

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

October 4, 2007
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Robinson, Valentina Kiselev, Jim Messner, Eileen Putter, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Catherine Brallier, Diana Thompson, Gary Dickerman, Christina Coulter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Stephen Lam, Eve Stern, Dwayne Dilley, Howard Katz, Marjorie Todd

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services; Mike Ingram, Mike Katterman, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kevin McDonald, Franz Loewenherz, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Doris Ford, Kirkland Senior Council

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair Robinson who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Stephen Lam, Eve Stern, Dwayne Dilley, Howard Katz and Marjorie Todd.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 6, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Ms. Seltzer. Second was by Ms. Putter and the motion carried unanimously.

3. CITY INITIATIVES

A. Great Streets Project – Mike Ingram, Transportation

Senior Planner Mike Ingram explained that the Great Streets project is focused on the downtown and builds on the Downtown Implementation Plan that was completed in 2003. In addition to taking into account anticipated growth and transportation infrastructure needs, the project is focused on making the downtown an attractive place to walk and a livable place.

Mr. Ingram said what the city currently has in place are standards that relate to how wide sidewalks should be and what sort of street trees to plant. The Great Streets project is

intended to yield a pallet of options to be used by developers and a specific vision for how certain corridors of the downtown should look. The project will also develop a strategy for incrementally building out the vision over time.

The five corridors receiving the primary attention in the project are Bellevue Way, 106th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE, NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street. For each of those corridors, specific plans will be developed which will outline what each block should look like. A toolkit of options will also be developed for the other streets in the downtown.

Many of the developers working in the downtown have wanted to construct high-quality street frontages for their projects, but the city has not been able to proactively identify what it will accept. The result has been less than what either party might really want.

The Downtown Implementation Plan holds the basic identities for each of the primary corridors in the downtown. Bellevue Way is identified as a shopping street; 106th Avenue NE is shown as an entertainment street; and 108th Avenue NE is listed as a commerce street. The Great Streets project seeks to establish those identities where they do not already exist, and to reinforce them where they have begun to take shape.

Several public workshops were held during the summer months in conjunction with the project consultant. The input from the public was used to help develop concepts for how the various street frontages should be developed. During September staff made presentations at the Parks and Community Services Board, the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission and the Arts Commission to gain their input. The project is now focused on further refining the design before it is presented to the City Council in November.

Mr. Ingram said the consultant team includes two public artists who are tasked with developing a framework for using public art and identifying themes for the various corridors and concepts for how those themes could be expressed.

Mr. Dickerman asked if the art themes will incorporate ethnicity in any way. Mr. Inghram said they will not do so directly. Bellevue has a high number of immigrants and refugees, and many of them have weighed in about the lack of vitality of the streets in the downtown. Accordingly, there has been a lot of discussion about how to activate the streets in ways that will facilitate interaction between different kinds of people. Some of the street designs being looked at require wider sidewalks, which means the buildings will have to be set back more given the limited amount of right-of-way.

Ms. Seltzer pointed out that much of the downtown is already developed or in the process of being developed and asked how the process will address the street frontage where buildings are already in place. Mr. Inghram said the design concepts will be presented to the City Council in November. If the Council approves them, the city will reach out to as many projects under way as possible to see how the streetscape plans might be expressed along their frontages.

Ms. Putter commented that the more she visits the downtown the less she likes to be there because there is no economic diversity. If all the stores and developers put in high-level retail and services, only the well-to-do will be able to shop there. The immigrants and those of low-income status will not be attracted to the area. Mr. Ingram said economic issues are outside the scope of the Great Streets project. He agreed that as property values rise in the downtown, new development must try to attract tenants that will be able to pay higher rents. However, there still are a number of older buildings in the downtown that are able to accommodate shops catering to patrons in all income brackets. Ms. Putter added that the Crossroads area has much more diversity and as a result feels more cosmopolitan; nothing in the downtown expresses the same picture.

Chair Robinson asked what is the best way the Network could provide suggestions and voice concerns. Mr. Ingram said his email address is on the handout he provided. He added that the project is in the wrap-up stage; staff and the consultants are working to put the lid on it by the end of the month. The package will be delivered to the Council on November 19.

