

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

June 14, 2007  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Holler

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Kris Liljeblad, Maria Koengeter, Kate Johnson, Eric Miller, Stephanie Parkins, Jen Benn, Department of Transportation; Mike Bergstrom, Department of Planning and Community Development; Robin Cole, Parks & Community Services Department

GUEST SPEAKERS: Don Billen, Andrea Tull, Sound Transit; Neil Strege, Chief of Staff for King County Councilmember Regan Dunn

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Chair Young who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald provided the Commissioners with copies of a flyer announcing the public process for updating the ped/bike plan, copies of the 2007 ped/bike plan community engagement survey, and a matrix listing upcoming public outreach opportunities.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Glass said he participated in the process of interviewing candidates for the vacant Commission seats. He said the ten candidates are all very well qualified and the selections will be made very soon.

Commissioner Glass said he attended the June 13 Bel-Red corridor study steering committee meeting at which there was in-depth discussion about the preferred alternative. There was talk of including low-income housing in the area and about how the heights of buildings might be viewed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Chair Yuen said earlier in the day he had attended the Bellevue Downtown Association

breakfast meeting at which the topic of focus was the transit system that will be coming up for a vote in November.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Sound Transit/RTID Briefing

Neil Strege, Chief of Staff to King County Councilmember Regan Dunn, reminded the Commission that in 2006 the state legislature linked the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) and Sound Transit's ST-2 in a dual ballot proposal. Accordingly, there will be in November a single ballot title covering the entire package. The combined roads and mass transit proposal is comprehensive and takes into account the worst traffic congested areas within the region.

Mr. Strege said severe congestion and the fact that road and bridge infrastructure is aging is a well-known fact in the region. Every year that needed projects are not constructed increases their overall cost. Roads and transit are vitally important for delivering people to and from work and for delivering goods to and from businesses. The population of the area is growing by some 50,000 people per year; over the next 20 years the three-county region will be home to more than one million additional residents, and that will make the congestion problems worse.

Mr. Strege said the roads and transit package has been under development for the past two years. The focus has been on the most congested corridors. The public has been offered a variety of opportunities to become involved and provide feedback.

Andrea Tull, Sound Transit Office of Policy and Planning, said open house events were held in Bellevue, Overlake, Redmond, and in other parts of the district. The public made it clear at each opportunity that they are tired of traffic and congestion and want some transportation investment now. They voiced concerns about the economy and quality of life issues and believe the combination of roads and transit projects is needed to address overall mobility needs in the region. The benefits of the package are that it will reduce delay and improve travel times through improvements to major highways, which for the Eastside includes SR-520, I-90 and I-405, the development of 50 miles of new light rail, improvements to HOV lanes, and ped/bike system improvements.

Mr. Strege said the package is broken down by corridor. The north corridor takes in North King County and Snohomish County. The east/central corridor focuses on Seattle and the Eastside. The south corridor incorporates south King County and Pierce County. He shared with the Commission maps of each corridor highlighting the proposed projects. The map for the east/central corridor showed light rail across I-90 connecting Seattle, Bellevue and Overlake; new lanes on I-405; improved interchanges; and a rebuilt SR-520 bridge.

Mr. Strege said RTID put together a financing strategy that showed a way for the state to fund the new SR-520 bridge without raising taxes. The package includes \$1.5 billion for the most vulnerable part of the structure, and the financing strategy addresses the entire structure from I-405 to I-5, including the Pacific interchange on the west side. RTID also includes funding for the R-8A project on I-90; addresses the I-405/SR-520 weave with braided ramps and connects SR-520 with the new NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street interchange; includes four new lanes on I-405 between Bellevue and Renton; rebuilds the I-405/SR-167 interchange, which is the most congested

interchange in the state; includes improvements to the I-90/I-405 interchange; and includes funding for one lane of the Wilburton weave project.

On the west side, RTID includes funding for a number of Seattle mobility projects, including the Mercer mess; Lander Street and Spokane Street improvements; and replacement of the South Park bridge which is rated the most seismically vulnerable structure in the state.

