

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

June 22, 2016  
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Hilhorst, Commissioners Carlson, Barksdale, deVadoss, Laing, Morisseau, Walter

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Cullen, Department of Planning and Community Development; Patricia Byers, Department of Development Services; Catherine Drews, City Attorney's Office; Paul Bucich, Department of Utilities; Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

COUNCIL LIAISON: Not Present

GUEST SPEAKERS: Brittany Port, Wayne Carlson, AHB

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

(4:48 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 4:48 p.m. by Chair Hilhorst who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

(4:50 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Barksdale, who arrived at 5:08 p.m., and Commissioner Laing, who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(4:51 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

(4:51 p.m.)

5. STUDY SESSION

(4:51 p.m.)

A. Low-Impact Development Principles Project

Consultant Wane Carlson with AHBL briefly reviewed the reason for the low-impact development project, including the Council's support for the objective of maintaining the region's quality of life, including that of making low-impact development (LID) the preferred and commonly used approach to site development, which is language taken from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. He noted that the Council had also approved various principles to guide the work, including being Bellevue appropriate, recognizing and balancing competing needs, building on existing information programs, engaging stakeholders, and maintaining the city's compliance record with the NPDES permit. Integrating LID into the city's codes and standards will involve both the LID best management practices and the LID principles. The Commission will focus on the principles, while the best management practices will be incorporated through an update to the city's storm water management manual. The goals related to the principles are to minimize native vegetation loss, minimize impervious surface coverage, and minimize storm water runoff. Over the past year an evaluation was done to determine the opportunities to work toward the goals and the areas of focus in the Land Use Code identified included evaluating the use of LID early in the process, reducing impervious surface coverage, preserving and enhancing tree canopy, and looking for opportunities to make the city's existing clustering provisions more attractive to applicants.

Mr. Carlson stressed that the proposed amendments do not involve any changes in the amount of building coverage. The city currently has a standard for building coverage and another for impervious surfaces. The proposed approach does not change the allowed structure footprint. Driveways, patios, walkways, sport courts and parking lots are hard surfaces and a new standard is proposed for hard surface coverage that will supplement the existing impervious surface standard. The new standards are consistent with development that has occurred in each zone and were established both through GIS investigation and development permit research. The proposal allows for the same coverage using permeable surfaces.

A hard surface is an umbrella term that includes both structures, traditional impervious surfaces, and permeable paving and vegetative roofs. In the R-1 zone, the maximum structure lot coverage is 35 percent. No change to that is indicated. The current standard for maximum impervious surface coverage in the R-1 zone is 50 percent. The proposal is to reduce the maximum impervious surface coverage to 40 percent, which is actually higher than the existing development patterns; the GIS and permit research determined what is realized on the ground is close to 22 percent in the R-1 zone.

Commissioner Walter asked if reducing the allowed coverage to 40 percent from 50 percent could be considered to be a downzone. Mr. Carlson said property owners could still get to 50 percent coverage, but where feasible permeable surfaces must be employed beyond the allowed 40 percent impervious surface coverage.

Commissioner deVadoss asked about the comparability between traditional hard surfaces and pervious surfaces. Department of Utilities Assistant Director for Engineering Paul Bucich explained that significant strides have been made over the past 15 years to bring the cost of pervious concrete and asphalt down. Plants are now set up to run that type of material. While the cost is still incrementally higher, it is more than offset by a reduction in the amount of storm water controls that have to be built and maintained. For single family residential, it will cost

somewhat more for a permeable driveway, but with less water running off the site there is less storm water infrastructure needed for the neighborhood, and that theoretically reduces costs to property owners. The developer may actually net an extra lot or larger lots by freeing up what would otherwise be used for storm water facilities.

Ms. Drews noted that some cost information had been included in the EPA fact sheet that was included in the packet, as well as on low-impact development project website.

Chair Hilhorst suggested that the aesthetics of a community could be negatively impacted by not having retention ponds, which often serve as the only green areas within a neighborhood. She asked what homeowners can do under the current approach that they would not be able to do under the proposed approach. Mr. Bucich said tennis courts do not work well with pervious surfaces, and swimming pools are impervious surfaces in that they do not infiltrate into the soil. In reality, however, rainwater that falls on swimming pools and triggers an overflow will in most cases drain into the sewer system. The fact is that on-the-ground residential developments fall far below what is currently allowed in terms of impervious surface, so in most cases the new approach will not represent any constraints. The proposed target is 40 percent impervious surface, and with the extra ten percent, pervious surfaces must be used to the degree possible. There are provisions spelled out in the footnotes that allow for an out where the use of pervious surfaces is not feasible.

