. About 75 percent of all jobs and housing growth over the planning horizon will be accommodated in the Downtown, and there is accordingly a major emphasis on providing for adequate infrastructure to serve the growth. The recommended plan includes capacity increases to I-405 as well as additional capacity enhancements within the Downtown. The plan anticipates a doubling of transit services over the 20-year planning horizon; achieving that goal will be critical to the success of the plan. The BDA as an organization encourages transit options, including ridesharing. The plan articulates a new vision for Downtown Bellevue, including the notion of the Downtown building on its strengths in the marketplace. From that effort came the great place strategy which is organized around four main elements. The CAC extensively studied the Downtown transition to the southern residential areas.

Mr. Andrew McCormick, 10208 NE 23rd Street, spoke representing the East Lake Washington chapter of the Audubon Society which is active in promoting the study and observation of birds as well as the preservation and restoration of natural ecosystems. He spoke in support of the proposed amendments to the Environmental Element aimed at protecting critical areas for wildlife preservation. He provided the Commission with a copy of the Audubon Washington Report on the state of birds, a comprehensive study of over 300 bird species in the state. The study found that 93 of the species are at risk of drastic population decline. Despite the

prevalence of pollution, pesticides, collision with manmade structures, and predation by uncontrolled cats and dogs, the single greatest threat for birds is loss of habitat through human population growth and alteration of the landscape. The human population of the state has doubled in the last 50 years, and is expected to double again in the next 50 years. The sprawl that results from such growth fragments natural landscapes, leaving birds only small islands of suitable habitat for their needs. Riparian shrubs and trees line the streams and lakes and provide critical habitat for songbirds. Birds are important to the natural ecosystem: they pollinate flowers and trees, disseminate seeds, and keep insect populations under control. Birds also bring money to the state; bird watching is the fastest growing hobby in the nation. In 2001 more than 46 million Americans watched birds and spent some \$32 billion in travel, bird feeders and seeds, planting bird-friendly gardens, and supporting bird research. Wildlife watching in Washington state alone provides for 22,000 jobs and brings in about \$980 million annually, more than either hunting or recreational fishing. The East Lake Washington Audubon Society acknowledges that a great deal of shoreline development has been inherited by the city, and that the existing problems are not completely of the city's own making. The addition of bulkheads, walls, ramps, docks, boat houses and various fences have left little of the natural lakeshore for wildlife. The changed habitat does not support spawning fish, shorebirds or waterfowl. Individual property owners should not be held personally responsible, however. The preservation and restoration of the shorelines should be the responsibility of all residents of Bellevue. He said as an upland resident he is willing to pay an increased tax to provide financial assistance to shoreline property owners to make wildlife-friendly changes to their properties. Incentives to property owners should be a large component of the shoreline preservation and restoration program. Water is an essential but endangered resource; controlling pollutants at their source will be extremely important to the health of the lakes. Runoff from streets and roadways is a major waterway pollution source, and citywide efforts are needed to improve water quality for both humans and wildlife. Environmental progress has been made; the bald eagle, osprey and peregrine falcon have been brought back from very low numbers by controlling pesticides. The city is faced with new opportunities for protecting and restoring the habitat of fish and wildlife for future generations of Bellevue residents to enjoy.

Mr. John Alton, 507 130th Avenue NE, noted that the Environmental Element addresses water quality. However, the largest polluter of the lakes in Bellevue is the city itself. Many storm drains dump directly into creeks that feed the lakes, yet there appears to be no urgency to address that issue. Preserving vegetation is of critical importance. Staff should be empowered to make recommendations that differ somewhat from the written word of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Richard Lee, 10927 SE 23rd Street, said the neighborhood he lives in gets a lot of noise from I-405. The vertical noise walls that were put up many years ago have been a constant problem. Sound attenuation for those walls should be required. He also noted that a new cell tower has been installed at the corner of Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue SE. There used to be several nice trees at the site, and the provider's solution to interference was to cut down the trees. The tower was originally designed to blend in with the trees by painting it green, but now that the trees are gone the tower stands out starkly; replanting trees on the site would be appreciated. The South Bellevue park and ride lot is always full; additional parking spaces there are very much needed. Many travel there, find it full, drive to the Mercer Island park and ride lot and find it full as well, and then just continue driving on in to work; that is hardly an efficient approach to controlling traffic on the freeways. There still is no plan for greenery at the intersection of Bellevue Way at I-90. He supported the comments made by the Audubon Society representative, noting that South Bellevue is frequented often by bald eagles to the enjoyment of all who see them.

