

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

December 13, 2007
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Yuen, Vice Chair Northey, Commissioners Glass, Tanaka

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Holler, Van Valkenburgh, Wendle

STAFF PRESENT: David Cieri, Kevin McDonald, Kristi Oosterveen, Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m. by Chair Yuen who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Holler, Van Valkenburgh and Wendle, all of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA -- No Action Taken

3. STAFF REPORTS

Transportation CIP Construction Manager Dave Cieri said he received from Commissioner Holler an email in which she announced her resignation from the Commission. He said she cited personal and health issues as the reason she has not been able to attend meetings regularly.

4. REPORTS FROM CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Yuen said he attended the East Bellevue Community Council meeting at which they discussed the Costco project at the old K-Mart site. He said he saw from the presentation that traffic will be an issue and that there is opposition to including a traffic signal at either the intersection where Starbucks is located or at 156th Avenue SE and Main Street.

Commissioner Northey reported that she presented the position of the Transportation Commission regarding the downtown mobility project Comprehensive Plan amendments to the Planning Commission on December 12.

With regard to the Costco project, Commissioner Northey agreed that there should be careful consideration given to the traffic flow.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. John Lorge, owner of the property at 4307 Factoria Boulevard SE, said he was present to gain some clarification regarding TFP project 120. He noted that the project has been on the books but without financing for ten years. The project was originally brought to the table as a means for clearing up the traffic patterns going into and out of Newport High School. When the high school was rebuilt, an exit onto 124th Avenue SE was constructed. Pressure for traffic coming out of the school to make a left turn onto Newport Way has been alleviated, and there is no longer a backup for traffic going into the school. It would seem there is no longer a need for a double left-turn lane. Project 120 should be removed from the TFP list. Were the project to go forward, it could heavily impact his property.

Mr. Larry Totally, a traffic engineer with the Transpo Group, 11730 118th Avenue NE, Kirkland, said the consulting firm has been assisting Overlake Hospital in reviewing the technical analysis for the Bel-Red corridor study as well as the WSDOT work on the NE 10th Street ramps. He said there have been substantial assumptions made in the Bel-Red corridor study as far as major transportation improvements, such as Sound Transit Phase II and the 124th Avenue NE interchange with SR-520. Even with those substantial improvements, the level of service around the hospital campus will be at LOS E and F. The improvements, however, should be funded sooner rather than later to help resolve the impacts on the hospital campus. The NE 10th Street overpass is the only project that is currently funded, but it should not be a standalone project; the improvements in the Bel-Red plan are needed to support growth in the area. The NE 12th Street overcrossing is a case in point; the bridge must be replaced as part of the NE 10th Street northbound ramp, and having the widening and associated intersection improvements in place at the same time will be most cost-effective. The extension of NE 4th Street between 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE is another critical need project to alleviate the pressure on NE 8th Street. Improving 120th Avenue NE to facilitate NE 4th Street will be important as well. The WSDOT has not yet committed to the 124th/SR-520 interchange ramps to and from the east, which will be very important to provide alignment alternative route for development in the Bel-Red area. The extension of NE 10th Street east of 116th Avenue NE, however, may bring more traffic impacts to the hospital. The Bel-Red corridor plan should only be adopted if there is a commitment on the part of the city to completing the key transportation improvements. Additional growth in the area should only be allowed in conjunction with the transportation improvements.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. 2009-2020 Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) Update

Capital Programming Coordinator Kristi Oosterveen reminded the Commission that the process to update the TFP began in September. In October the criteria to be used by staff to

score and rank the projects were discussed. At that time the Commission also approved the proposed public involvement process. She noted that the ped-bike projects are being reviewed on a parallel track; in time the ped-bike projects will be integrated with the roadway/intersection projects.

Ms. Oosterveen noted that all of the projects and their descriptions are drafts; as the other processes move along, they will be refined. The final TFP document will have all of the correct project descriptions. Staff will also be bringing to the Commission some planning level cost estimates.

Referring to the map labeled Attachment 2 in the Commission packet, Ms. Oosterveen explained the color coding used to indicate the projects in the Bel-Red/Overlake area, the current CIP, the Downtown Implementation Plan, the Eastgate/I-90 plan, and the projects that came out of the Bel-Red corridor FEIS. As the Bel-Red corridor plan evolves, it is possible that some pre-existing projects will be superseded. Projects proposed in new Comprehensive Plan amendments were also shown on the map.

Capital Programming Manager Eric Miller said the project referred to by Mr. Lorge is on the map as a candidate and is also in the current TFP. The project was recommended as part of the FATS update.