Commissioner Barksdale asked about the relative cost differences with regard to maintenance between pervious surfaces and impervious surfaces. Mr. Bucich said the answer is complicated. Porous asphalt can look very similar to regular asphalt. It has a very high porosity level and if used as a residential sidewalk it is necessary to make sure it is not under a lot of trees. Over the long term it is necessary to vacuum it; if really clogged up, jet blasting is required to clean it out. The same is true of porous concrete. Developers of large developments have found it is far more cost effectively to build with LID techniques. For the average homeowner, cleaning by sweeping or with a leaf blower is generally sufficient.

Commissioner Carlson asked about the costs of installing pervious surfaces over pervious surfaces. Mr. Bucich said generally speaking both are fairly comparable depending on a few factors, including the type of pavers and any desired aesthetic pattern.

Chair Hilhorst asked staff to gather and bring to a future Commission meeting data regarding the costs of both installation and maintenance.

Mr. Bucich said there are direct construction costs to homeowners and developers. The Department of Utilities works closely with the Department of Ecology to keep them from going down paths that would result in costs to homeowners in the form of evaluations and studies. What often gets lost in the conversations is the cost to the environment, and that is why Ecology has put the issue into the NPDES permit. The cost to the environment of development activities over time can be very high, and where it is most often seen is in storm water facility fees. It is often difficult to explain to individual property owners how what they do with their properties will benefit them over time, but reducing runoff will reduce stream degradation and will result in lower net costs, all of which play into utility rates.

Commissioner Morisseau asked if the design principles and guidelines as is meet the requirements needed for the permit. Mr. Bucich said they do and the intention is that the same will be true as 2017 begins. To get there will require making changes to the design standards.

The Department of Ecology and others are recognizing that by the time a developer or a homeowner is looking at how to address their storm water problems, they have already made decisions about how they want to develop their sites. The tools that are in place to address that are insufficient to prevent damages to the natural ecosystem. The idea of thinking about site development before design and before any dirt is turned is the next generation of storm water management, and that is what the principles are all about.

Mr. Carlson called attention to footnotes 49 and 50 associated with the maximum hard surface coverage percentages. He explained that footnote 49 calls attention to LUC 20.20.425 and exceptions and performance standards relating to hard surfaces, and footnote 50 indicates that where the application of permeable pavement has been determined to be infeasible using the infeasibility criteria in the Department of Ecology's storm water management manual, the maximum impervious surface coverage may be exceeded, up to the maximum hard surface coverage allotment.

Mr. Bucich pointed out that the work to revise the codes compliments the work being done to revise the engineering standards. Even if after all is said and done the pervious surface limits are not reduced from 50 percent to 40 percent, anyone coming in to develop a site will have to do the feasibility/infeasibility analysis according to the permit and the engineering standards.

Chair Hilhorst commented that it is always better to offer incentives for compliance, possibly in the form of lower permit costs for utilizing LID principles. She said she would not want to do anything that would take away from what property owners can do or to make it harder to improve their properties.

Commissioner Morisseau asked if property owners will have an avenue to dispute or challenge a finding that the criteria either are or are not met. Ms. Drews allowed that decisions are appealable to the hearing examiner and there is due process provided for that.

Commissioner Walter observed that no new ramblers are being built even though there is a growing demand as people age. The proposed approach will make it even more difficult to build that style of home. Ms. Drews reminded her that the GIS study looked at all of the development done throughout the city, including ramblers that were built back in the 1950s and 1960s. Staff believe that the proposed limits will accommodate anyone building a rambler on their property. Commissioner Walter said it would be more expensive to build under the new approach. Mr. Bucich stressed that nothing in the proposal will change the percentage of structure square footage allowed on a site.

Mr. Carlson said the proposed new section related to hard surfaces describes the intent and applicability. In some ways it replicates the existing language of 20.20.460 related to performance standards, exceptions and modifications as they apply to pervious surfaces.

Commissioner Barksdale asked if the maintenance and assurance item F under 20.20.425 applies only to commercial properties. Consultant Brittany Port said it applies to any permeable surface installed on a residential or commercial property. As drafted, should permeable pavement be

implemented optionally, the Director could require a maintenance plan or long-term performance assurance. Mr. Bucich added that it would be a rare occasion to require a maintenance plan of a single family property owner. The exception might be a very large lot where a lot of impervious surface would trigger the need for a tank, vault or pond for which there would be a maintenance plan required. Ms. Drews said the Department of Development Services has a prepared template for maintenance plans that spells out what needs to be done; for homeowners, it is a simplified version of what is asked of commercial developers.