Mr. Victor Amara, 200 99th Avenue NE, spoke as president of the Ashleigh House Homeowners Association regarding the proposed expansion of the Lochleven power substation by Puget

Sound Energy. He allowed that expansion of the facility was included in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, but no one at the time realized that the project would include the removal of all existing vegetation and replacing it with substation buildings, including 35-foot-tall galvanized towers and gravel on the ground. Downtown Bellevue is the central business district for the city as well as several neighboring jurisdictions. In most major cities, including Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Tacoma, San Francisco and Los Angeles, the power substations needed to supply their central business districts are located within their central business districts, not in neighboring residential areas. While moving the substation to the Downtown core would cost a great deal of money, new Downtown projects set to come online soon will provide Puget Sound Energy with a great deal of additional income. Puget Sound Energy should be required to provide power for the Downtown via a substation located within the Downtown.

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, concurred with the comment made by Mr. Plummer regarding the very low citizen turnout at such an important public hearing. The city spends a great deal of time sending out notices, but often the notices do not adequately explain what the advertised meetings are about. The result is too many do not understand what is happening, and that is a huge problem in Bellevue. She said she served as a member of the DIP CAC and said the south transition boundary issue did not receive extensive study. Some 200 local residents signed a petition seeking additional green space on the south side of the Downtown, but that has not come about yet. Noise is a very large problem for local residents; the Commission should include strong language in the Comprehensive Plan about protecting residential neighborhoods from noise. The residential focus of the current Comprehensive Plan is very important; the proposed updated version of the Comprehensive Plan does not have the same focus. New Policy LU-37 discourages the creation of additional potential office development beyond the areas currently designated in the Land Use Plan, unless an areawide planning process identifies office uses as appropriate for an area under transition from an earlier use that is in decline. The policy language is scary for residential uses; the policy should be eliminated, and nothing about earlier uses in decline should be included. New Policy LU-4 which seeks to adopt minimum density standards for each residential district outside the Downtown is also of concern. The Growth Management Act does not in fact require minimum densities; it requires only the efficient use of urban land applied equally and fairly throughout the urban growth area.

Mr. John Albertson, 2001 102nd Place SE, asked the Commission to consider extending the time for accepting public comment on the proposed Comprehensive Plan update. The changes made to the existing document came too fast and too late to be fully grasped by the public. He noted that there is a lot of preemptive real estate speculation going on in both north and south of the Downtown boundaries in anticipation of the proposed Comprehensive Plan. The investments are being made in residential R-1 properties in the hope that there will be upzones. The draft documents are not written as a final ordinance and it is difficult to tell what the final package will provide. Increases in density should be permitted only in the Downtown; phrases such as “near the Downtown” should be deleted. The city is doing a very good job of posting updated information to the internet, but what is still missing is a valid method for tracking changes to documents over time; the city should try to find a way to make the process simpler. He added his voice to those calling for holding the line on the city becoming more noisy. The growth in noise over time has diminished the quality of life for many; if the trend continues, many will choose to leave the city.

Mr. Bernie Goddard, 802 108th Avenue SE, said there needs to be better coordination between and among land use planning efforts, transportation, and police enforcement. A planning effort that resulted in a sign not allowing traffic traveling southbound on 108th at Main Street from continuing south is not enforced, so the traffic just keeps going down 108th. With regard to noise, he said when the concrete wall was installed along I-405 to protect one neighborhood, the

sound was bounced off the wall directly to the 108th neighborhood. The traffic generated by students at Bellevue High School, and the associated noise from boomboxes, is increasing annually. All of those issues should be addressed to help protect the residential areas.

With regard to holding the public hearing open, Chair Lynde said she would prefer to allow for written comments and additional public comment by continuing the public hearing to July 21, the Commission's next scheduled meeting, to give the public more time to go through the document.

Commissioner Orrico said she would concur provided that any additional testimony on July 21 is from persons who have not already spoken. The other Commissioners concurred.

Motion to table the public hearing to the July 21 Commission meeting was made by Commissioner Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Orrico and the motion carried unanimously.

****BREAK****

8. STUDY SESSION

A. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan

Commissioner Robertson addressed the urban density issue raised by 1000 Friends of Washington. She said it is her understanding that so long as the density of a jurisdiction is on the whole a minimum of four units per acre the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) are met. Ms. Burgess said staff sent a letter to the organization outlining the position of the city; clearly the organization has a different opinion. Ms. Burgess said she would provide the Commission with the letter outlining the official position of the city.

