

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 8, 2007
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Yuen, Commissioners Bell, Glass, Northey, Wendle

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Holler

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Goran Sparrman, Kris Liljeblad, Franz Loewenherz, Kristi Oosterveen, Eric Miller, Karen Gonzalez, Department of Transportation; Ron Matthew, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Vice-Chair Yuen who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Holler who was excused.

3. STAFF REPORTS – None

4. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Wendle reported that he attended the RTID Sound Transit Phase II community meeting held at Bellevue High School on March 1. He said there was good attendance and a lot of good input.

Commissioner Bell said he and Chair Young met with Councilmembers Balducci and Noble to discuss operations of the Commission in relation to the City Council.

Commissioner Bell reminded the Commission about the desire of the Chamber of Commerce and the Bellevue Downtown Association to develop a better working relationship with the Commission. He proposed developing an active plan for doing that.

Commissioner Northey reported that there is legislation being considered that would allow for a joint ballot for RTID and Sound Transit instead of two separate votes. She suggested a briefing from staff would be helpful.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS,

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Mayor Degginger acknowledged the receipt of Chair Young's resignation letter. He said the Council appreciated the services of Chair Young and appreciates the services of each member of the Commission. The input from the Commission is vitally important to the Council.

Continuing, Mayor Degginger said transportation is a very important issue and is played out in a variety of venues. Bellevue is growing rapidly, a fact that brings certain challenges. Bellevue is also part of a region that is served by a transportation grid that has challenges of its own. A lot of money is spent annually by the city on transportation projects, second only to salaries for public safety. What the Commission does to review and recommend priorities for how to spend transportation dollars is very important and will continue to be into the future.

One question raised by Chair Young in his letter of resignation focused on the role of the Commission in terms of participating in regional transportation debates. There are a number of regional bodies that are focused on regional transportation issues, and for the most part membership on those bodies requires an elected official. Councilmember Balducci sits on the Transportation Policy Board of the Puget Sound Regional Council, and Councilmember Marshall is vice-chair of the Sound Transit Board. The City Council must chart the course for what policies it should pursue in the region. That is not done in a vacuum; in part they are determined at the federal level and in part at the state level. The Council determines what the city's strategies should be and spends time coordinating efforts with its lobbyists.

There is a great deal that must be done to address the transportation needs of the city, and the Council needs the help of the Transportation Commission to get the work done. A myriad of issues will be coming before the Commission in the coming year, all of which the Council will follow closely. The recommendations of the Commission will be carefully considered by the Council in coming to conclusions.

Commissioner Bell said one of the issues he has been concerned about is planning for light rail. He recognized that the Council must provide the lead in certain areas, but said the Commission does not feel it has been adequately briefed on the issue which will be of tremendous impact to the Commission and its deliberations concerning the CIP. The Commission should have a better understanding of what the Council's position is. Mayor Degginger said last year the Council was asked by the Sound Transit board to provide guidance on a preferred method of high-capacity transit to be incorporated into ST-2. Given the short timeframe involved, the Council conducted a public hearing before taking a position. With respect to planning going forward, the Council has initiated a process to take a look at how some of the Comprehensive Plan policies will factor into questions about routing. The Council will certainly want to hear from the Commission, especially regarding the policies in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Council has asked for an inventory of Comprehensive Plan policies that touch on the issue and any gaps in the Comprehensive Plan that would be useful to fill before getting specifically into questions of routing. Staff has been asked to report back on that exercise fairly soon, and once that is in hand it will be possible to more fully develop a workplan.

Commissioner Northey said she does not agree with Chair Young's position that regional issues should be the purview of the Commission. However, she suggested that at some point the Sound Transit work is going to become local. As the focus turns to alignments and the roadway network that will be needed to support the alignments, it will drive the CIP

deliberations and tradeoffs. The city has not previously been in a position of having to recognize that a major regional issue will have a direct impact on local citizens. While it may be that there are many transportation things going on in the city, the Commission has not heard about very many of them. In meeting after meeting the Commission is given briefings without being asked for an opinion on policy direction. At times it appears unclear whether or not the Council in fact even wants the opinions of the Commission.