Commissioner Northey asked if there has been any analysis regarding the need for the project following completion of the new high school access. Mr. Miller agreed that another look should be given to the project. He noted that the other aspect to the project is the realignment of the driveway to St. Margaret's church on the east side of Factoria Boulevard. He noted that the project was in fact below the funding line during the 2006-2017 TFP process until representatives from the church made the case for moving it up.

Ms. Oosterveen stressed that the projects have not yet been scored. She explained that the scoring will occur in two different sets: the roadway/intersection projects, and the ped-bike projects.

Commissioner Glass asked why none of the Great Streets projects appear on the list. Mr. Miller said there is funding available in the supplemental CIP to implement some of the Great Streets projects. The project is not, however, a true roadway/intersection improvement plan.

Mr. Miller noted that a couple of projects, including West Lake Sammamish Parkway and the Northup Way project, are funded and have started an early implementation phase. However, the project cost estimate only entail placeholders toward implementation. One thing the Commission will be asked to do is give further consideration to whether or not more funds should be appropriated to these projects in the TFP and CIP processes.

Commissioner Northey asked about project CBD-1 and Ms. Oosterveen said it involves the intersection of 112th Avenue SE and SE 4th Street. Mr. Miller said the project, originally

adapted in the old long-range CDB Implementation Plan would widen 112th Avenue to two lanes in each direction with turn pockets at intersections all the way from NE 12th Street to SE 8th Street. The only place where that has not been done yet is the intersection with SE 4th Street.

Commissioner Northey asked if the process of meshing the old BROTS projects with the potential new BROTS projects will be done in time for the Commission to make any priority decisions. Mr. Miller noted that the Bel-Red corridor project overlaps very closely with the BROTS study area. In many cases the improvements that were planned through the BROTS process were considered in the Bel-Red corridor process. In many cases the projects have been incorporated into the recommendation. It is expected that through the remainder of the Bel-Red corridor process the issue of whether or not BROTS projects should be incorporated or superseded will be worked out.

Ms. Oosterveen said the 2009-2020 revenue projections will be developed beginning in early 2008. Those projections will help inform commissioners as to where the funding line is going to be. Integrating the ped-bike projects and determining the appropriate place for the funding line will be the first step toward the CIP budget update in 2008.

****BREAK****

B. Bel-Red Subarea Plan

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald reminded the Commissioners that the process of reviewing the policies and projects contained in some of the older transportation facilities plans has as its objective consolidating a large number of transportation facility plans into a smaller number for ease of management, to find efficiencies and to reduce the number of redundancies. The relevant projects and policies from the older plans will be merged into the East Bellevue Transportation Plan, the new Bel-Red subarea plan, and the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The discussion on the policies and projects will be continued in February.

Mr. McDonald noted that all of the boards and commissions meeting in December will be looking at the outline and format of the Bel-Red subarea plan. In January the focus will be on the draft policies, then in February the work will include fitting the various pieces together and developing a preliminary recommendation to forward to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will then conduct a public hearing and forward a recommendation to the City Council, probably in June.

Under the Growth Management Act, jurisdictions are required to have a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan in Bellevue has two volumes. The first includes the general elements with policies relating to the city as a whole, and the second includes the subarea plans with policies specific to certain areas of the city. The suite of transportation facility plans is included in the second part of the Comprehensive Plan. Of particular interest to the Bel-Red

subarea are the Eastside Transportation Program and the Bel-Red/Overlake Transportation Facility Plan.

The Bel-Red Subarea Plan will be designed to implement the vision for the corridor as identified in the final steering committee report. It will attempt to integrate all of the steering committee policy recommendations and all staff or Commission refinements to those recommendations. The proposal will include replacement of the outdated Bel-Red/Northup Subarea Plan and modifying the boundaries to be consistent with the Bel-Red corridor project. A project list will be included as well.

The outline of the Bel-Red subarea plan includes content issues related to an overall vision for the corridor. The vision includes multiple topic areas, including land use and transportation. It will include a suite of policies and maps to help identify amendments appropriate to the Land Use Code. Those policies and maps will be supportive of new transportation, parks and utilities infrastructure projects. The policies will identify the important environmental objectives identified by the steering committee along with a number of implementation strategies, including incentives, financing and phasing, along with the project lists.

The plan will include a chapter on general policies that articulate the overall vision for the corridor. Under the land use policies, the key concept will involve a pedestrian and transit oriented nodal development pattern. The land use section will also talk about the future of light industrial and service uses which the steering committee spent a lot of time discussing.

The urban design section will involve policies aimed at defining how land use looks and feels on the ground. The focus will be on high-quality neighborhoods in context with adjacent neighborhoods and the environment. The urban design policies will help to define an overall sense of place.