Mr. Carlson said paragraph G relating to existing hard surfaces is also similar to the existing language for impervious surfaces. It spells out that instances where legally established hard surfaces exceed the allowable limits, applicants can replace but cannot add additional hard surface. Currently, surfaces paved with pervious pavement or other innovative techniques are not included in the calculation of pervious surface areas. The proposal is to revise the language to make it clear that all permeable pavement will be included in calculating the maximum hard surface areas. Ms. Drews said the new approach seeks to balance the use of permeable surfaces with the loss of vegetation.

Chair Hilhorst asked how the use of Astroturf comes into play. Mr. Carlson said it depends on what lies beneath it. Rain will soak through Astroturf, but if the structure beneath it is impervious, the entire area would be considered to be impervious, whereas if there is no structure beneath, it would be considered permeable. An coverage exemption is included for non-residential uses such as parks, schools and churches in residential districts that allows up to 80 percent pervious surfaces.

Chair Hilhorst said when the single room rental issue was on the Commission's table, it was found that some homeowner's were paving their front lawns to accommodate parking for the residents' cars. While that should not be allowed, there may be instances in which homeowners may need to expand their driveways to keep extra cars from being parked on residential streets. She asked if any exceptions could be included to accommodate that need. Ms. Drews reiterated that the amount of hard surface coverage is not changed by the proposal. As proposed, up to 40 percent of sites can be covered with pervious surfaces, and permeable options are required to get all the way up to 50 percent. Where permeable solutions are not feasible, up to 50 percent can be covered with pervious surfaces.

Commissioner Walter asked if there is any chance the proposed approach could lead to land being considered developable that would not be under the current system. Ms. Drews said the proposal does not change anything about the critical areas ordinance.

## 6. PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICER ELECTIONS

(5:57 p.m.)

Chair Hilhorst opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

A motion to have Commissioner deVadoss serve as Chair was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to ask the current Chair to continue serving through the end of July was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Chair Hilhorst and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Hilhorst opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Walter to serve as Vice Chair was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Carlson to serve as Vice Chair was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion died for lack of a second.

The motion to nominate Commissioner Walter to serve as Vice Chair carried unanimously.

#### 7. ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

(6:01 p.m.)

Chair Hilhorst adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

#### 8. CALL TO ORDER

(6:33 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Carlson and Laing, both of whom were excused.

#### 9. ROLL CALL

(6:33 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barksdale and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 10. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(6:34 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barksdale and the motion carried unanimously.

## 11. PUBLIC COMMENT

(6:34 p.m.)

Ms. Pamela Johnson, 3741 122nd Avenue NE, addressed the tree canopy issue relating to low-impact development. She said if things are to be changed, it should be done right. The city should develop a policy for a 40 percent tree canopy as an important environmental resource. The lack of trees is a significant environmental justice issue that should be addressed right away. A strategic focused investment is needed to ensure the health of the urban forest. An urban forestry commission should be created focused on improving the health and sustainability of the urban forest. Portland, Seattle and Vancouver have adopted urban forestry commissions. Trees should be planted or retained as part of development and redevelopment. Single family developments have no requirement to retain trees, while short divisions, subdivisions and new planning and development are required to put trees on a map. Landmark trees should be retained and should be considered important community resources, and there should be community input. Notice to the public should be required for any tree retention issues where trees meet minimal standards. Historical significance and cultural importance should not be determined by staff. Currently, there is no public input into which trees should be saved. There should be 50 percent tree canopy for parking; one tree for every 20 stalls is not enough, even in the downtown. Trees provide shade, visual relief, and aid in storm water management.

## 12. PUBLIC HEARING

### A. Proposed Land Use Code Amendments: Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project

(6:39 p.m.)

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and the motion carried unanimously.

Code Development Manager Patricia Byers said the Eastgate/I-90 CAC worked on the Eastgate issues between 2010 and 2012 in relation to both transportation and land use. The purpose was to evaluate land use and transportation conditions, policies and regulations in the Eastgate/I-90 commercial corridor, and produce a plan that builds on the area's assets of accessibility, visibility, job diversity, and stable nearby residential neighborhoods. The CAC's final report included recommendations for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan/subarea plan, the transportation plan, and the Land Use Code.

Ms. Byers explained that Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan contains the framework goals and the general elements, and that Volume 2 contains the subarea plans and the transportation facility plans. At the more specific level, the Comprehensive Plan contains regulations, including the Land Use Code, and plans, such as transportation facilities plans and capital facilities plans.

As development projects are submitted to the city, they are subject to review by different departments to make sure all of the requirements are met. At the end, the projects get implemented.