Mayor Degginger said there will be a role of the Transportation Commission to play. One of the things the Council wants is a Bellevue-preferred alignment concept. While ultimately East Link is a regional problem and a regional decision, with the Council serving as a recommending body to Sound Transit in the same way the Commission serves as a recommending body to the Council. The decision will be an important one certainly and will need to be formulated in a thoughtful way. One of the best ways to do that will be to have the relevant planning policies percolate through the Transportation Commission and the Planning Commission. In the CIP discussions in the fall of 2006, there were a number of projects addressing pedestrian mobility in the downtown, especially in the NE 6th Street corridor. There were some pedestrian improvement projects on the table along with a green street proposal and an art element, but there was nothing that brought it all together. At the same time, the Council knew Sound Transit was looking at the street as a potential light rail alignment. Accordingly, the Council brought the mix into a single package for review.

With regard to the Commission not being fully briefed with regard to ongoing transportation issues, Mayor Degginger said he did not have a good answer in hand but would certainly talk with staff to come up with a solution. He said much of what comes to the Council are projects that have been in the pipeline for a long time, and the focus for the Council is on spending the money. He said he will make sure the Transportation Commission is fully briefed on the process of reviewing the Comprehensive Plan policies once staff completes its task of pulling together the package of policies and issues to be studied.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Lindy Bruce, 13624 SE 18th Street, spoke representing the Sunset Community Association. She said it has been 18 months since the community celebrated ten years of hard work to get award winning flood control and traffic, pedestrian and bicycle improvements made to lower Kamber Road. Now a conditional land use application to change a new office building to a K-8 450-student private school on Kamber Road could mitigate against some of safety improvements put in place. The building is located on the south side of Kamber Road between 138th Avenue SE and 136th Avenue SE, the side of the street that has no shoulder or sidewalks. The speed limit in the vicinity is 35 miles per hour, but downhill traffic tends to exceed the limit. There is a great deal of confusion and anxiety on the part of the neighborhood, particularly regarding the additional traffic congestion a school would create. Between 139th Avenue SE and 137th Avenue SE on Kamber Road there are already four different turn pockets and channelizations, and so far the only traffic mitigation we have seen for the proposed project would add two more left-turn pockets at a shared intersection at 137th Avenue SE, and right-turns only at two of the school's driveways. That will mean six channelizations, three intersections and three driveways in a two-block section of roadway that has poor sightlines on a two-lane road that would lose its shoulder and combined bike lane to build the channelizations. The Department of Transportation has requested an in-depth study from the developer's traffic engineering firm before making any recommendations, and the community has every confidence in the department. However, because there are so many

facets to the issue, the community would like the Transportation Commission to become involved in providing oversight and expertise in the decision-making process.

7. STUDY SESSION

There was agreement to revise the agenda to reverse items 7A and 7C.

B. 2007 Pedestrian & Bike Transportation Plan

Senior Planner Franz Loewenherz said the city has a number of pedestrian and bicycle policies and programs in place. The controlling document is the 1999 ped/bike plan and design standards. The 2007-2013 CIP includes an estimated \$20 million in investments in walkway/bikeway projects, representing approximately 15 percent of the overall transportation budget. In addition, there are a number of other programs and CIP projects that include walkway/bikeway enhancements. Many of the projects that have been implemented have won awards for excellence. The city also has an award-winning awareness and education program and other strategies, and is very involved in regional projects, including the Mountains To Sound Greenway and the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe corridor project.

Mr. Loewenherz said the city benefits in a variety of ways by implementing non-motorized facilities and programs. The public health is improved, as is transportation efficiency, air quality, accessibility, economic development, and quality of life.