The environmental policies will focus on restoring the degraded stream corridors in the area and on enhancing the overall environment through parks and other public projects, along with the transfer of development rights in the corridor and possibly throughout the region. The policies will emphasize looking for opportunities to utilize green infrastructure.

The parks and open space policies will focus on interconnectedness within the corridor and with other parts of the city. As parks and open space areas are designed, the policies will direct them to keep in mind environmental enhancement opportunities.

There is a lot of housing proposed for the corridor, up to 5000 units through 2030. The policies will emphasize the need for a range of multifamily housing types. The steering committee voiced concern about the need to provide affordable housing within the corridor, so policy language related to that aspect will be included.

Mr. McDonald said the steering committee highlighted the importance of integrating arts and culture within the corridor as public and private projects are developed. There will be policies

related to that topic in the subarea plan.

As the Bel-Red corridor redevelopments, the city will need to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions. The ongoing work with Redmond will include advocating for projects that will benefit both jurisdictions.

The steering committee recommendation outlines a vision for a brand new land form in an area that currently has very few amenities. Accordingly, the city may need to provide some incentives to spur developers into bringing online the kinds of developments the steering committee envisioned.

Mr. McDonald explained that there are multiple parts to the transportation section of the subarea plan. The first section will outline the vision for a multimodal system to serve future land use and to provide connectivity within the corridor and with other parts of the city. Wherever possible and practical, the transportation projects should incorporate low-impact development strategies to achieve the environmental benefit of enhancing the stream corridors.

One of the key projects within the roadway component of the transportation section will be the extension of NE 16th Street. The NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street corridor will have a multimodal focus accommodating vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles while incorporating an alignment and stations for a future light rail system. The vision includes a new system of local streets built around small blocks within the corridor; the intent will be to connect and enhance the character of the neighborhood and provide pedestrian connections. Primarily the smaller blocks will be focused around the nodal development areas at 122nd Avenue NE and 130th Avenue NE where the land use intensity will be the greatest.

Regional connections to the freeway system will be critical to keeping the overall traffic operations flowing. A completed interchange at 124th Avenue NE with SR-520 with ramps to and from the east is envisioned.

The section focused on the ped-bike system will emphasize sidewalks and bicycle facilities. Opportunities for midblock connections will be identified, along with potential midblock street crossings. The West Tributary may present an opportunity for a trail connection from the BNSF right-of-way in the northwest corner of the study area to Bel-Red Road. The BNSF corridor itself represents a potential future regional trail; the policies will support the construction of a multimodal trail in the corridor with ped-bike connectivity to other local systems.

Mr. McDonald said transit will be a key mobility component in the corridor. The policies will talk about the need to work with transit providers ahead of light rail coming to the area to enhance transit service to new development within the subarea. Initially that could take the form of transitional rubber tired transit service. The policies relative to light rail will outline the position of the city relative to alignment and station locations, will stress the importance of having feeder transit service from surrounding neighborhoods, and recognize the need to

include a maintenance facility within the corridor.

Other components of the transportation section will include policies regarding parking, reducing the number of vehicle trips, and extending to the corridor the transportation demand management program that has been so successful in the downtown. There will also be policies focused on opportunities to calm traffic to help mitigate the potential impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Staff and the consultants are currently working to flesh out the various transportation projects identified by the steering committee. Mr. McDonald said there will be more information relative to specific projects in the February timeframe. The project section will also include a phasing and funding strategy.

Commissioner Glass suggested that the workforce housing aspect has been somewhat overstated. The steering committee identified the fact that the Bel-Red corridor offers a good opportunity to provide workforce housing, but the committee did not necessarily promote the corridor as appropriate only for workforce housing. Mr. McDonald said the focus will be on accommodating workforce housing within the subarea along with market-rate housing. Workforce housing will be only a subset of the projected 5000 housing units projected to be developed in the corridor through 2030. Commissioner Glass added that the steering committee recognized the need to address the affordable housing strategies citywide and not just within the Bel-Red corridor.

With regard to the parking strategies, Commissioner Glass agreed that there should not be wide open seas of parking developed within the corridor, but suggested that there will be a need for an adequate amount of parking. Enhancing the transit system will be a must, but there will always be people who will choose to drive their cars.

Commissioner Glass said the steering committee also spent some time focused on the level of service issue. The discussion focused on allowing a lower level of service in light of bringing more transit services to the corridor, but in the end the conclusion reached was that the level of service should be kept close to where it is currently. Mr. McDonald said level of service standards are adopted as part of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, so it is not something that will be talked about as part of developing the Bel-Red subarea plan. The Commission will, however, have an opportunity to recommend a level of service standard for the subarea when changes to the Transportation Element are discussed.