Ms. Rasnack said she is pleased to see a plan being developed for going forward in the downtown. She asked if a similar approach will be taken in other areas of the city as they move toward redevelopment. Mr. Ingram said there have been discussions on the part of staff about the merits of taking that approach.

Ms. Thompson asked how people living in the downtown will carry out tasks such as grocery shopping as traffic increases. Mr. Ingram agreed that traffic will not be getting any better, particularly during peak hours. However, there will be other accessibility options. There will be housing units developed directly above the new Safeway, and there will be hundreds of other housing units within a few blocks of the site. The density of development near the QFC will not be as high, many will be able to walk to and from the store. One primary focus of the Great Streets project is on making the streets friendly to pedestrians.

Ms. Kiselev said the workshops were all very thorough, and all comments made have been discussed and addressed. The Arts Commission has been very focused on how to incorporate art into the streetscape.

B. Bel-Red Corridor Study – Kevin McDonald, Transportation

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald distributed to the Network members a map outlining the final recommendation of the Bel-Red corridor steering committee. He said the plan is intended to address development within the 900-acre corridor for the next 25 to 30 years. The current land use pattern for the area has light industrial uses and small-scale commercial retail and service uses. There is very little housing in the corridor. Over the past few years there has been a lot of pressure put on the city to consider allowing other uses; a number of light industrial and commercial uses have already left the corridor.

The City Council appointed a steering committee headed by two former mayors and charged it with devising a plan for the corridor looking out to 2030. The plan, which was two years in the making, was completed by the steering committee on September 6 and has been forwarded to the City Council.

The land use map that came out of the process paints in very broad terms the future layout of the corridor. The different colors represent different kinds of land uses, and the density and intensity of each land use varies across the study area.

Mr. McDonald explained that the hospital use will continue where it is and will be supported by additional medical uses and professional offices. To the east of the hospital is an area for which the vision is office uses and a small amount of housing mixed in. Further to the east is an area comprised primarily of housing but with some retail in a mixed use format. Even further to the east is an area designated as an arts and culture district in the vicinity of the existing Pacific Northwest Ballet facility. The plan calls for the Highland Park and Community Center to continue to be in its current location. On the far eastern edge of the corridor is a triangular area that is home to Angelo's Nursery and Uwajimaya; the plan calls for that area to have a mix of land uses having both residential and commercial components.

There are several highly degraded stream systems that flow through the corridor. Many of them are in pipes that flow under parking lots and buildings. Those that are not piped are often narrowly constrained and contain very little habitat for wildlife or salmon. The vision calls for revitalizing the streams to make them productive for salmon and wildlife while making them into amenities for humans as well.

The overall vision for the corridor includes some 5000 housing units of various types to attract a range of income groups. The final report of the steering committee includes a strong recommendation for the city to consider offering incentives for developers to include affordable housing. In addition to housing, about 4.5 million square feet of office space is incorporated in the plan.

The road and ped-bike systems in the corridor are immature at best. It functions well for light industrial uses and for some general commercial uses. However, the introduction of additional uses and housing will require upgrading the transportation system for all modes. The vision is for good connections, for each arterial to have ample sidewalks and be designed as Great Streets. Consultants have been engaged to develop ideas for how to build new streets or enhance existing streets with ped-bike amenities that will make the area a great plan.

One concept of the transportation plan is to extend NE 16th Street through the center of the corridor. The other piece of the transportation system is light rail. Sound Transit is proposing to extend light rail across the lake through downtown Bellevue and out to Redmond, and the intended route passes through the Bel-Red corridor. One way to take advantage of that amenity will be to build land uses of higher intensity around the

potential future stations. With better access to transit, commuters will not need a car to get around.

Mr. McDonald said the Council at its October 1 meeting approved the next phase of the project, which is having the various city boards and commissions begin the task of flushing out the policy and regulatory framework that will be needed for the land use vision to occur. That process will kick off in a joint meeting on October 10; the members of six boards and commissions will convene in a single room, something that has never happened before. The focus of the meeting will be to receive the direction from the City Council. The Planning Commission will have the lead but will be supported by the Transportation Commission, the Parks and Community Services Board, the Environmental Services Commission, the Arts Commission and the Human Services Commission.