The 1999 ped/bike plan includes 260 miles of pedestrian facilities, of which 58 percent has been implemented, and 155 miles of bikeway enhancements, of which 37 percent has been implemented. The plan establishes a vision for non-motorized improvements, but the vision needs to be updated. Since its adoption, there has been a great deal of growth and development in the downtown, a number of major projects on in the works, including the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe corridor and the East Link project of Sound Transit.

A three-phased approach for updating the plan has been identified, beginning with a needs assessment. An online survey requesting input on walkway/bikeway usage and suggestions for improvements has already been launched. The second phase will focus on confirming the network by examining in-depth the relative priority of each project on the list. In phase three the focus will turn to laying out an overall policy vision, establishing a prioritized list of projects, estimated costs and implementation scheme, and developing a performance tracking system.

Throughout the effort there will be opportunities for community participation. The primary intent is to have a balanced perspective with weigh-in from all users of all ages and all abilities. A citywide messaging effort has already begun for the initiative with articles in *It's Your City*, *Neighborhood News*, *Connections*, and media releases to the *Seattle Times*. In addition, BTV is airing a public service announcement. To date there have been 200 responses to the bicycle survey, and 80 responses to the pedestrian survey. Staff will be going over the responses in-depth and will consolidate the emails to a list-serve to keep people updated as the project progresses. Once the results have been tabulated, the intent is to reach out to a number of user groups. The Bellevue Network on Aging has already received an update, as has the East Bellevue Community Council. Consideration is being given to tying in with existing events in the city, such as the walkathon, the marathon, Bike to Work Day, and other non-

motorized community events. The Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, and Parks and Community Services Board will be provided with regular updates and will be asked to help evaluate the community input as the process moves forward.

A popular new approach being implemented by a number of jurisdictions is the adoption of "complete streets" policies. Seattle has taken that approach. Mr. Loewenherz said staff intends to look into that approach to see what it might mean for Bellevue; it involves training staff in performance tracking data. Once an updated plan is in place, the city may want to seek certain awards.

Staff has concluded that it would be overly ambitious to attempt to wrap up the project by the end of the year. It is more likely that it will not be ready for adoption until the first quarter of 2008.

Commissioner Bell commented that the project materials include no mention of coordinating with the light rail planning efforts. In addition the notion of school routes needs to be part of the project mix. He pointed out that in the past the pedestrian/bicycle CAG was asked to weigh in on such issues. If the group has been disbanded, there should at least be some recognition of their work.

Commissioner Yuen said the CAG has been disbanded. Commissioner Bell said to his knowledge it has not been officially disbanded. Everything has been left in limbo and it needs to be handled properly. The committee was formed as a committee of the Transportation Commission.

Mr. Loewenherz said the pedestrian/bicycle CAG approach was considered as a community engagement strategy but was not determined to be the most expeditious route to take.

Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning, asked if a letter of recognition and thanks on behalf of the department would serve as a proper wrap-up for the work done by the CAG. Commissioner Bell suggested that action should be taken by the Commission, not the department. A letter should go out thanking the CAG for their work and explaining that there is new work going on in which the CAG should participate.

Commissioner Glass said it was his understanding that the CAG was in limbo while waiting to be formalized.

Commissioner Northey voiced support for the innovative approaches outlined for gaining broad participation, but expressed shock that there will be no citizen oversight committee. There should be for two reasons: first, pedestrian and bicycle mobility is critically important to most citizens of Bellevue, and citizen oversight provides a level of accountability; second, such committees serve as incubators for growing city leadership.

Department of Transportation Director Goran Sparrman said there are a lot of different opinions with regard to why the old pedestrian/bicycle CAG was created, what its role was, and what the status of the group is currently. He explained that the Council has a strong desire to make sure that all boards and commissions are treated with consistency. Under that view, there can be no citizen oversight board operating independently. The direction given from the Council has been that the Transportation Commission should be the body to provide input into all transportation modes and all planning work leading to specific capital projects. The role of

citizen oversight is therefore to be rightly played by the Commission. At the same time, no one group should dominate the process of providing input on which to base an update of the ped/bike plan; it will be necessary to hear from a variety of stakeholders.

