

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

October 1, 2007
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Balducci, Davidson, Lee, and Marshall

ABSENT: Councilmember Noble

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 10 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition and one item of potential litigation.

At 6:14 p.m., the meeting reconvened with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Bel-Red Corridor Steering Committee's Recommendations

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened discussion regarding the Bel-Red Corridor Study Steering Committee's recommendations. He noted that Council received the Committee's final report last week.

Planning and Community Development Director Matt Terry explained that the purpose of tonight's briefing is to review the Steering Committee's recommendations and for Council to approve the charge and role for each Board and Commission as they review the committee's recommendations over the next few months.

Kevin O'Neill, Transportation Long-Range Planning Manager, said elements of the Committee's report address a number of items including a vision statement, development program, transportation components, land uses, parks and open space, housing, and building heights. He recalled Council's interest on September 24 in the implications of the corridor's development for schools. City staff and the project's consultants have been in contact with Bellevue School

District officials since Spring 2006 regarding the Bel-Red study's plan to add housing and how this might affect the need for schools. The Committee's preferred alternative adds 500 housing units and potentially approximately 8,400 new residents by 2030. This represents the addition of potentially 400-800 school-age children by 2030, assuming children are 5-10% of the new Bel-Red residents. Some would attend private schools but 90% or more would attend Bellevue School District schools. The Steering Committee's report has been sent to the District and officials have indicated that planning for additional students will occur incrementally based on 5-6 year planning windows.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak thanked staff for working with Bellevue School District.

The second issue of concern to the Council is coordination with the City of Redmond's planning activities. Mr. O'Neill said Bellevue staff has been working with Redmond staff since Redmond started its Overlake Plan update process. Regular meetings between staff of the two cities have been ongoing for the past few years, and Redmond's Planning Commission was briefed by Bellevue staff approximately one year ago. A joint Council meeting was held in November 2006, and Redmond staff attended the Bel-Red Steering Committee meeting in February 2007.

Both Bellevue and Redmond have identified a 2030 land use and transportation plan, which in Bellevue's case to date is the Steering Committee's recommendation. Redmond's plan has been through its Planning Commission process and is now before the Redmond City Council, which is expected to adopt the updated plan by the end of the year.

Mr. O'Neill said the next joint Council meeting is scheduled for November 19 to discuss principles toward updating the Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) agreement. The goal is for both Councils to adopt the principles by the end of the year and before Redmond adopts its update of its Overlake plan. Adoption of a preferred alternative for the Bel-Red corridor by Bellevue's Council is not expected until next year. Both cities' staff will begin to work on additional modeling and the identification of projects to mitigate development impacts for public review. This will result in an update to the BROTS agreement by next summer.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Transportation Director Goran Sparrman said staff will evaluate the impacts of trips to be generated by development of the Bel-Red and Overlake areas. A key principle for the Bel-Red area is to concentrate development density in the west end due to more opportunities for transportation enhancements. He confirmed there will likely be some increase in trips in East Bellevue. However, the City has no plans to expand its arterials.

Mr. Terry said the City's assessment will look at trip origins and destinations to get an idea of whether new trips are primarily Bellevue residents or non-residents passing through the city. This might influence the selection of mitigation strategies to be used in Bellevue and specified in the new BROTS agreement.

Continuing, Mr. O'Neill noted residents' concerns regarding building heights on the east end of the Bel-Red corridor. He reviewed the overall land use plan for the corridor study area. The Bel-Red Steering Committee's recommendation focuses on retail use as well as housing and

mixed use development. Redmond's Overlake plan envisions a mixed use/housing emphasis east of 152nd Avenue. Redmond is looking at taller building heights potentially on the Group Health site, and slightly lower building heights (maximum of six stories) along 156th Avenue. Redmond and Bellevue are both interested in siting light rail stations within the Bel-Red-Overlake area.

The Bel-Red Steering Committee deliberated on building heights for all nodes within the area. The Committee recommends that building heights in the 152nd Avenue NE node (near Uwajimaya) should be consistent with existing zoning (heights ranging from 45 to 60 feet). Mr. O'Neill explained that density is regulated by the floor-area ratio, and building heights will not change existing maximum FAR limits. He described photos from the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) demonstrating the potential visual impacts of various building heights. The impacts vary based on how the buildings are designed and located/oriented. Mr. O'Neill said Redmond is considering buildings with 8 to 9 stories.