Ms. Tull said the major ST-2 component for the Eastside is light rail between Seattle, Bellevue and Overlake. When first proposed, the overwhelming input from Eastside residents was that light rail should be brought to the Eastside as soon as possible and that it should include downtown Redmond. The transit portion of the package includes funding for the segment between Bellevue and Overlake. The segment between Overlake and Redmond is identified as a high-priority extension and the package includes funding to complete the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation as well as the acquisition of strategic right-of-way. The plan includes the completion of light rail to downtown Bellevue by 2021, and to the Overlake transit center by 2027. Other components of the transit package for the Eastside include the Renton parking garage on North 8<sup>th</sup>, and the Bothell transit center parking garage. The package also includes funding for studies that will look at high-capacity transit and make recommendations regarding what should be implemented in future phases.

Mr. Strege shared with the Commission the financial numbers for the East King County investments. He suggested that Bellevue and the Eastside stand to be the biggest beneficiaries of the overall package.

Ms. Tull pointed out that the budget includes a line item for service enhancement. She explained that funds accumulate at the rate of one percent per year through 2020 and a half percent per year through 2027 and is to be used for additional bus service. By the end of the program, the result will be the addition of between 35,000 and 44,000 annual service hours.

Mr. Strege highlighted the south corridor projects, including the SR-509 corridor; additional capacity on I-5 south to Federal Way; improvements to the I-5/SR-18/SR-162 interchange; improvements to SR-167; completion of the HOV system in Auburn; and completion of SR-167 through the Green River Valley to the Port of Tacoma. The cross base highway project was removed from the package by the RTID board, but the Pierce County delegation negotiated to have it reinstated.

Ms. Tull said one major component of the ST-2 plan for the south corridor is light rail running south to the Tacoma Dome station. The Burien park and ride transit-oriented development project is in the mix, and there are improvements to Sounder commuter rail stations as well.

Mr. Strege said the capital investments in 2006 dollars total \$17.7 billion, including \$10.8 billion for transit and \$6.9 billion for roads. The revenues will be generated by a sixth-tenths percent sales tax increase and a Motor Vehicle Excise Tax of \$80 per \$10,000 of vehicle value.

The Commissioners were reminded that some areas of Snohomish County were not interested in annexing into Sound Transit district. Accordingly, a way was found to leave them out of that portion of the package while allowing them to vote on the RTID portion of the package.

The final plan was adopted by the Sound Transit board in May. The process on the RTID side has been more complicated. The executive board is made up of seven members representing the three counties. Their recommendation was forwarded to the planning committee which is comprised of all county Councilmembers from all three counties. The planning committee

adopted the plan on June 8 and sent the plan back to all three county councils separately for a vote to put it on the ballot; that process is under way. The ballot title must be filed by August for the general election on November 6.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Northey, Mr. Strege said both Boeing and Microsoft are backing the package, which appears to have the support of the business community in general. The group "Keep Washington Rolling" is interesting in fighting for the package. The Sierra Club has preliminarily said it will not be supporting the package, but other environmental groups have said they will support the final plan.

Don Billen, Sound Transit East Link project manager, said because of the strong interest on the part of the Eastside jurisdictions and the Sound Transit board, the East Link project will be funded. The project is currently in the project-level environmental review.

Mr. Billen shared with the Commission a map produced by the Puget Sound Regional Council showing the population and employment projections through 2030. He noted that downtown Bellevue and the Overlake areas will by that date be the most densely populated areas of the Eastside, and that is the logic for focusing the East Link project on those two areas. The long-range vision including potential future extensions to Issaquah and up to Kirkland, but it is clear downtown Bellevue and Overlake will be the priority corridor. With the East Lake project, trains from the Eastside will cross I-90, enter the downtown Seattle tunnel and continue north to Capitol Hill, the University District, Northgate and on to Lynnwood.

The East Link project is relatively early in the design process. In the fall of 2006 a scoping process was conducted in which at public meetings held in various locations the public was asked to identify and comment on route alternatives and station locations. A screening analysis followed, and in December the Sound Transit board identified alternatives for detailed study in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Prior to converting the center roadway of I-90 to light rail, Sound Transit and the Washington State Department of Transportation will work together to complete a project to add new HOV lanes to the outer roadway. Within the conceptual engineering phase, a range of factors will influence the work, including engineering requirements, costs, environmental impacts, land use plans, station accessibility, and community input. Each will be evaluated in the EIS and weighed by the Sound Transit board before picking a preferred alternative.

