

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

April 1, 2010
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -112

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Robinson, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson, Howard Katz, Eileen Rasnack, Bill Merriman, Jullie Gray, Bob Megargel, Heidi Ressler, Hannah Kimball, Peg English, Richard Englund, Beverly Heyden

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cindy Sharek

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Polly Nelson, Hopelink; Rich Allen, Kirkland Senior Council; Jeannie Grote, North Bellevue Advisory Board; Mike Kattermann, Department of Planning and Community Development; Katie Kuciemba, Michael Miller, John Walser, Sound Transit

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair Robinson who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Howard Katz and Berta Seltzer, who arrived at 8:59 a.m., and Cindy Sharek, who was excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 4, 2010

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Merriman. Second was by Ms. Heyden and the motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION: EASY RIDER BUS

Polly Nelson, mobility coordinator for Hopelink, explained that the Easy Rider bus service operates on the Eastside and was originally designed to connect people to Sound Transit or King County Metro services. She said those who qualify, including seniors, Access riders and persons with disabilities can call in and make a reservation to be picked up and taken to one of 16 transit stop locations. The service coverage area runs from the Overlake park and ride to the Eastgate park and ride, and from just west of 140th Avenue NE to West Lake Sammamish Parkway. Low-income persons must be at 150 percent or below of the federal poverty guideline in order to qualify; in addition, they must have a job, be looking for a job, or be enrolled and participating in a job training program.

Ms. Thompson asked why the program will be operating just in east Bellevue rather than in all of Bellevue. Ms. Nelson said funding is the primary reason. The program is to be operated

with grant dollars, and at the time the grant was received consideration was being given to eliminating the DART route in east Bellevue; the thinking was there would end up being very little service in that area. While the DART route was not in fact eliminated, it is very limited in the way it travels and the Easy Rider bus service will help to fill in the gaps.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said the project was only a dream with Easy Rider started. The process of applying for and receiving funding and waiting for all of the puzzle pieces to come together has taken a long time. Hopefully the pilot project will meet with a level of success that will allow it to seek and obtain even more funding dollars and expand.

Ms. VonWald said the travel ambassador program visits the North Bellevue Community Center once a month. That is just one of the ways word about the Easy Rider bus program is being spread.

Ms. English asked what other methods are being used to get the word out. Ms. Nelson said a brochure has been developed and sent out to several different mailing lists. It will also be on the website, and Hopelink plans a press release and will post information on its homepage. Ms. English asked if there are identified areas of east Bellevue which could be targeted with well-placed posters. Ms. Nelson said the brochures will be made available near each of the 16 drop-off locations as well as the community centers, Crossroads Mall, the Kinderling Center, Youth Eastside Services, and of course at Hopelink. She said Hopelink hopes to get an article published in the *Bellevue Reporter* as well.

Mr. Englund asked how many buses the program will have. Ms. Nelson said there are will be two buses operated by paid drivers.

Ms. English asked if the brochures will be made available in languages other than English. Ms. Nelson said they will be translated into Russian and Spanish, and any non-English speaker who calls in will be connected to the Language Line. Agencies who work with non-English speaking clients will be assisting in getting the word out as well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Housing

Ms. Kimball said the committee met on March 18 and continued work on the housing guide. The committee discussed the kinds of housing to be focused on and definitions for the different kinds of housing. The exercise was very useful. Each committee member was assigned a specific segment of housing to research; their findings will be shared at the next committee meeting. ARCH has agreed to host the list.

Ms. Kimball announced that a housing tour has been scheduled for April 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ARCH director Arthur Sullivan will be participating.

Ms. Kimball said ARCH, Habitat for Humanity, DASH and a couple of other agencies sponsored a Housing 101 seminar at city hall on March 31. Three of the committee members attended.

B. Outreach

Ms. Ressler said the committee met and focused primarily on getting Kevin Henry to do a program on the topic of how to have parent/child conversations about what the roles will be as the parent ages. Mr. Henry has tentatively scheduled the program for May. It was suggested that Bill Morton might be part of the discussion group.

Ms. Ressler reported that BTV has agreed to air the AARP video on identify theft. It is already being shown. She said the group is looking at individual opportunities to share the video are also being sought.