Addressing an observation made by Commissioner Bell, Mr. Sparrman acknowledged that the Transportation Commission had previously crafted a memo to the City Council with suggestions for how the pedestrian/bicycle CAG could be designed to operate. The feedback from the City Manager and the Council, however, has been clear that the established boards and commissions are not to have separate, freestanding groups operating under them. Commissioner Bell held that the Commission should have been made aware of that response.

Commissioner Northey respectfully disagreed and proposed offering the Council with a parallel recommendation. She suggested that there should be a steering committee formed to guide the process of updating the ped/bike plan, just as would be put in place for any other major plan update. Commissioner Bell concurred with the need for an oversight committee.

Commissioner Yuen suggested the topic should be discussed more fully under agenda item 7A, Commission Business, later in the meeting.

Commissioner Wendle commented that the plan update will involve a mix of policies and activities. The process is just getting under way and it is far too early to determine the level of public interest. The fact is the Commission has often complained that it is not being involved to the degree it could be, and it would make no sense for the Commission to turn its responsibility over to another group when the opportunity to be involved comes along. Unless through the process it is discovered that the work level and public response demands a subcommittee, none should be considered. The outreach program as explained by staff is more than adequate. The department should carefully consider every opportunity to partner with other programs that might result in an increase in the number of people choosing to walk instead of drive.

Commissioner Bell conceded the point and agreed the prudent thing to do would be to wait and see.

Commissioner Northey said she would like to see a clearer statement of the project milestones. Mr. Loewenherz said he expects to come back to the Commission after the two online surveys have been completed and the results are tabulated. He said he will have by then a game plan for engaging the Commission.

Commissioner Glass suggested the Commission is fully capable of handling public input and providing assistance in updating the plan and prioritizing projects. It would be redundant to ask another citizen group to do the same thing.

Mr. Loewenherz said he will be updating the Council on March 12. He said he will inform them that the Commission intends to be actively involved in the plan update process.

****BREAK****

C. Neighborhood Sidewalk Prioritization Process

Capital Programming Manager Eric Miller explained that the Neighborhood Sidewalk

Prioritization Process is the result of two separate drivers that came up in the latter half of 2006. The first is the Neighborhood Livability Action Agenda, which was approved by the Council in September. There are three key points to the agenda: 1) property maintenance issues and their resulting impacts on livability and property values; 2) neighborhood character and the impacts of infill and other development practices that may compromise the character of an existing single family neighborhood; and 3) neighborhood investment which is a response to the perceived inadequacies of neighborhood infrastructure, particularly pedestrian facilities.

Mr. Miller said the second key driver is the fact that in the fall the Council had a lot of conversations about the need for a supplemental CIP. As a result of those discussions, the Council approved a two percent property tax increase and the intention to approve additional two percent increases annually for each of the next nine years. The revenue to be generated by the increases will total between \$50 million and \$60 million over the next 20 years. No specific allocations of the new revenues have been made, but among the possibilities are neighborhood sidewalks. The allocation to neighborhood sidewalks could be as much as \$7.5 million.

A neighborhood sidewalk is a pedestrian facility connecting neighborhood residents to neighborhood destinations. Such facilities help to address safety issues, and they promote walking and healthy lifestyles.

The city has a number of existing capital programs used to fund sidewalks, including stand-alone walkway/bikeway projects, the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, and the Pedestrian Access Improvement Program, also referred to as PW-W/B-56. Stand-alone walkway/bikeway projects must compete with high-priority transportation roadway, intersection and maintenance projects, as well as high-priority parks, community development and economic development initiatives.

The 2007-2013 CIP includes quite a few neighborhood sidewalk investments that total just over \$19 million. The two previous CIP updates funded no new stand-alone walkway/bikeway projects at all.