A fairly intensive public involvement process is expected to come into play in the coming three months or so. That will ultimately lead to plan amendments and approved regulations, hopefully by the first or second quarter of 2008.

Ms. Kiselev asked what will happen if the roads and transit measure does not pass in November, and asked what kinds of flexible transportation systems have been discussed. Mr. McDonald said the transportation system in the corridor is focused on light industrial-type uses. If new housing and other uses are to be introduced, there will need to be new, wider streets. The package of transportation projects include improvements to all the north-south and east-west arterials. In between those major streets will be a system of smaller, neighborhood-scale streets that will knit the overall system together. There will be ped-bike facilities and improved transit services within the corridor. The plan for the corridor has been drafted to function with or without light rail.

Mr. McDonald added that a lot of new parks and open space amenities are included in the plan for the corridor.

C. Walk & Roll 2007 Ped-Bike Plan – Franz Loewenherz, Transportation

Senior transportation planner Franz Lowenherz informed the Network that all of the various city initiatives are tied together, and the staff are working closely together in consort. The multimodal vision that embraces a non-motorized component is consistent with all of the subarea projects. The ped-bike plan broadens the focus to the city as a whole.

The non-motorized vision is reflected at its broadest level in the Comprehensive Plan. The 1993 ped-bike plan was updated in 1999 and is in the process of being updated a second time. The transportation department is actively involved in building ped-bike facilities; about 15 percent of the transportation CIP is earmarked specifically for ped-bike projects.

Mr. Lowenherz said there are a variety of benefits to having a function ped-bike system, including public health, efficiencies in the transportation network, clean air, accessibility for all segments of the population, economic development and quality of life.

A three-phased approach is being utilized in updating the plan. The initial needs assessment has been completed, and a draft network plan has been drawn up. The process is currently in an evaluative phase. During October there are 12 different community events planned that will highlight the project. The final plan is slated to be presented to the Transportation Commission on November 29 for review and adoption. Once the plan is adopted, the focus will turn to developing an implementation plan, which will include project costing and prioritizing. Because the ped-bike plan is a component of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission will need to initiate an integration of the elements through the Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Prioritization will be key given that there are some 360 street segments called out. The costs will run into the hundreds of millions and implementation will not occur overnight.

When the Council initiated the project in the first place, they directed staff in emphatic terms to reach out to all user groups of all ages and all abilities. Accordingly, staff made extensive use of *It's Your City* and *Neighborhood News*. Two public service announcements were run on BTV; a project website has been set up; and two online surveys have been completed. In addition, two project flyers were developed and distributed, and a third is being developed. There have been collaborations with Cascade Bicycle Club, and a list serve with the names of 700 interested persons has been developed and is being utilized. A series of focus group discussions have been conducted, and staff has met with stakeholders and manned information booths at community events.

The online survey generated 919 comments regarding bicycle facilities and 406 comments regarding pedestrian facilities. Not surprisingly, the most-requested item highlighted in the bicycle survey was designated bicycle lanes; on the pedestrian side, the top request was for more sidewalks. On both sides, those who use the systems most were more likely to rate them as poor or inadequate. The need to fill gaps in both systems was placed high on the list, as was improved east-west facilities for cyclists.

One of the exciting technology innovations used with the project that garnered some interesting feedback was the use of posted digital photos. The public was encouraged to take photographs of locations that represent barriers in either the pedestrian or bicycle system; those photos were then uploaded to a site along with specific comments and the exact geotech locations. The tool was very helpful in informing the process and plan recommendations.

Mr. Lowenherz said all of the line segments from the maps are being transferred to a Virtual Earth platform. When it goes live in about a week, people logging onto the project website will be pull up the various networks, click on a project of interest and

receive a cross section illustration and project description; the person will also be able to comment on the proposal. Bellevue is perhaps the first jurisdiction to use the tool.