Ms. VonWald said she spoke with BTV about running the elder abuse video again during the Month of June in conjunction with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

C. Advocacy

Ms. Rasnack said the committee met on March 8 and reviewed what had gone on during the legislative session. She said with the special session still under way, much is on hold pending knowing what the revenues will be.

Ms. Rasnack said the committee continued its work on the light rail issue. A letter was put together with all of the speaking points agreed to by the full Network and will be sent to Sound Transit soon.

Ms. Rasnack asked if the work of the committee to map senior housing locations is in any way duplicating the work of the Housing committee. Ms. VonWald said GIS work is not duplicative in that it is focused on showing Sound Transit where the bulk of the housing is located.

Mr. Katz asked if any new developments that will include units for older residents are going up or are planned to be constructed soon. Ms. Gray said an independent living facility is planned for the area near Uwajimaya. Ms. Rasnack said a new development with senior units in downtown Bellevue is currently on hold.

Ms. Rasnack said the committee will meet again on April 12 and will start work on the legislative meet and greet scheduled for the fall.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Katz, Ms. VonWald verified that the light rail hospital station on the Whole Foods site is not in a designated flood area. However, a hundred year flood event likely would flood the site. That fact in and of itself would not preclude locating the station there. She recommended the Network should not go down the path of talking about the flood issue as it falls outside the focus of the Network.

Ms. Gray agreed with the recommendation of Ms. VonWald. She suggested that if the topic were included in the talking points, it could appear as though the Network were trying to direct Sound Transit in deciding where to locate the station. The Network should be as neutral as possible in advocating for access and mobility for seniors.

Ms. O'Reilly said on April 12 at 4:30 p.m. Councilmember Balducci will be meeting with representatives of the advocacy committee and city staff to discuss issues of concern to seniors in the development of light rail in the city.

Ms. Seltzer said she and Mr. Katz will be attending the meeting with Councilmember Balducci to assist in making the point that the senior population has not been well represented. She said she hopes the Network will be given a permanent place at the table, or at least in the conversation.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS REPORT

A. Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative

Ms. O'Reilly noted that the report was largely covered earlier in the meeting. She added that some additional state and federal dollars are coming down the pike in the fall, and work is under way to get that information out to human services providers.

B. Eastside Human Services Forum

Ms. Seltzer noted that the Forum's workgroup has offered to work with the Network to facilitate the promotion of senior advocacy groups in other Eastside cities. She said a planning meeting of the group was set to occur later in the day to discuss the particulars.

Ms. VonWald said ultimately staff from the various Eastside cities will need to be convened to hear a presentation on what the Network has done. While the Network would not be in a position to actually help form other groups, it can make itself available to provide whatever assistance and support might be necessary.

Mr. Merriman said one message that needs to be made clear is the power and influence collaborating groups can have. There is in fact strength in numbers and in a regional approach.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. VonWald noted that the proposed bylaw amendments had been in the hands of the Network members for a month and that it was necessary to take action to approve them.

Motion to approve the bylaws as amended was made by Chair Robinson. Second was by Mr. Englund and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. VonWald called attention to a document titled "A Compendium of Community Aging Initiatives" and indicated that it was a research project by the School of Social Welfare at the University of California Berkeley. She pointed out that the Network is specifically mentioned in the document, which was published in March 2010.

Ms. VonWald commented that she had included with the agenda the Network's 2009-2010 annual report. She asked the Network members to review the report and let her know if any additional items should be included. The report will be shared with the Council on May 3 as part of the presentation for Older Americans Month.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will be in June, and a proclamation will be made by the Council on June 7.

BREAK

SOUND TRANSIT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Katie Kuciemba, community outreach liaison for Sound Transit, said in December 2008 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the East Link project was published. That document included some 19 different alternatives throughout the East Link alignment, which runs from downtown Seattle across I-90 to Mercer Island, downtown Bellevue, on to Overlake, and eventually to Redmond. Five open house events were hosted in late 2008 and early 2009 to receive public feedback before the Sound Transit board selected a preferred alternative. The design work for the preferred alternative is currently under way.

Ms. Kuciemba said geotechnical information is currently being gathered both as part of the design work and publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Sound Transit intends to make a final decision regarding a single downtown Bellevue preferred alternative by the end of April. The board will select the final project alignments in early 2011, after which the final design work will progress through 2013. Construction will begin after that.

The project will be phased. In the first phase the section between downtown Seattle and downtown Bellevue will open by 2020. The second phase running between downtown Bellevue and the Overlake area of Redmond will open in 2021.