Neighborhood Enhancement Program coordinator Ron Matthew explained that the NEP program has an annual budget of \$1.4 million. Each of the 13 established neighborhood areas is visited once every three years by the program. The program has a maximum project limit of \$150,000. While the program has served as a generator of requests for sidewalk programs over the years, it is not specifically dedicated to sidewalk projects. Over the last two cycles, a total of 710 sidewalk requests for 360 separate locations came in through the program. Of those, only 98 projects were placed on the ballots, primarily because of the \$150,000 limit. In the end, only 21 sidewalk projects were selected and funded.

Commissioner Bell asked if there has been any talk of increasing the \$150,000 limit, given that that amount of money does not go all that far on sidewalk projects. Mr. Matthew said that issue has been raised. It is recognized, however, that the limit would need to be raised significantly, making it necessary to increase the total budget for the NEP. On average, the allocation per neighborhood area is around \$375,000.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Mr. Matthew said a ten- to twenty-percent response on the neighborhood votes is typical. He said that the number of people voting for projects is always greater than the number of people submitting requests.

Mr. Miller clarified that the Pedestrian Access Improvement Program is an ongoing transportation CIP program. It receives about \$420,000 per year and is primarily used to supplement other programs to improve pedestrian access; the list of supplemented projects includes NEP, NTCP, the overlay program, and some small stand-alone improvements. The program is not dedicated to neighborhood projects.

Many high-priority neighborhood sidewalk projects fall into a gap between what the small scale programs can accomplish and the highly competitive projects that received stand-alone CIP project funding. A significant unmet need for neighborhood sidewalk funding remains. Mr. Miller said an interdepartmental team was pulled together to determine the extent of the issue and begin to make some headway toward determining what can be done about it. The team has identified a broad pool of projects, all of which are too large or expensive for NEP and other small programs.

All of the projects identified by the team for inclusion on the list have been frequently requested and supported by neighborhood outreach programs. The project list includes a six-foot sidewalk on the north side of NE 40th Street between 140th Avenue NE and the 14500 block. The project represents 21 percent of all NEP sidewalk requests in the Bridle Trails area during the last two cycles; it carries an estimated price tag of \$2.25 million. Also on the list is a six-foot sidewalk on 128th Avenue SE between SE 25th Street and SE 32nd Street which over the last two cycles has received 30 percent of the NEP requests for the Woodridge area. The project cost is estimated at \$975,000. In the Somerset area, the list includes a six-foot sidewalk on the west side of 148th Avenue SE between SE 44th Street and SE 46th Street; the project has a price estimate of \$850,000 and represents 27 percent of all NEP area sidewalk requests over the last two cycles. The Somerset area list also includes a five-foot sidewalk on the west side of Somerset Avenue between Somerset Boulevard and 136th Place SE; the project is estimated at \$800,000 and represents 21 percent of all Somerset area sidewalk requests over the last two cycles.

Mr. Miller said the team put together some prioritization criteria, starting with the criteria the Commission worked on through the TFP and CIP update processes. The criteria are intended to link the vision of the citizens as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan with capital budget funding decisions. The criteria are based specifically on the Comprehensive Plan language of policy TR-79. The TFP and CIP pedestrian/bike project scoring criteria were modified to better focus on neighborhood projects for purposes of the exercise; less weight is given to accident history and traffic volume, more is given to the destination network category.

The project was well received by the Council on February 20 at which time action was taken to refer the neighborhood sidewalk prioritization process, including the specific criteria weighting to the Transportation Commission for feedback and recommendations. One point made by Councilmember Chelminiak concerning the destination network weighting was that neighborhoods without a lot of sidewalks could be penalized by not being able to provide connections to existing sidewalks; that issue will need to be addressed by the Commission.

Mr. Miller said staff is continuing the effort of cost estimating; that work will progress through March and April. During those same months, the Commission will be asked to focus on the criteria and project prioritization. Any necessary staff follow-up should be completed by May. The Commission will then be free to develop a recommendation to be forwarded to the Council in May or June.