Sound Transit is paying close attention to the Bel-Red corridor study and is coordinating closely with the city as the alternatives develop. The city of Redmond is conducting a similar study for the Overlake neighborhood and is looking at potential zoning changes that could increase employment or housing.

The light rail line will leave the I-90 center roadway and will either head north on Bellevue Way or near I-405. Maps of the possible alignments were shared with the Commission. Mr. Billen noted that where the line will operate at grade Sound Transit will widen the existing arterial to make room in the median for the track while preserving the same number of existing through lanes. In some cases the line is anticipated to be elevated, either on the side of an existing street or in the median.

The alignment alternative that utilizes Bellevue Way serves the South Bellevue park and ride, which potentially could have structured parking with 1400 stalls. The line will continue north on either Bellevue Way or use 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. The alignment that parallels I-405 would require a new bridge across Mercer Slough, use a portion of the railroad right-of-way to where

it crosses the freeway, then use an elevated guideway alongside the freeway. The alternative is projected to have lower ridership because it does not serve park and ride demand as well and does not provide good neighborhood access.

Commissioner Glass asked if consideration was given to running the line through a portion of Factoria before heading north. Mr. Billen said that was studied and it was determined that the alternative would add both cost and travel time, and would dilute the primary market between downtown Bellevue and downtown Seattle. The Factoria area would best be served in the future by building a light rail extension to Issaquah.

Mr. Billen said a full range of alternatives is being studied for downtown Bellevue, including tunnel, elevated and at-grade alternatives. Alternative C-1T connects the Bellevue Way alignment to the downtown via a tunnel and subway station at Main Street. The line then continues north and swings under the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian corridor to a station at the Bellevue Transit Center before using a portal to come out of the ground between 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE onto an elevated guideway crossing I-405 and tying into the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe corridor before going east through the Bel-Red corridor.

The C-2T alternative envisions a tunnel under 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE that swings under the Pedestrian Corridor to a subway station at the Bellevue Transit Center, then crosses over I-405. The third tunnel option uses the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE alignment, has a subway station by the Bellevue Transit Center, and then continues north to McCormick Park before emerging from the ground and using an elevated guideway to cross I-405. A station is included over the freeway to serve both the downtown and the hospital campus.

C-4A is an at-grade alternative. It serves the downtown via a northbound track on 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and a southbound track on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. It continues on to NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street where it crosses I-405. The elevated alternative C-7E runs up 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and swings over the freeway at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street. C-8E, also an elevated alternative, runs up 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE but swings onto NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and goes around City Hall to 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to access the Bellevue Transit Center, then continues north to cross the freeway at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Billen said the screening done for each alternative concluded that the ridership for each is similar. That is because each allows for access from the Bellevue Transit Center and provides good coverage of the downtown area. The environmental process will focus primarily on the costs and impacts of the various alternatives.

Commissioner Wendle allowed that national studies show transit riders are willing to walk up to half a mile to gain access, but asked if Sound Transit has tested having stations located within a shorter walking distance. Mr. Billen said that a number of station locations were studied and that the big challenge with at grade alternatives is locating station platforms, which are almost 400 feet long. They must be sited so as not to block access to parking garages and major developments.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Northey, Mr. Billen said the preference expressed to date by the Bellevue City Council has been for the tunneling options.

Turning to the Bel-Red corridor, Mr. Billen said two basic options are under consideration. The one that lines up best with the preliminary preferred alternative identified by the steering committee runs along the NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street alignment. The preliminary preferred alternative indicates a station near 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and another near 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, though the ST-2 plan only funds one station in the corridor. The other alignment being considered runs along

SR-520 to the Overlake transit center. It is a lower-cost and faster alignment, but would be of most interest only if Bellevue concludes the land uses in the Bel-Red corridor should not be changed. A alignment running along Bel-Red Road was screened out for a variety of reasons.

The two alignments for approaching Redmond are focused on NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street and SR-520. Both alignments propose a station near the Group Health campus then continue on to the Overlake transit center. The funding package does not include continuing the line on to downtown Redmond but does provide funding for preliminary engineering and the purchase of strategic right-of-way.