The Seattle-Mercer Island segment will connect light rail on the existing I-90 center roadway. There will be stations in Rainier Avenue in Seattle and between 77th and 80th on Mercer Island. New HOV lanes will be constructed on the outer roadway of I-90.

The preferred alternative for the south Bellevue segment runs north from I-90 on Bellevue Way SE and 112th Avenue SE. Subject to additional evaluation, the rails will be located on the east side of those roadways. A station at the south Bellevue park and ride lot will be constructed to include 1400 parking spaces.

The segment through the Bel-Red corridor the trains will serve Overlake Village and the Microsoft campus. Depending on available financing, there will be either three or four stations in the corridor. As currently envisioned, the stations would be at 120th Avenue NE, 130th Avenue NE, Overlake Village and the Overlake transit center.

Mr. Katz asked if locating a station at 120th Avenue NE would mean no station would be located at 124th Avenue NE. John Walser, Sound Transit staff architect, said when the station location was first envisioned it appeared it would be halfway between 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE. In discussions with the developer and the city, the decision was made to move the station over to the 120th Avenue NE side of the stretch. Since the entrance will be on 120th Avenue NE, the station is being called by that street name instead.

With regard to downtown Redmond, Ms. Kuciemba said Sound Transit has future plans to provide a connection from Overlake. However, funding for that segment was not included in the Sound Transit 2 package that was passed by the voters in 2008. Sound Transit does intend to do the preliminary engineering on that segment, however, using a route along SR-520 and the northern edge of Marymoor Park, with stations at SE Redmond Way and a terminal station near Redmond Town Center.

The downtown Bellevue segment has spawned a great deal of interest. In May 2009 the Sound Transit board identified C-4A as its preferred alternative. The at-grade alignment includes a couplet running south on 108th Avenue NE and north on 110th Avenue NE, turning east to the north of NE 12th Street. The alternative includes an Ashwood/hospital station, a transit center station, and an East Main Street station. After a lot of evaluation and work with the city of Bellevue and the local neighborhoods, concerns were voiced about the alternative.

The recession has reduced the Sound Transit revenue forecast by about 20 percent. That essentially means the project reserves for East Link have been eliminated. Three expert reviews were conducted, including an at-grade peer review, a tunnel peer review, and a value analysis workshop. The work of those review panels resulted in a recommendation for a shorter tunnel alternative with a NE 6th Street crossing, a new at-grade alternative with a NE 6th Street crossing, and an at-grade alignment on 112th Avenue NE as the approach into downtown Bellevue.

The recommendation for a shorter tunnel segment through the downtown was echoed by stakeholders, the business community, and individuals, as well as by the city as the best way to avoid some of the traffic impacts the at-grade alternative would impose. Additional analysis on the 112th Avenue SE section in south Bellevue determined that costs could be reduced by between \$50 million and \$100 million.

Ms. Kuciemba said the Sound Transit board recommended to the Sound Transit staff to put together an analysis of the various options that have come to light, including an option for an elevated alignment along 114th Avenue NE. The resulting concept design report was released in February that included four new alternatives. C-9T included a tunnel underneath 110th Avenue NE with three stations, an elevated one at East Main, an underground station at the transit center, and an elevated hospital station behind Whole Foods. The alignment is fully grade separated. In a letter dated March 24 the Bellevue City Council identified the alternative as its preliminary preferred alternative for the downtown. Support for the alternative has also been voiced by the Bellevue Downtown Association and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce. The committee has committed to providing a range of local contributions to help bring the cost down.

Two of the new alternatives are at-grade alignments. C9-A runs at-grade along 110th Avenue NE in the center of the roadway, and the alternative has the same stations and configurations identified in C9-T. Overall, the alignment would be 76 percent grade separated. The alternative was recommended by the peer reviews and the value analysis workshop. It reduces the number of intersections and eliminates the crossing at NE 8th Street. C-11A runs at-grade along 108th Avenue NE. It has two at-grade stations, one at 108th Avenue NE and Main Street and one at the transit center, and an elevated hospital station. The alternative would be 73 percent grade separated.