Responding to Councilmember Marshall, Mr. O'Neill said CrescentView has had its architects develop options with building heights up to 150 feet.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Terry noted that the development pattern on 156th Avenue NE, north from Bel-Red Road to NE 24th Street, is low density with primarily one-story buildings. Even buildings of 40-60 feet will modify the visual environment that exists under current zoning. The Steering Committee was concerned about visual impacts when driving on 156th and as westbound traffic approaches the area on NE 24th Street.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. O'Neill noted that some Steering Committee members felt shorter, wider buildings would affect views more than taller, thinner buildings.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Terry said the Steering Committee considered a range of building height options, and the ultimate vote was split.

Mr. O'Neill next addressed the need for recreation facilities and sportsfields, and the potential for including them in the Bel-Red corridor. The area provides large, relatively flat open spaces and a central location with convenient access to transportation systems. It would be a good way to reuse industrial land and to provide an amenity for Bel-Red residents as well as the greater community.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak recalled that there had been consensus around having a major recreation facility in the area, with the exact nature of the facility to be determined in a citywide context at a later date. Mr. Terry concurred.

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran confirmed that the type of facility is to be determined later. He noted that the Bel-Red area provides the best opportunity for siting a community-wide recreation facility. He added that the potential for a large facility must be addressed now in terms of environmental assessment and overall planning.

Referring to the version in the desk packet of Attachment 1, the Charge to Boards and Commissions, Councilmember Balducci suggested adding a sentence about specifically considering the addition of sports fields. She feels that adding sports fields incrementally should be considered as well as the option for a larger regional facility.

Councilmember Marshall concurred and suggested looking for partners, including Bellevue School District, to help provide the facilities, whether an aquatic center and/or sports fields.

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram reviewed the phasing of development infrastructure likely to occur in the Bel-Red Corridor. The vision articulated by the Steering Committee seeks to coordinate the development of public infrastructure including transportation, parks, and open space with private redevelopment anticipated for the corridor.

Mr. Inghram described two possible approaches to providing infrastructure. The first is for the City to invest in capital projects that will make the area more attractive to developers. However, this conflicts somewhat with the typical strategy of waiting for redevelopment to provide some of the funding needed for public infrastructure improvements. Staff is conducting an analysis and researching options to address the interrelationship among land use code strategies, financial strategies, and transportation requirements. Major transportation components (i.e., light rail) will be necessary in order for full redevelopment to occur.

Mr. Inghram noted the revised version in Council's desk packet of the proposed Charge for Boards and Commissions in reviewing the Bel-Red Corridor Study recommendations. The Arts Commission has been added to the process, as requested by Councilmembers last week. A joint Board and Commission meeting is scheduled to enhance planning coordination. The focus of Boards and Commission is implementation, including related policies, capital investments, and priorities for the corridor.

Noting concerns previously expressed by the Council that the implementation schedule might be too aggressive, Mr. Inghram said staff, the Boards, and the Commissions are aware of the need for sufficient time to conduct a full review. He reviewed the implementation schedule, which will expand if necessary to complete the planning process. Joint Bellevue and Redmond City Council meetings are scheduled for November 19 and next March. Public involvement activities will continue throughout the process.

Responding to Mayor Degginger regarding the coordination of the Bel-Red Corridor and light rail planning, Mr. Stroh said the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) package, which could include amendments applicable to the Bel-Red Corridor, will be adopted in early 2008. The light rail best practices work, which will also affect CPA planning, is scheduled for completion by mid-2008. It is possible that light rail-related CPAs could be adopted on an emergency basis following adoption of the full 2007 CPA package.

Mr. Degginger commented on the importance of coordinating Bel-Red Corridor planning with light rail planning. Mr. Stroh concurred.

Councilmember Marshall encouraged a master schedule coordinating Bel-Red Corridor and light rail planning/implementation efforts with both Meydenbauer Bay Park and adjacent land use planning and citywide budget planning. She noted strong community interest in adding sports fields.