Commissioner Wendle asked if Sound Transit is assuming a need to purchase right-of-way through the Bel-Red corridor. Mr. Billen said Sound Transit will be developing cost estimates based on the notion of only having to construct light rail through the corridor, which will include right-of-way. If Bellevue identifies funding for roadway improvements along the same alignment, Sound Transit and the city will likely want to work together in making joint right-of-way purchases.

Mr. Billen said Sound Transit will require a maintenance facility on the Eastside under any of the scenarios. Three possible locations within the Bel-Red corridor have been identified; a fourth is near SR-520 and SR-202 in Redmond.

Commissioner Glass asked if anything prevents Sound Transit from implementing the East Link project sooner rather than later, assuming voter approval in November. Mr. Billen said the primary drawback is financial capacity; all of the plan dates are driven by the time needed to generate the necessary revenues. It will take a decade to develop and deliver a light rail project of the magnitude envisioned.

Commissioner Wendle asked how likely it will be to see simultaneous construction on both the I-90 and SR-520 bridges. Ms. Tull said staff are working on principles of coordination between ST-2 and RTID to keep the roadways moving. Mr. Billen added that the funds for R-8A are in place so that project can move ahead quickly. The SR-520 project is still in flux given that a preferred alternative has not yet been chosen for the west side of the lake, but as envisioned the old SR-520 bridge will remain in place and operational during construction of a new bridge.

## B. Light Rail Best Practices Committee Briefing

Senior Planner Maria Koenigter said the Sound Transit East Link Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be released in the fall of 2008. At that time, the City Council will be asked to make a recommendation on a preferred alternative. The environmental review will look at things such as performance, impact and cost. The Council wants its recommendation to be based on the best possible system, one that is high performance and that either avoids or mitigates neighborhood and environmental impacts. Light rail is new to the region, so the Council has undertaken the best practices project, the objectives of which are: 1) to position Bellevue to provide leadership; 2) to create a body of knowledge about light rail implementation best practices; 3) to create a forum for the community to discuss and understand light rail implementation; and 4) to develop a local policy foundation needed to help guide decision making and frame the review of the DEIS.

Ms. Koenigter said the best practices project work program includes a review of other light rail systems and case studies from around North America. There will be a review of local policy guidance, characteristics of the urban environments in which the systems were

implemented, the various impacts encountered, access to stations, parks and neighborhood integration, the performance of systems, and identifying lessons learned. Additionally, the project will include a review of specific topic areas relevant to light rail implementation in Bellevue as identified by the Council and local citizens.

As part of the technical review, a committee of commissioners will be formed to review the documentation and engage the larger public in a review of what other cities have done. The group will be asked to develop a catalog of best practices to be communicated to the Council along with policy recommendations. The committee will consist of one Councilmember and two members each from the Environmental Services Commission, Parks Board, Planning Commission and Transportation Commission. Meetings will be held monthly beginning in July and could continue into the spring of 2008.

Ms. Koenigter said one key component of the best practices project will be the development of policies in areas such as reinforcing the city's land use and neighborhood vision; developing a system compatible with local character; optimizing ridership; providing neighborhood access to the system; and avoiding, minimizing or mitigating impacts of siting, construction and operation.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Northey, Ms. Koenigter said both the Department of Transportation and the Department of Planning and Community Development will have a primarily project manager assigned to the project.

Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning, said it is very likely that subjects for further discussion will be generated from the public involvement process as well as by staff and the committee of commissioners.

Commissioner Wendle said it will be very important to educate the public with regard to which meetings they should attend to get their issues on the table.

### C. Meydenbauer Bay Update

Planner Mike Bergstrom explained that the Meydenbauer Bay Park project has a strong land use component and a strong parks component, thus both departments are jointly conducting the study. He shared with the Commission an aerial view of the waterfront showing the properties owned by the city from the waterfront to Downtown Park. The two primary components of the project are the development of a master plan for the Meydenbauer properties, and a plan for knitting the waterfront properties together with the downtown proper through visual and physical connections. In addition to utilizing existing city-owned rights-of-way, an attempt will be made to incentivize redevelopment of some of the older properties in the area in a way that will create view corridors and connections with the waterfront; that will require a study of the existing land use patterns and new regulations and incentives.

A steering committee with 13 members has been appointed by the City Council and has been meeting monthly. Chair Yuen represents the Transportation Commission on the committee.