Ms. Kiselev asked if the online surveys included demographic information about age, economic status and cultural diversity of the respondents, and if there was any correlation between where the respondents live and their specific comments. Mr. Lowenherz said the project website includes the public involvement report in addition to the network plan. He allowed that the report includes a great deal of demographic information; the responses are differentiated by age and area, but not by cultural diversity. The number of responses to the online survey on the part of seniors was very low, which is precisely why staff has made a concerted effort to attend community events and schedule talks with specific stakeholders.

D. Light Rail Best Practices – Mike Katterman, PCD

Planner Mike Katterman with the Department of Planning and Community Development explained that the segment of the first phase of the Sound Transit light rail project that is currently under construction runs between Westlake and Seatac airport; that segment is set to open in 2009. Phase II, called East Link, is proposed to come east across I-90 through south Bellevue, on to downtown Bellevue, across I-405 to and through the Bel-Red corridor, and then on to Overlake and Redmond.

Mr. Kattermann shared with the Network a number of maps showing possible alignments. He noted that some of the alternatives include systems constructed at grade while others have elevated sections or tunnel options. The environmental process currently under way by Sound Transit, which will be published in September 2008, will inform the decisions relative to the preferred alignments to be made by the Sound Transit board.

While Bellevue is not in the driver's seat when it comes to determining alignments, the Sound Transit board can and should be influenced by local opinion. To that end, the Best Practices project seeks to gather as much information as possible about how other jurisdictions have gone about the task of bringing light rail to their communities. There are about 25 such systems in North America, and a consultant has been retained to study each of them and narrow the list down to those systems that are most similar to Bellevue. The process will analyze the steps taken by other jurisdictions and will look at both successes and shortcomings in an attempt to learn from those experiences.

Bringing light rail to the city will represent a major investment and will be a transformational event for the city. That is the reason the Best Practices Committee has been set up by the City Council. The environmental report being developed by Sound Transit will supplement but not duplicate the work being done by the Committee. The best practices study will put the city in the very best position possible to make good choices relative to light rail.

The Committee is comprised of two Commissioners each from the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission, the Parks and Community Services Board and the Environmental Services Commission, as well as a Council liaison and alternate. The schedule of the Committee is fully driven by the September 2008 date on which the DEIS will be published. The product of the Committee will be a catalog of best practices to be used as a resource throughout the project. A second product will be a set of recommendations for policy amendments.

The City Council will rely on the recommendations of the Best Practices Committee in formulating an overall recommendations. The city wants to have its policies in place, however, before the DEIS is published, in order to be in a good position to influence and negotiate with Sound Transit.

Sound Transit has the funding and approval to go through the entire environmental impact analysis process, and the outcome of the vote in November will not affect that aspect of planning for East Link. Accordingly, the city will need to continue with the best practices project regardless of what position the voters take.

Mr. Kattermann said the Best Practices Committee has met twice. At its most recent meeting it focused on developing a list of topics to be studied. Comments regarding light rail in Bellevue that were collected over the past few years from a variety of sources were compiled and organized into four areas that were the subject of an open house on September 13. About 95 people attended the event and about 150 comments have been received. All of that information was organized into eight topic areas which were reviewed by the Committee and used in developing the approved topics list. The first four topic areas to be tackled are 1) connecting people to light rail; 2) community and neighborhoods; 3) protecting and enhancing property values; and 4) station security.

The consultants are slated to present their findings on the four topic areas at the Committee meeting November 6. An open house event will occur just prior to that meeting. In December, the Committee will zero in on the best practices applicable to Bellevue.

The Committee will deal with the second group of four topics beginning in January. The topic areas are: 1) land use; 2) street design and operations; 3) elevated, at-grade and tunnel integration; and 4) construction impacts and mitigation.

Ms. Kiselev stressed the need for the transportation system to be fully connected, something that is of particular importance to seniors. Shuttles and buses will need to be brought online to connect with the light rail system.

4. BREAK

The group did not take a break

5. STAFF REPORT

A. BNOA Header design

Ms. VonWald said because there cannot be a separate logo for the Network, it was decided that the standard city letterhead should be used along with a header that says “Bellevue Network on Aging” and the mission statement.

Ms. Kiselev voiced concern regarding the catch phrase. Ms. VonWald said the catch phrase is in fact the adopted mission statement. If the group wants to change it, it should take up the issue at the retreat.