With regard to parking, Mr. McDonald said the intent of staff and the steering committee was not focused on restricting parking for retail uses. The smaller street grid system that is envisioned will allow for more on-street parking. There will not be a focus on creating a lot of parking for commuters within the corridor.

Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning, added that the development community has typically had a pretty good idea of how much parking is needed to support the

tenants in the buildings they construct. The Land Use Code generally identifies a minimum and maximum range; developers routinely and voluntarily build more than the minimum. In some cases that could prove to be a disincentive to transit use, so there is a fine line to walk. Parking for shoppers is critical. Some of the work being done relative to light rail best practices involves looking at approaches to be used within walking distance, and parking might be one aspect of that.

Commissioner Tanaka said one way to make transit successful is to make driving painful. He agreed, however, that the city is not to the point of taking that approach yet. Mr. Liljebald said there is no desire to make it painful to access the area, but there will be an acknowledgment that with more land use intensity there will be an expectation that congestion will become more a normal part of life within the corridor. The current level of service standard represents more of a suburban atmosphere, so the idea will be to revisit the standard and make it more consistent with what is in the downtown area.

Commissioner Tanaka noted that the overall transportation policies include a reference to natural drainage practices. Mr. McDonald explained that traditional drainage practices involve channeling water along a curb into a storm drain pipe and dumping it into a detention vault and metering it out to a stream. Natural drainage practices involve slowing the progress of water getting from the street to the stream by incorporating porous pavement to encourage direct infiltration. The practice is especially effective when used in conjunction with parking areas, alleys and the like. There can also be more of a rural approach incorporated by using swales that feed to basins that eventually feed to a stream; in some cases the swales facilitate the on-site incorporation of stormwater. The Environmental Services Commission has the lead on identifying the types of natural drainage system components that are appropriate for the Bel-Red corridor. They will be looked at in the context of infrastructure and land use and could become part of the incentive system.

Commissioner Northey suggested that in some ways the redevelopment of the Bel-Red corridor can be seen as a glorified subdivision, and pointed out that in subdivisions are generally require to build their own roadway systems. She said she is inclined to incorporate the strongest language possible to have the transportation system developed by the private sector. The private sector stands to make a lot of profit from redeveloping the area and the city already has a long list of demands on its current transportation dollars.

Commissioner Northey said she would also like to see paid parking required, but allowed that it may not be possible to include that direction in a subarea plan. Building to attract light rail should not have to include accommodating cars and transit at the same levels.

Commissioner Northey said she still is not convinced regarding the value of the whole Bel-Red redevelopment scheme, suggesting that it will be creating a great deal of competition for the downtown and Overlake areas. She allowed, however, that that ship has sailed.

Commissioner Glass said when the focus first turned to development of the implementation

plan there was talk about how different projects might affect the system. He asked where that fits into the timeline. Mr. McDonald said the expectation is that the Commission will be talking about the project list in February. At that time the projects recommended in the FEIS will be better fleshed out, and there will be a phasing strategy identifying which projects should come first. Because the development will likely happen first along the NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street alignment, it will be important to get focus on that segment first.

Commissioner Glass asked if the modeling will show how important each project is to the success of the overall development plan. Mr. Liljeblad said the project array is very lengthy. He said it would be very difficult to vary the land use and the projects. The phasing analysis under way will look at some assumed land use horizons at two major time points, 2020 and 2030. It will be assumed that all of the Redmond work will be done at the same time points. The focus relative to the 2030 forecast will look particularly at what will happen if each of the individual projects either do or do not pan out. The assumption for 2020 is that light rail will not have extended all the way through the corridor; accordingly, there will be a need to determine what parts of the transportation system will need to be in place in order to support the planned land use vision.

8. OLD BUSINESS -- None

9. NEW BUSINESS -- None

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Todd Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties, owner of properties in the Bel-Red corridor for 40 years, said he is looking forward to the Bel-Red corridor project moving forward. He noted, however, that he shares some of the same concerns voiced by the Commission about the impacts of the intensity of the proposed development vision and the degradation of the functional level of service. He called on the Commission to maintain the current level of service rather than letting it go lower. He said the proposed extension of NE 10th Street is shown running through the middle of his four buildings, which is both surprising and disappointing; he said it does not represent a very good solution. A more rational and balanced solution should be sought for the area. Widening NE 12th Street and Bel-Red Road will certainly help. The Commission was urged to consider soil structures along with the impacts on properties associated with extending NE 10th Street from 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE which will impact properties having a combined assessed valuation approaching \$50 million. The assessed value of the properties between 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE that would be impacted is on the order of \$20 million.

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 25, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Northey. Second was

by Commissioner Tanaka and the motion carried unanimously.

12. REVIEW OF CALENDAR

The Commission reviewed the topics to be covered at upcoming meetings.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yuen adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date