Planner Robin Cole pointed out that because some of the properties in the study area are currently under a moratorium, the land use component of the project is being moved forward as quickly as possible. The desire is to have land use alternatives and the framework of a park program plan on the table within the next several steering committee meetings. Details regarding what improvements will be made, how intense the improvements will be, and where they will be on the site will all come later. Design of the park master plan will follow

completion of the land use plan. Unless extended by the Council, the moratorium will expire on September 13.

Mr. Bergstrom said getting people to and from the park will be one of the challenges, and one aspect associated with that is vehicular access and parking. One of the planning principles the Council adopted for the project is to maintain a pedestrian-first outlook while making sure the park is designed to be a community-wide asset, not just a neighborhood park. All other ongoing downtown projects will be followed closely to determine if there is a nexus between them and the Meydenbauer Bay Park project. The art walk project under review by the Arts Commission has an art consultant involved, and that person will coordinate with the art consultant working on the Meydenbauer Bay Park project.

Commissioner Wendle asked if there are currently routes that allow people to walk to and from the marina as well as along the waterfront. Ms. Cole used a map to indicate walking routes, noting that people are not presently allowed out on the piers. There is pedestrian access from Lake Washington Boulevard via stairways. She said staff are working to develop a virtual walking tour to be posted to the web in the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Northey asked if the marina moorage will be maintained or removed to enlarge the beach area. Ms. Cole said removing the moorage would be an option, but added that one of the funding sources used to acquire the property requires that at least 14 slips be retained for transient moorage. A number of different concepts regarding the moorage will be discussed.

Commissioner Glass asked if the yacht club has offered significant comments regarding the process. Mr. Bergstrom said they are paying close attention; they attended the open house and have been attending the steering committee meetings. They have indicated a desire to have a coordinated approach to controlling and keeping the bay clean, and they are concerned about security and privacy for their own location. They are supportive of the city retaining some level of transient moorage.

#### D. Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) & Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC)

Grants Administrator Jen Benn said the City Council has for almost 20 years recognized the importance of balancing the buildout of roadway capacity with Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs. The city had TDM programs in place long before the original Commute Trip Reduction Act was passed. She said the Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act of 2006 has given the city the opportunity to look comprehensively at its TDM program strategies and target an approach for the downtown.

Ms. Benn asked the Commissioners to consider what would encourage them to make some trips by an alternative mode and to provide feedback on the draft set of strategies.

Transportation Outreach Coordinator Stephanie Parkins explained that CTR is an ongoing element of the TDM program in place in Bellevue. Both CTR and TDM allow the city to help employers reduce the number of single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips by encouraging alternative transportation modes such as carpooling, walking, bicycling, using the bus, and telecommuting. The CTR law applies to employers with 100 or more employees traveling to a single site between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

The Bellevue CTR program was initiated in 1993 and requires sites to have a 35 percent reduction in SOV trips over a 12-year period. At the time the program began, the mode split

was 77 percent SOV and 23 percent non-SOV. The CTR program elements include program administration, conducting surveys to determine how people get to and from work, reaching out to employers with training on-site employee transportation coordinators at each site to serve as the point person for helping employees understand their transportation options. The city program also supports special programs, including the mini grant that CTR sites can apply for and use for special events encouraging people to drive alone less, or for challenges and areawide promotions.

Continuing, Ms. **Parkins** said by 2001 the SOV rate was down to 69 percent. By 2005 the rate had dropped again to 67 percent.

The 2006 Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act helps to focus the program, making it more efficient, effective and targeted. It focuses the program on congested corridors in urban growth areas that have person delays of 100 hours or more. The Act also increases planning and coordination between jurisdictions, regional transportation planning organizations, and the state; includes tools and incentives for local jurisdictions to establish a Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC); and sets new targeted goals. Between 2008 and 2011, CTR-affected employers must reduce their SOV mode by ten percent and their vehicle miles traveled to their work site by 13 percent. For jurisdictions including Bellevue, there is the additional goal of lowering the overall SOV rate of all CTR sites combined by ten percent and the vehicle miles traveled by 13 percent. The Act requires cities to update their current CTR plans.