Ms. Berens allowed that there are some isolated and small areas of the city that may need further study with regard to increasing the density. Staff will be talking with the Council about initiating a study for those areas. By and large the city is in compliance with the requirements of the GMA.

Commissioner Robertson asked how the city addresses historic preservation. Commissioner Orrico noted that most historic properties in the city are under the control of the Parks Department. Ms. Burgess said staff would provide additional information on historic properties at the next Commission meeting.

Ms. Burgess said staff will provide at the next meeting a response to every comment made by the public during the public hearing.

Ms. Burgess asked the Commissioners to send her editorial changes to any of the elements.

Capital Facilities Element

Commissioner Orrico called attention to page 11 and use of the term "buildout." She suggested that the term needs to be better defined.

Chair Lynde asked why on page 5 the number of water customers did not match the number of sewer customers. Senior Planner Nicholas Matz explained that the City's water service area is larger than its sewer service area. Households outside the city limits are provided with water,

but city sewer services are provided only within the city limits.

Economic Development Element

Commissioner Maggi suggested that on page 11 the phrase "...Bellevue has been a leader in land use planning..." should read "...Bellevue is a leader in land use planning...."

Commissioner Orrico called attention to page 7 and the reference to aging commercial areas and asked if the document should be positioned to talk about rethinking the whole Safeway distribution area. Associate Planner Steve Cohn allowed that the use may not be the best long-term use for the area. Policy LU-37 specifically calls for reviewing that question. Ms. Burgess mentioned that the matter is shown as a challenge and not a solution.

Commissioner Robertson called attention to the last paragraph on the bottom of page 13 and suggested that language should be added to the end reading "However, given the fully developed nature of the city, redevelopment of these centers to serve the surrounding local neighborhoods should be encouraged."

Environmental Element

Ms. Burgess provided the Commissioners with copies of a memo from the East Bellevue Community Council, and copies of a letter from the Department of Ecology, focused on the Environmental Element. She said staff would provide responses at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Bach said he would appreciate getting more information from staff with regard to what impact moving away from the two-zone buffer approach and placing the burden on the city as a whole will have. Ms. Berens noted that changes to the policy language were made at the direction of the Commission. Policy EN-17 was added to establish limits on the amount of impervious surface area on new development and redevelopment citywide. For commercial properties the impact may be focused on the required landscaping and expanding the purpose beyond mere screening to water retention.

Commissioner Bach asked if bulkheads count as impervious surface. Ms. Berens said she would have to research that issue.

Commissioner Bach called attention to Policy EN-63 which refers to the opening of streams when redevelopment occurs. He suggested that in addition to the community and environmental benefits, the language should include the benefits to the property owner. Ms. Berens said the policy is intended to evaluate all impacts of the reopening of streams by redevelopment. The cost of restoration mentioned in the policy language is meant to encompass the literal cost of reopening plus the cost in terms of the developability of the property.

Commissioner Bach asked what changes were made to the policies as they relate to the differences between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish. Ms. Berens said no major changes were made. There was a discussion added about the lake environment in general and how it differs from streams and wetlands, but the differences between the two lakes were not called out in order to be consistent with how all other water resources are treated.

With regard to establishing citywide impervious surface standards, Chair Lynde suggested that the goal should be to move beyond institutionalizing what currently exists to striving for improvement. The status quo is obviously not working. Ms. Berens suggested that the proposed

policy language represents an improvement in the sense that currently there is no impervious surface requirements for residential properties; a property owner can literally pave over their entire lot. What staff is struggling with is how to pick a number without making a very large percentage of the city nonconforming. Further discussion about the appropriate impervious limit will take place as the implementing regulations are developed.

Housing Element

Commissioner Bach referred to Policy HO-1 and asked how the city will go about encouraging investment and revitalization. Ms. Burgess noted that on Page 6 there are several paragraphs that discuss the health of Bellevue neighborhoods. Some of the older neighborhoods are showing some signs of aging. Implementing the policy could include for example putting together stock plans for additions to homes within a neighborhood; this would be less costly to the homeowners. The policy is intended to foster creative thinking aimed at keeping neighborhoods healthy; it is not intended to refer to an increase in density or rezoning.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bach regarding Policy HO-2, Ms. Burgess allowed that most new housing in Bellevue over the next 20 years will be multifamily. Currently the standards are primarily aimed at protecting the single family neighborhood from multifamily developments; they are not aimed at producing a quality living environment within multifamily developments. The existing protections for single family developments would be retained while making the new multifamily developments more livable by incorporating open space and pedestrian connectivity.