Commissioner Wendle commented that Bellevue has been largely developed without sidewalks in neighborhoods. He asked if the need for facilities has been based primarily on community requests. Mr. Miller said the primary driver was neighborhood support for particular projects. If each of the 29 projects on the list \$1.5 million, the total would be significant.

Commissioner Glass said he could see how in some areas there might be general support for projects. However, for those whose properties face the street and who stand to lose some land in order to accommodate the project, there might be some level of dissent. He asked if that concern is factored in at all. Mr. Matthew said NEP will not put a sidewalk project on a ballot unless 75 percent of the adjacent residents approve having it on the list. Mr. Miller allowed that there is seldom 100 percent support for any project.

Karen Gonzalez, Neighborhood Services Manager, said where a right-of-way is relatively wide the sidewalk can often be constructed into the street to gain some traffic calming and reduce impacts to adjacent property owners. NEP will not build anything not within city right-of-way.

Commissioner Wendle suggested that because things like retaining walls are very expensive to construct, the set project dollar limits alone would preclude projects with significant impacts for adjacent property owners.

Commissioner Northey thought it would be helpful to have some idea of cost per mile for the selected projects. She allowed that cost alone should not be the determining factor in approving projects, however. She also noted the need to respond to the issue raised by Commission Chelminiak.

Commissioner Glass commented that streets with higher traffic volumes have more safety issues. As such, those streets should be given a somewhat higher weighting.

A. Commission Business

Mr. Liljeblad pointed out that under the Commission by-laws, the Commission must act to elect a new chair. He noted that in addition to Chair Young, the terms of two additional Commissioners will end in May: Commissioner Bell and Commissioner Yuen, though Commissioner Yuen will be eligible for reappointment. A recruitment process has been initiated with the goal of having replacements lined up before the June meeting.

It was agreed to conduct the election for Chair and Vice-Chair later in the meeting.

1. Council Direction on Roles & Responsibility

Councilmember Balducci reminded the Commissioners that the roles and responsibilities, along with the authorizing ordinances, for all of the city's boards and commissions has been on the Council's work list for at least three years. In February, the Council reviewed the language all the authorizing ordinances with an eye on making them consistent. The Council also reviewed the scope and duties for each board and commission.

The Council concluded that the language regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Transportation Commission, is sufficiently broad and gave no policy direction to change the

language of the ordinance. The ordinance makes it clear that the Transportation Commission is to serve in an advisory role to the City Council.

A list of roles and responsibilities as outlined in the authorizing ordinance was provided to the Commissioners.

Councilmember Balducci said the City Clerk has been directed to redraft the board and commission ordinances to make them more uniform with each other.

Councilmember Balducci said different commissions had in their ordinances different language about how often they are required to meet. The Council does not want the commissions to meet more than is necessary to conduct their business, thus the updated ordinances will state that there are to be meetings at least monthly.

With regard to the pedestrian/bike CAG, Councilmember Balducci said the group was formed by resolution and was clearly not intended to be an ongoing body. The committee was originally created to help inform the development on the ped/bike plan. The membership of the CAG was never spelled out so anyone who showed up was considered a member and was given voting rights. The consensus of the Council was that there is nothing in pedestrian/bicycle planning that is outside the expertise of the Transportation Commission, and that all such planning vest with the Transportation Commission. If it is found that the Commission is overwhelmed by its workload, the option of setting up a subcommittee can be considered, but the Commission is to serve as the main oversight body for all transportation-related issues, regardless of mode. Councilmember Balducci said it would be a good idea to formally close out the pedestrian/bicycle CAG by recognizing and thanking them for the work they did for the city.