Ms. **Parkins** said the city began the process of updating its CTR ordinance in January with a gap analysis to determine what barriers if any exist at sites struggling to meet their goals. The study included a Comprehensive Plan, subarea plan and areawide studies analysis of the policies supportive of CTR. City staff also visited each CTR site in Bellevue, took a very basic inventory of services and facilities, and rated them in four categories: sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit stops and transit service. It was found that the majority of the sites have facilities that encourage high mobility. About 50 percent of the sites are served by a bicycle facility such as a trail or a lane. Four of the CTR sites do not have transit service within a quarter mile. Reports of overcrowded buses at the transit station were also investigated.

The gap analysis information was shared with key stakeholders and program participants. The outreach included information sessions with employee transportation coordinators to brainstorm barriers and develop strategies for overcoming the barriers. A CEO and program manager survey was also conducted. A CTR transportation advisory committee comprised of city staff and King County Commute Services staff finalized the recommended strategies, after which Bellevue staff organized a meeting which was attended by representatives from all Eastside jurisdictions focused on coordinating the plans.

There are three focus areas for the CTR plan, the first of which is policy support for the program. There is significant existing policy support, however some of the policies could be better connected. The second focus area is services and facilities. It is the intent of staff to work diligently to get more information from the CTR sites regarding enhancements that can be made to the services and facilities available at each site. The third focus area involves strategies for marketing, incentives and education. As identified, the components are a new CTR employer welcome kit; a quarterly newsletter with helpful information and tips; incentive programs encouraging greener commuter by offering prizes; an employer recognition program; and employer education.

Ms. **Parkins** said the program is currently financed by the state CTR grant. Staff estimates that

between 2008 and 2011 there will be \$400,000 provided by the state for the plan. There is also \$10,000 in leftover grant funding that must be used by 2011. From the CIP, the R-87 funds have traditionally been available for TDM activities, but with new CTR sites coming on board along with additional programs to help meet the goals, \$135,000 of the R-87 funds will be made available for the CTR program. However, given the estimated expenditure of \$792,000, there remains a funding gap for which the city will investigate additional grant opportunities.

Planner Kate Johnson said the 2006 Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act provides an option for cities to create Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTEC) and to create a four-year plan for them. Bellevue has elected to create a GTEC for the downtown. The idea is to tie commute trip reduction more closely to the Growth Management Act. The GTEC program differs from the basic CTR program in several key ways. By focusing on a specific geographic location, GTECs can address the full employment and residential populations of the area, not just the employers meeting the CTR threshold. In the downtown, CTR employees make up only one-seventh of the total workforce. The GTEC plans can be customized to meet the particular needs of an area.

Statewide, there is \$2.4 million available for all GTECs, or about \$300,000 per jurisdiction.

For GTEC plan development, a project team was set up in January, and staff worked with the downtown TMA Partnership Team. Both teams include city staff and members of King County Metro and the Downtown transportation management association called TransManage, an arm of the Bellevue Downtown Association.

In late May a newsletter was sent out to the downtown community in an effort to reach as many residents, employers, business managers, property managers and employers as possible. A preliminary draft of the plan was posted to the web as well. The plan was presented to the City Council on June 11 and was the subject of an open house earlier in the day. A final draft will be forwarded to the Puget Sound Regional Council in early July who must certify that the plan meets regional criteria. The plan will then be forwarded to the state for review; once the plan is accepted for funding by the state, the City Council will be asked to adopt the plan in early 2008.

Ms. Johnson explained that the plan is based on the city's previous strategic planning for downtown TDM as well as background research and gap analysis. The previous efforts include an opportunities study focused on how the TMA could be more effective in the downtown; formation of a three-way partnership with city staff, TransManage and King County Metro market development staff formed to design and implement programs for the downtown; and a downtown market analysis. There are a lot of small employers in downtown Bellevue and they have been identified as the key target audience.

The background work identified some constraints on choosing an alternative mode of travel, including some over-capacity transit routes, some over-capacity high-occupancy vehicle systems on the freeways leading to the downtown, and over-capacity park and ride lots. The need for more flexible parking options was also highlighted. Unmet pedestrian and bicycle needs were also shown.

The GTEC program sets a specific and measurable goal for reducing the number of SOV trips by the year 2011. By state mandate, GTEC targets must be more aggressive than CTR targets. The measurement tool will be the city's mode share survey that is done every two or three years.