Human Services Element

Commissioner Orrico agreed with the notion of having adopted goal areas but suggested that simply adopting United Way goals may result in not specific to Bellevue.

Ms. Burgess responded that the City coordinates human services planning with providers, other jurisdictions and non-profits such as United Way. These goals have been adopted by others and are consistent with Bellevue's involvement in human services.

Land Use Element

Referring to Policy LU-25, Commissioner Robertson asked if any of the Commissioners had changed their minds about the retail areas for shopping centers after the discussion that occurred at the Commission retreat. She said she would like to make the policy apply to centers that are not necessarily located in Neighborhood Business (NB) or Community Business (CB) with a concomitant agreement. There was no inclination indicated to revise the policy.

Parks, Open Space and Recreation Element

Commissioner Bach asked if Policy PO-10 refers to state and local funds for parks acquisition. Mr. Cohn said the Parks Department is very creative when it comes to finding funding. The policy refers to a variety of funding sources, which would include state and local funding.

Transportation Element

Referring to policy TR-12, Commissioner Orrico suggested that the wording should be more proactive and encourage employers to encourage their employees to use telecommuting.

Commissioner Orrico suggested that Policy TR-46 could be clearer to readers if the term “curb cuts” was changed to “driveways.”

Commissioner Orrico referred to Policy TR-100 and asked if there is not already an onramp on SR-520 at Bellevue Way NE. Kevin McDonald, Senior Planner, Department of Transportation, explained that there is no ramp at that location heading eastbound.

Chair Lynde asked if any of the policies refer to the noise issue. Mr. McDonald referred to the “Transportation, Environment and Quality of Life” section on page 25 and Policy TR-112. Chair Lynde asked if the policy could require addressing noise issues instead of considering them. Mr. McDonald said there are in certain instances conflicts between implementing a noise buffer and other urban design or neighborhood quality issues. He allowed that the benefits versus other impacts of noise walls should be considered.

Commissioner Bach pointed out that the freeway rights-of-way belong to the state over which the city has little control. The problem with traffic noise is that there are just too many people driving. Even if sound walls are constructed to protect one area, the sound can bounce to another area and someone else will be affected by it.

Chair Lynde said pavement type can have a lot to do with noise levels. She added that city streets add to the overall noise level and requiring good design for those streets could help reduce the noise levels.

Commissioner Bach said walls constructed on both sides of a roadway do little to beautify a city. Too often they simply create barriers and blocked-in communities. The fact is cities are noisy places.

Commissioner Robertson said she would like to see Policy TR-118 worded more strongly, such as “Where feasible, reduce noise impacts from streets and freeways on adjacent neighborhoods.”

Bel-Red/Overlake Transportation Study

Commissioner Maggi thought it would be helpful to define the acronym “BROTS” in the document.

East Bellevue Transportation Plan

Ms. Burgess referred to the written comments submitted by the East Bellevue Community Council.

Mr. McDonald referred to page 8 and the three bullet items under project 541. He noted that item C is an equestrian path that is no longer under consideration; it will be removed from the document.

Commissioner Mathews called attention to project 502 on page 3 and clarified that the intent is to provide residents better access to the Downtown.

Urban Design Element

With regard to design review for GC and LI, Senior Planner Emil King said he would talk with the land use staff about how design review presently occurs in the different zones. He said he would have additional information ready for the Commission for the July 21 meeting. He said it

is possible the Commission may want to recommend a future Land Use Code amendment to address design review in certain zones.

Utilities Element

Mr. Matz noted that the Commission and Council had elected not to pursue the issue of the Puget Sound Energy Lochleven substation location in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Vision

Commissioner Maggi called attention to page 11 and the section regarding an active and engaged community. She observed that a reference is made to people getting involved by voting and asked if that is something that could be encouraged by including it as a goal. Ms. Burgess said the vision section outlines a view of what the city will look like 20 years out. It is certainly hoped that the citizens will still be actively voting in 2025.

With regard to public notice of planning issues, Chair Lynde asked if the city could improve its exposure by paying for advertising space in announcing public processes. Ms. Burgess said that approach has not specifically been added to the budget. She said the city is using fewer and fewer hard copy mailings in favor of newsletters and web postings.