Councilmember Balducci said the Council will be looking to the Commission during 2007 for input on the ped/bike plan update, the sidewalk prioritization process, possibly other supplemental CIP funding, and citizen outreach for the Sound Transit and the Regional Transportation Investment District projects.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bell, Councilmember Balducci clarified that the Council wants to see a public outreach process around the Sound Transit issues that will get Bellevue citizens engaged in the very important decisions the region is going to have to make. Bringing light rail to Bellevue will certainly involve impacts to roadways and neighborhoods. The Council has already identified a preferred mode, and will not be necessarily asking the Commission to weigh in on whether or not the Sound Transit Phase II and RTID votes should be combined into a single ballot issue. The Council is working to define exactly what it wants the boards and commissions to focus on.

Mr. Sparrman said there is a significant public involvement process already under way under the guise of Sound Transit, and public input was sought relative to which specific alignments should be studied in the draft Environmental Impact Statement. The technical work being done will continue for the next 12 to 18 months, and during that time there will be additional opportunities for public input. What the Council will work to determine is the level of additional public outreach that should be done; staff is working on a plan for Council approval.

Councilmember Balducci commented that the City Council will want to take a position with Sound Transit as to what the alignment should be. That will be a difficult and controversial

discussion, and the Transportation Commission will have a role to play in gathering the input that will be needed to reach a decision. The Sound Transit and RTID vote is scheduled for November, but the process will be nowhere near ready to entertain a discussion on alignment by then.

The Commissioners were informed that every year proponents can approach the city suggesting amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The package of amendments for 2007 includes a request from a Surrey Downs resident to insert a one-sentence change into a transportation policy that would limit regional transit facilities to regional roads. That would mean Sound Transit would not be allowed to come through Surrey Downs. Councilmember Balducci said in reading through the Comprehensive Plan she did not find anything providing really good guidance for how to make decisions of that sort. She said she proposed having staff read through the entire Comprehensive Plan and analyze it for gaps that should be filled to help feed into the city's position with Sound Transit on a preferred alignment. That gap analysis may yield a need for new and revised policies, including transportation policies, and that is something that will come before the Transportation Commission.

Mr. Sparrman added that for the last five years or so the city has been providing guidance to the large regional transportation projects through the use of interest statements. The current focus is on the largest infrastructure by far in Bellevue's history; clearly there are Comprehensive Plan implications for the positions the city will take.

Commissioner Bell suggested the Commission should have some input as staff develops plans to take to the Council for review and approval. Councilmember Balducci agreed it would be fair for the Commission to be given updates and opportunity to comment on what will work and will not work.

Commissioner Wendle pointed out that people generally do not understand how big projects occur, likely because they do not come around all that often. He agreed that Bellevue should have its own process for gathering citizen comments, but it should be geared so as to avoid confusing the citizens with regard to who to provide input to. Councilmember Balducci agreed that the challenge will be in getting Bellevue citizen input to the right decision makers.

Commissioner Wendle stressed the need for the Commission to hold its annual retreat after the new Commissioners are appointed. One item that should be discussed is the fact that when the agenda calls for updates and informational items, attendance falls off because very little input from the Commission is called for. Another item is the fact that when meatier issues do come to the Commission they often appear with very little warning; the impact fee issue is a case in point.

Commissioner Northey voiced discomfort with how the decision-making process has been structured for the Commission. It has varied from project to project, and the decision milestones are not always clear. She noted that the consultant report for Factoria was done and practically at the publisher by the time the Commission had time to provide feedback. As things are brought to the Commission, staff should outline for the Commission what the decision-making process will be and what the milestones will be. Mr. Sparrman said staff will do its best to be more structured. He pointed out, however, that staff's workload is very heavy and staff are stretched nearly to the breaking point, a fact that makes it necessary to move very fast on certain issues; the impact fee program and how it played out is an excellent example. He asked for the forbearance of the Commissioners in that staff expects to be under pressure

for some time to come.

Mr. Liljeblad added that the Council's calendar often is a limiting factor. Sometimes staff has the milestones for a particular project all aligned, and a sudden opening on the Council calendar will change everything. To the extent possible, staff tries to anticipate what the schedule for each item will be.