Ms. Johnson explained that the strategies include revisiting the city code as it relates to developer transportation management programs for buildings as well as inventorying commuter parking issues; continuing to advocate for improved transit services; and marketing non-SOV choices and offering incentives. Carpool and vanpool options will be marketed as viable alternatives.

The Commissioners were shown a matrix listing the anticipated revenues and expenditures for the GTEC plan between 2008 and 2011.

Commissioner Glass asked if consideration has been given to developing a program for matching rideshare commuters by their starting places and destinations. Ms. Johnson said a similar program already exists at [rideshareonline.com](http://rideshareonline.com). One strategy that will be implemented will focus on encouraging more ride matching within buildings.

Commissioner Wendle commented that he has given up his downtown parking but said he would not have done so had he not been given a free transit pass. He suggested that it will be very difficult for employers to reduce their overall number of SOV trips unless they provide free transit passes to their employees.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Mr. Liljeblad said the issue of whether or not the city could fund discount transit passes has come up a number of times and the city attorney has said it cannot be done using impact fee revenues. Other jurisdictions, however, have found ways to generate revenues that can be more broadly applied.

Ms. Johnson said one of the strategies being investigated for getting the word out is having a storefront staffed by TransManage a couple of days a week. Commuters could receive there personalized commuter planning assistance.

Commissioner Glass commented that while that would be a good idea, people at the transit center are likely already at least somewhat familiar with the transit system and how it works. Another approach would be to take the message to gathering places such as Starbucks.

#### E. Bel-Red Corridor Project Update

Mr. McDonald said the steering committee has endorsed a preliminary preferred alternative and has directed staff and the consultant team to conduct the final environmental impact analysis on it. The alternative represents a hybrid of the four alternatives that were studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, including components of the no action alternative. There were a lot of areas within the corridor that the steering committee concluded are working just fine and do not need to be changed, namely the area in the northern part of the corridor along SR-520, and along the southern edge of the corridor along Bel-Red Road, though a housing component was added there.

A lot of the components of Alternative 3 found their way into the preliminary preferred alternative, including a light rail corridor running through the center of the area with stations in the vicinity of the hospital, at 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and near 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE in the Overlake area of Redmond.

Noting that Sound Transit has indicated funding for only one transit station in the corridor, Chair Yuen asked if Bellevue will be able to bring about more than one. Mr. McDonald said the work being done in the corridor is serving to inform the decision-making process for the Sound Transit board. Planning processes always make a big difference in the final analysis.

Mr. Liljeblad added that Sound Transit could elect to fund and construct the first transit station and hold off on constructing a second station until such time as a critical mass of employment and housing is reached. That could easily happen in the corridor given the substantial development patterns under discussion.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Mr. McDonald said Sound Transit is considering both at grade and elevated rail sections.

Commissioner Wendle observed that housing is planned for the area near the current King County Metro bus base and where Pacific Topsoil is operating and suggested that those uses will be incompatible with housing. Mr. McDonald agreed that the current development of the area is contrary to the new vision, and as such there will for some time be incompatibilities. The implementation strategy will be focused in part on minimizing the incompatibilities to the greatest extent possible.

Commissioner Wendle suggested that a station option should be considered for the area of the corridor along SR-520. Mr. Liljeblad said Sound Transit selected the NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street alignment based on the assumption that a SR-520 alignment would not be as successful as the corridor redevelopments according to the preliminary preferred alternative. The area along the freeway is currently developed with light industrial uses that will likely stay that way unless a redevelopment plan is adopted. The nodes that will be developed around the transit stations will have a mix of uses, including housing, so the stations will be serving a combination of employment and residential. Part of the reason for indicating housing further to the north and east is to take advantage of some very nice views. Commissioner Wendle said the trade-off will be between travel speeds and cost. It will be very attractive to be able to get out to Overlake faster, and that argues in favor of a station closer to SR-520.

Commissioner Northey suggested it is somewhat odd that two transit stations are being considered for the Bel-Red corridor when there is only one transit station being considered for downtown Bellevue. More options in the downtown are needed.