C-14E is an elevated option running north along 112th Avenue NE behind the Bellevue Club and then cutting over to 114th Avenue NE. The alternative has two stations, an elevated station at the Bellevue transit center and an elevated hospital station. The alternative includes the options of a moving sidewalk and a pedestrian bridge connecting with Meydenbauer Center, a 200-space park and ride and a possible circulator bus connector. The alignment would be fully grade separated.

Ms. Kuciemba said Sound Transit has a strong policy of getting out into the community to talk with stakeholders. She said several stakeholder briefings have been conducted with business organizations and neighborhood groups. In addition, an open house was held in the downtown in February at which attendance was very high. The comments of the Network were included in the summary. The C-9T alternative received the most comments in support, while the C-14E alternative received the least comments in support. That outcome, coupled with the City Council's support, has given the Sound Transit board new food for thought for the downtown portion of the East Link project.

Sound Transit staff are preparing to present information to the capital projects committee. The committee was directed by the Sound Transit board to conduct some analysis and develop a recommendation regarding what the downtown preferred alternative should be. The board is slated to take action in a few weeks on whether or not it should update the preferred alternative.

Michael Miller, accessibility manager for Sound Transit, said the 15-member citizens accessibility advisory committee is made up of two representatives from each of the five Sound Transit service subareas, and five at-large members. The members are persons with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income citizens, advocates for those groups, or people who work at agencies that serve those groups. The committee is very active and is charged with

reviewing station designs, the vehicles used, and all policies and procedures. New members are recruited in July and August of every year. The committee meets quarterly.

Ms. Gray noted that one of the Network's subcommittees recently created some talking points that will be mailed to the Sound Transit board for consideration. She clarified that the comments have nothing to do with any specific route but rather on the needs of persons with limited mobility and special needs. The committee wants to make sure stations are fully accessible, are located where they will provide good access to the hospital, and will not be situated where those who have trouble navigating hills. Mr. Miller said he had already received the list and passed it along to the policy and planning department.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Ressler, Ms. Kuciemba said Sound Transit intends to move forward with all segments of the East Link project as quickly as possible regardless of the pace of new housing development, particularly in the Bel-Red corridor. The anticipation is that in time all of the planned housing units will be developed, but the development of the light rail system may not occur at exactly the same time.

Mr. Katz said his concern relative to the hospital station is that the area around Lake Bellevue is in a flood zone. Lake Bellevue is the source of Sturtevant Stream which goes into an inadequate culvert. During a significant storm event, flood waters will overtake the hospital station site. Mr. Walser said Sound Transit looked at that and determined that the tracks are actually out of the flood zone. That issue will be mentioned in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Mr. Katz pointed out that to the north of Lake Bellevue there is a large homeless population. He asked how that issue will be handled if construction of the light rail line means moving them. Ms. Kuciemba said that is an issue Sound Transit is prepared to deal with. She said there is a homeless population that exists fairly close to a Sound Transit project in downtown Seattle. Sound Transit has been working very closely with service organizations and with the homeless themselves to make sure they are getting what they need.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Merriman, Mr. Walser said there is no plan on the books to construct a light rail line north through the I-405 corridor. It would take another vote of the people to do that.

Mr. Katz said the Bellevue Senior Advisory Board, which is housed in the North Bellevue Community Center, endorsed the stand taken by the Network relative to light rail. He noted that they made a separate presentation to the city but they will not be sending a separate letter to Sound Transit. The group has, however, voiced a number of concerns about locating the hospital station where it has been proposed to be.

Ms. Kuciemba commented that the East Link project will not be constructed in a vacuum. When completed it will connect Bellevue and Redmond to downtown Seattle, to the University of Washington, and eventually it will connect with Snohomish County. Around the country, jurisdictions have discovered that once systems are constructed their ridership increases as people who previously had said they would never get out of their cars and walk six blocks to access light rail actually begin to do so. Additionally, light rail that runs through essentially undeveloped areas tends to create its own ridership by being the magnet that draws new development in.

Mr. Miller allowed that transit services designed to serve the light rail stations is vitally important.

Senior planner Mike Kattermann said the city undertook a best practices project two or three years ago and specifically looked at what other systems around the country have done. One key piece of data from that process was that in order to light rail to work there must be a good transit system that serves the stations. While those issues are outside the control of the city, the city will certainly push for good service. He added that when the Sound Transit board makes a decision on April 22, it will not be the end but rather the beginning of much of the planning work that will follow. One role the city will play is participating in station area planning for each of the proposed stations. That will include a public process.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m.