Commissioner Bell suggested that the Commission chair needs to be fed a sufficient amount of information from staff to make it possible to know which items should be discussed by the Commission prior to key decision points.

Mr. Sparrman said things have changed in the past few years. Many of the issues the Council and staff are dealing with are far more complex and interdisciplinary by nature. Often schedules are impacted by the various departments. The Council must juggle a host of complex issues and find time on its calendar to discuss them. He agreed that staff needs to work diligently to create clear roadmaps where possible.

2. Work Program Outlook

Mr. Sparrman said staff has been waiting to get confirmation from the City Council regarding the role and responsibilities of the Commission before developing a detailed work program.

Mr. McDonald said some major projects from the capital investment side and some major programs have been put on the list. They include commute trip reduction, and a Sound Transit briefing after their round of community workshops is concluded. He said he is working on the program outlook framework that will include at least one full agenda each month.

Mr. Liljeblad said the list of items to come before the Commission in the near term include the Great Streets project in the downtown; the downtown circulator proposal; the ped/bike plan update; and the Bel-Red corridor study recommendations.

Commissioner Glass asked if the impact fee program will be back on the Commission's plate in the coming weeks. Mr. Sparrman said the recommendation of the Commission in 2006 was forwarded to the City Council along with a report from staff. The Council remanded the issue back to the Commission with instructions to conduct a public hearing, which was done and which caused the Commission to offer a revised recommendation. The Council then embarked on a very extensive budget process. The direction that has been handed down by the Finance Department is to bring the impact fee issue back to the Council in the context of some broader financial discussions the Council will be wrestling with in the next few months.

Councilmember Balducci said the concern at the Council level with regard to the impact fees was that they need to be justified.

Commissioner Northey said the Commission has been hoping to see various subarea studies. The City Manager's interest in the Wilburton/NE 8th subarea has subsumed some of what was in the pipeline, including the Eastgate study. Councilmember Balducci allowed that that study will likely not occur in 2007 given the workload. She said if she is reelected she will work to make sure it does happen in the future.

Commissioner Northey said the focus of the city lately has been heavily on major economic

development opportunities, and the neighborhoods are likely to get irritated soon in that they have not been getting enough attention.

3. Election of Officers

Commissioner Yuen said the normal time for electing a new chair is the month of May. The fact of Chair Young's resignation has brought the issue to the table sooner. He put to the Commission the options of electing a chair to serve until May, and electing a chair to serve through 2008. It was agreed that a new chair should be elected to serve through 2008.

Commissioner Yuen indicated his intent to ask to be appointed for a second term.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Yuen to serve as chair was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Wendle.

Commissioner Bell moved unanimous approval. Second was by Commissioner Wendle and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Northey to serve as vice-chair was made by Commissioner Yuen. Second was by Commissioner Bell.

Commissioner Bell moved unanimous approval. Second was by Commissioner Wendle and the motion carried unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

9. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Northey asked what response the Commission should give to the representative who spoke earlier in the meeting on behalf of the Sunset Community Association. Mr. McDonald said the issue in question involves an Administrative Conditional Use Permit, which is a quasi-judicial matter over which the Commission has no jurisdiction. Commissioner Northey proposed drafting a letter to Ms. Bruce thanking her for her input and advising her that the Commission has no role to play in those decisions.

Commissioner Wendle suggested the letter to Ms. Bruce should identify the process by which she can provide input or express concerns.

Mr. Liljeblad said the fact that the Administrative Conditional Use Permit process is quasi-judicial, the Commission has no legal or appropriate role to play. The process requires careful documentation of the information offered and received along with all responses. Commissioner Bell said that should be said in the letter to Ms. Bruce.

Commissioner Glass asked staff to provide the Commission with a memo regarding the annual overlay program.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 25, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Wendle. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

12. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

The Commission reviewed the items scheduled for discussion in upcoming meetings.

B. Public Involvement Calendar

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Yuen adjourned the meeting at 9:34 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date