Commissioner Bach suggested that the notices that do get mailed out are perfectly easy to understand. The problem is that people have so much going on in their lives and get so much junk mail that they cannot possibly keep up with it all. He agreed that getting more citizen input would greatly benefit the city. What is needed most of all is citizens who take an interest and get involved. Until an issue affects them directly, too many just stand by. The city tries to get the word out and is very diligent and creative.

Commissioner Bonincontri agreed. She suggested that changing a policy regarding a transportation issue or the zoning code will only generate interest in the limited group of citizens who will be directly affected. Most people just do not have the time or energy to try and digest all of the policy and ordinance changes.

Ms. Burgess said Policy CP-1 could be amended by incorporating the notion of education, and then at a later time the Commission could come back to discuss different ways to involve, notify, and educate citizens.

Downtown Subarea Plan

Commissioner Bonincontri asked if the city has projections for future energy needs in the Downtown. Mr. King said that as part of the Lochleven Conditional use permit, staff was rechecking the non-residential and residential forecasts to see if the energy forecasts were up-to-date. He said when more information is available it will be shared with the Commission.

General Updates

There were no comments made regarding the general updates.

- B. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan
 - Citizen Participation Element

Ms. Berens commented on the request previously made by staff of the Commission to eliminate

Policy CP-5 because of the conflict between it and the decision criteria in the Land Use Code. She called attention to her memo on the subject in the packet and said staff agrees there would be some benefit in refining the decision criteria for Comprehensive Plan amendments and rezones, particularly around the idea of the need for the use. The suggestion of staff is to delete Policy CP-5 and to initiate a Land Use Code amendment to refine the decision criteria for Comprehensive Plan amendments and rezones. She added that the Land Use Code amendment process could be on the Commission's plate in September.

There was general agreement in favor of the staff position.

Commissioner Robertson said she would like to see review of the decision criteria added to the planned unit development, conditional use and administrative conditional use processes as well. She said the city has been moving too far away from protecting the neighborhoods, so the decision criteria should move back in that direction.

There was consensus in favor of amending the agenda to allow for public comment next.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Geoff Bidwell, 1600 109th Avenue SE, suggested that clearly the public is not aware of what is going on in the city and as such is therefore not involved. The thrust of any future changes should be directed at educating the public. In a representative form of government, the representatives are charged with keeping the public informed. In Bellevue the Councilmembers are elected at large so are not tied to any particular neighborhood or area, and that is the primary reason why the citizens are not being kept informed. The city could spend many dollars publishing notices in the newspaper and find no better participation.

Mr. Bernie Goddard, 802 108th Avenue SE, said he lived in his current residence before the concrete noise wall on I-405 was constructed. After it was built the local residents found that the noise levels in the neighborhood increased because the sounds bounce off the wall. The noise could be largely stopped by building another sound wall on the other side of I-405. There are ways to address noise; it cannot just be accepted that cities are noisy places and that nothing can be done about it. He stressed the need for staff in the various city departments to communicate better with each other; everyone should work together for the common good of the citizens.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 28, 2004

Commissioner Orrico noted that her name was listed as a Commissioner but in fact she was not actually a Commissioner on April 28.

Commissioner Robertson referred to the third sentence of the last paragraph on page 5 and suggested that it should read "...should be considered to determine whether a project is consistent...."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Robertson; second was by Commissioner Bonincontri and the motion carried without dissent. Commissioner Orrico abstained from voting.

B. May 5, 2004

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson; second was by Commissioner Bach and the motion carried without dissent. Commissioner Bonincontri abstained from voting.

C. May 12, 2004

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson; second was by Commissioner Bonincontri and the motion carried without dissent. Chair Lynde and Commissioner Maggi abstained from voting.

D. May 19, 2004

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson; second was by Commissioner Bonincontri and the motion carried without dissent. Chair Lynde and Commissioner Bach abstained from voting.

E. May 26, 2004

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Bonincontri; second was by Commissioner Bach and the motion carried without dissent. Commissioner Robertson abstained from voting.

F. June 2, 2004

Motion to approve the minutes as amended by staff was made by Commissioner Robertson; second was by Commissioner Bonincontri and the motion carried without dissent. Chair Lynde abstained from voting.

10. OLD BUSINESS – None

11. NEW BUSINESS – None

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lynde adjourned the meeting at 10:03 p.m.