Councilmember Lee concurred with the need to integrate land use and transportation planning with financial planning. He supports adding the Arts Commission's participation in the overall implementation process. Mr. Lee encouraged involving the Human Services Commission to ensure a focus on housing and social services, as well as the consideration of multicultural services.

Ms. Balducci expressed her interest in policies to encourage affordable housing. However, she feels this would be a function of land use code changes to be considered by the Planning Commission. She is hesitant to involve another Board or Commission in the process.

Referring to the charge to Boards and Commissions, Mrs. Marshall suggested adding language about the Arts Commission's role ensuring the coordination of public art planning with Sound Transit's art program.

Mr. Chelminiak suggested adding specific language to the Park Board's charge mentioning sports fields as well as a potential major regional sports/recreation facility.

Mayor Degginger noted Council consensus to add a specific reference to sports fields in the Park Board's charge.

Following brief discussion, Mayor Degginger noted the lack of a consensus on involving the Human Services Commission as suggested by Councilmember Lee. However, staff and Council will solicit input from the Commission as part of the implementation process.

(b) Light Rail Best Practices Project Update

Mike Kattermann, Senior Planner, opened staff's report regarding the Light Rail Best Practices Committee's work. Meetings were held in July and September in which the committee reviewed the project scope and schedule, received a briefing on the East Link project, and learned about public outreach activities. David Evans and Associates (Portland) has been hired to conduct the technical study, and Norton Arnold and Company is assisting staff in the public outreach process.

Public outreach activities include a web site, communication with interested groups, press releases, and a public open house on September 13 attended by 95 citizens. Input from the open house is summarized in the meeting packet. Residents expressed concerns regarding potential impacts on property values, crime, parking, and safety. Residents support development at some, but not all, stations. They encouraged connections between light rail stations and pedestrian, bicycle, and bus systems. Residents said light rail should address noise and visual impacts and provide access for residential areas and businesses.

Maria Koengeter, Senior Planner, described eight topic areas that will provide structure for the work program and guide research, policy development, and public outreach:

1. Community and neighborhoods – How can the City maintain neighborhood stability, mitigate impacts, and ensure that light rail is a community asset?
2. Protecting and enhancing property values.
3. Station security.
4. Connecting light rail to pedestrians, bicycles, autos, buses, and special needs users.
5. Land use – Does light rail cause changes in land use? How can light rail be integrated into existing development as well as foster mixed use development?
6. Street design and operations.
7. Type of system – Elevated, at-grade, or tunnel integration? What are the functional and productivity trade-offs? What are the implications for urban design and land use issues?
8. Construction impacts and mitigation.

Ms. Koengeter reviewed the next steps in the process:

- October – Policy review, case studies and identification of key principles, and Central Link tours.
- November – Provide report on first four topic areas, conduct public open house, and tour Bellevue East Link segments.
- December – Provide Council update.

Councilmember Balducci stated that staff, the Best Practices Committee, and the community have been very engaged in the process to date. She feels confident the process will meet the aggressive timeline.

Dr. Davidson feels the composition of the Committee, made up of Commissioners, contributes significantly to the efficient pace of the review and planning process.

Mayor Degginger concurred and commended the Committee for their work.

3. Discussion

(a) Update on Golf Course Management [Regular Session Agenda Item 5(b)]

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran provided an update on the new management of the golf course. The clubhouse and driving range have been improved, and new electric golf carts have been added. Technology enhancements have allowed the golf course to issue 2,418 golf cards and process 1,148 online reservations. The golf course continues to support leagues and programs including the Junior Golf Foundation and high school leagues. Responses to a customer survey indicate more positive than negative comments, with customers reporting they are pleased with the golf course conditions and maintenance, location, and the staff's friendliness. One item noted that customers would change is the pace of play.

Mr. Foran recalled that the primary reason for considering a change in golf course management was a steady decline in the number of rounds and financial performance. Both the number of rounds and net income have increased in 2007. Future capital improvements to driving range, golf course, and clubhouse will be funded through greens fees. Management will continue to work on enhancing the pace of play and customer service.

Mr. Foran introduced Shelley Brittingham, the staff person responsible for the administrative duties associated with the Enterprise Fund as well as other functions within the Parks Department. Randy Leifer is the Golf Course Superintendent.

At 8:01 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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