There was consensus to use the header design that was emailed by Ms. VonWald to all Network members for all official correspondence.

B. Other Reports

Ms. VonWald introduced Doris Ford with the Kirkland Senior Council and noted that Ms. Ford will be attending the Network meetings and reporting back to Kirkland.

Ms. VonWald said the Kirkland Senior Council is requesting a joint meeting with the Bellevue Network on Aging on January 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Food will be provided. The focus of the meeting will be to compare notes prior to each group holding a retreat.

Ms. VonWald proposed scheduling the Network retreat in late January, possibly on a weekend, and spend the time focused on goals and accomplishments, revisiting the bylaws, and talk about the mission statement, along with setting goals for 2008. It was decided that the retreat will be held on Thursday, January 10, 8am-Noon at Bellevue City Hall.

Ms. VonWald also proposed rescheduling the January meeting from the first to the second Thursday of the month.

Ms. VonWald reported that October 18 is the statewide gathering of advisory council and state councilmembers on aging. She said she will be attending that gathering and said permission has been granted to bring along two members of the Network. The meeting will be at the Tukwila Community Center from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mr. Dickerman volunteered to attend.

Ms. VonWald reported that the seniors won the annual softball match with city staff.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Transportation

Mr. Dickerman said the subcommittee met on October 3 and reaffirmed the desire to be a voice and a presence for transportation issues. He said the Network has a distinct position and the subcommittee wants to take advantage of that.

Mr. Dickerman said the members also want to be more involved in the political scene by interacting more with the Council by attending meetings. The Easy Rider Collaborative met with King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn in September.

The committee is continuing to play a support role in the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative and having a voice with regard to the Dial A Ride program, the Bus Buddy program, and the downtown circulator issue.

Ms. Kiselev suggested the committee should get in touch with Ever Care to learn about the ridership program they offer. The program is offered free of charge and is not only for medical appointments.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said one project the Collaborative wants to take on is the printing of a brochure targeting older adults and listing transportation options on the Eastside. The group has held off publishing the document until there is more information regarding the other projects, including Bus Buddy and Dial A Ride. Hopelink will serve as the contractor for a couple of the projects, but though funding has been awarded the money is not in hand yet.

Ms. Kiselev said she is very disappointed with how Hopelink is providing its services and how the services are being handled. Anything the Network chooses to advertise should be of high quality. Hopelink routinely double books and many who have scheduled rides do not get them and miss their appointments as a result.

B. Housing

Ms. Rasnack said the subcommittee would be meeting later in the afternoon. She said the survey and cover letter to be sent out to the housing providers is being finalized; it should be ready for release in a couple of weeks.

C. Support Services

Ms. Coulter said the subcommittee spent time at its last meeting talking about gatekeeper training and how to get the information out to other organizations in the community. The group decided the first focus should be on neighborhood associations.

Ms. Coulter said volunteers are still needed for the Home Sweet Home fair event. She sent around a sign-up sheet.

7. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. VonWald said there are a number of parks master planning processes under way that the Network might be interested in. It was decided that the Network would like to receive the information via email. Ms. VonWald will email monthly status reports on Parks projects to the Network.

8. KIRKLAND SENIOR COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

Ms. Ford said the Kirkland Senior Council has a couple of subcommittees, one of which is focused on fall prevention. There is also a good neighborhood subcommittee that looks for seniors who are by themselves so they can be contacted during events such as power outages. The Senior Council is also looking at developing a plastic pouch seniors could fill with vital information and put on their refrigerator doors for emergency personnel to refer to when needed.

Ms. Ford said the Senior Council has produced a number of videos, the most recent one on elder abuse. The filming has been done but the editing and final production are not yet done.

Ms. Ford said the first year for any committee is the most difficult. She urged the Network members to hang tough because things will get better.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Mr. Peter Maxim with the Parks and Community Services Board said the Council has asked the Parks Board to begin a process for getting comments on different parts of the parks system. He handed out a one-page sheet and encourage the Network members to fill them out and turn them in at Service First. The public at large will also be asked to provide information in advance of the Council making a decision about floating a parks bond.

Next meeting- **Thursday, November 8, 2007**

10. ADJOURN

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.