Mr. Liljeblad commented that much of the LI-zoned land in the corridor is already transitioning to other uses. The work that has been done suggests that the vast majority of the land uses in the corridor are not industrial; many of them are service uses that could be relocated to other comparable zoning categories in other parts of the city.

Commissioner Northey question why the Bel-Red corridor should be raised to such a high level of importance given all the other things that need to be fixed in the city. Mr. Liljeblad said the tremendous pressure to convert to different uses in the area cries out for a cohesive and organized strategy.

Mr. McDonald shared with the Commission a schematic showing how the preliminary preferred alternative would actually work on the ground given the development program and the roadway network needed to support it. He noted that the information has been shared with the Environmental Services Commission and the Parks Board, both of which were interested in all the green on the map which represents parks and open space. The north/south arterial system will need to be widened and expanded to serve the land uses; NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street will be extended to the east of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE connecting to 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE; and the interchange at the north end of 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at SR-520 will be completed to allow for access to and from the east.

Improving the pedestrian/bicycle system will be critical to the success of the area. The system will provide access to the transit stations, the parks, and the future trail along the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe corridor.

The development potential for the Bel-Red corridor through 2030 is forecasted to be 4.5 million square feet of commercial and 5000 housing units. There will also need to be a significant expansion to parks and other amenities to support the new neighborhoods.

The steering committee was adamant about making sure that the light industrial and service uses that currently operate in the corridor will be allowed to remain, expand and be rebuilt in the event of catastrophe. The steering committee recognizes that some types of service uses that have light industrial characteristics will not be compatible with housing and a dense mixed use environment; those uses will be allowed to remain, but new such uses will not be permitted within the housing and mixed use nodes.

Commissioner Wendle commented that overall the street network as proposed looks very good. He suggested, however, that expanding NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the east of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE will be extremely difficult to pull off. Mr. McDonald agreed, adding that the roadway would have to wrap around Lake Bellevue, separating the businesses from their parking areas. The western terminus of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street will also be difficult to achieve because of the way NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street interfaces with NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Liljeblad said it is fair to say the most critical component of the transportation vision for the area is the NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. Without that piece, the vision is not likely to be played out. NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street will become the connecting fiber holding together the individual visions for parks, transit, and the non-motorized network. NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street is very important, but so is NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street, both of which will serve to relief NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, which currently is the only continuous east/west arterial. NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street will be difficult to achieve but it can be done.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Mr. Liljeblad said a design study is under way to improve Northup Way. The study is considering less than five lanes for the section between NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street and I-405.

Mr. McDonald said the park block is one of the concepts that has been embraced by the steering committee, which is a linear park feature running from about 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE along the north side of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. He shared with the Commission a rendering for how the concept might be implemented. He added that neighborhood parks, urban plazas and open spaces are sprinkled liberally around the corridor along with trails connecting the neighborhoods and regional systems.

Mr. Liljeblad commented that it will require a fairly aggressive vision in order to accomplish something that will be special and memorable. While the city could settle for something less, the result may be something without any particular specialness.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Mr. McDonald explained that none of the parks facilities shown on the map are programmed. There could be active recreation facilities along with green spaces and linear corridors. A neighborhood park large enough to accommodate a ball field could be located in the corridor.

Mr. McDonald explained that by improving the riparian corridors there will be multiple benefits, including green spaces, trails, and improved fish and wildlife habitat. Incentives will be part of the package for achieving the enhancements. Low-impact development will be

important throughout the corridor as it redevelops.

The steering committee met on June 13 and will meet again in July after the Final Environmental Impact Statement is released. Their final meeting is expected to be in September at which time they will transmit a recommendation to the City Council.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

9. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Yuen asked for volunteers to serve on the committee of commissioners studying best transit practices.

Commissioner Wendle expressed an interest but noted that his company is doing some work with the city on transit issues which may prove to be a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Glass voiced his interest in serving as well.

Commissioner Glass commented that the left-hand turn lane on northbound 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE onto Main Street by the old City Hall has been reduced to a single lane. He asked staff to report on why the change was made.

Commissioner Glass also asked if a better solution could be found to the practice of putting a sign in the middle of eastbound NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street near Bellevue Way on weekends to prevent right turns.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 26, 2007

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

B. May 10, 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

Chair Yuen adjourned the meeting at 9:58 p.m.

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Secretary to the Transportation Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

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Date