An environmental review is conducted at each stage under SEPA. The reviews are aimed at determining if a proposed action will result in probable significant adverse impacts, and whether the impacts can be mitigated. The SEPA review addresses things not covered by other ordinances or laws. One of those things is traffic.

The new zones Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) and Office/Limited Business 2 (OLB-2) were created as part of the Comprehensive Plan amendment in 2015 as recommended by the Eastgate/I-90 CAC. Both were subject to the notice process as required. The Transportation Facilities Plan is also subject to SEPA review. If the changes recommended by the CAC were not implemented, there would still be a 21 percent increase in traffic volumes in the Eastgate corridor by 2030. The preferred alternative is projected to result in a 27 percent increase in traffic volumes by 2030, but if the land use alternative is implemented without the proposed transportation changes recommended by the CAC, there will be a 26 percent increase in traffic volumes by 2030. The incremental increase tied to the recommendations of the CAC are not as much as will occur with just general growth. Growth is coming and there is a need to manage it in a way that will work for people. Where the rubber hits the road is during project review, because that is where it can be determined how trips will be generated and what mitigations are needed.

The three new districts proposed for Eastgate are the Eastgate Transit Oriented Development (TOD), OLB 2 and NMU. The TOD is intended to leverage the park and ride. The OLB 2 responds to the need to accommodate services employees want, such as restaurants and dry cleaners, close to where they work. The NMU contains a mix of residential and commercial/retail serving the local neighborhood. Within each zone there are specific uses allowed, along with specific dimensional requirements, development standards, and design guidelines.

Ms. Byers shared with the Commissioners a map of the Eastgate/I-90 area that showed the existing and proposed land use districts. She noted that the TOD is intended to provide for a mix of housing, retail, office and service uses, with an emphasis on housing. It covers about 40 acres adjacent to the existing park and ride. The FAR is proposed to be 2.0, with an exception of up to 1.0 for affordable housing, open space, public restrooms, special dedications and transfers. The maximum building height is 160 feet, except that parking garages would be limited to 45 feet. The parking requirement is reduced for the area

The OLB 2 district is intended as the location of offices, hotel/motel and eating and drinking establishments. The district is applied in areas that have convenient access to freeways, major highways and transit. The FAR is limited to 1.0 and the maximum building height is 75 feet. Residential uses are not allowed in the district, so there is no affordable housing bonus proposed.



The vision for the NMU is for a district with a mix of retail, service, office and residential uses. The retail uses would be on the first floor of buildings with residential above. The district is designed to be compatible with nearby neighborhoods and easily accessible by nearby office and residential uses. The FAR is 1.0 and the maximum building height is 75 feet. The affordable housing exception of up to 1.0 FAR is available in the district.

Ms. Byers said where there are NMU properties that takes advantage of the affordable housing exception, the overall building height should not exceed that of a house on a hill in a residential zone adjacent to it. The notion plays into the idea of the transition area design district which provides for buffers and other types of mitigation to ensure that the impacts of development in the more dense neighborhoods play nice with abutting residential districts.

Conformance amendments will be included to ensure that the new amendments conform with the code.

Implementation Planning Manager Eric Miller for the city's Department of Transportation. He explained that the Comprehensive Plan serves as the vision for the city. Within it are the Transportation Element in which are housed the long-range transportation facility plans. Those plans are used to inform the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) and the Capital Investment Program (CIP). The 12-year TFP is a citywide prioritization of projects; it involves a programmatic environmental analysis, and it forms the basis for the transportation impact fee program, which are fees development pays to help build facilities that serve their traffic impacts on the transportation system. The current TFP was adopted in December 2015 and covers the years 2016-2027. The CIP is the funded budget for capital improvements, including transportation projects.

The Commission was shown a map with suggested Eastgate improvements that included roadway/intersection projects, ped/bike projects, freeway projects, and transit projects.

Mr. Miller explained that under the Growth Management Act, jurisdictions are required to adopt concurrency ordinances. Concurrency is a system to determine the ability of the transportation system to support growth that is caused by new development. An analysis is made of each new development proposal submitted to determine the new trips the development will generate, and a determination is made as to whether or not the existing and funded transportation improvements can accommodate them. The analysis takes into account all existing land uses and factors in all approved development and adopted CIP projects. Each development proposal must meet the minimum thresholds tested for. Within the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, there are concurrency standards for each of the individual Mobility Management Areas, of which Eastgate is one that has an adopted V/C standard of 0.9, which is a measure of traffic going through system intersections identified in the transportation code and the volume those intersections can handle. The average of the seven system intersections must be within the standard; up to four of the intersections can exceed the standard so long as the average remains below the 0.9.

Each year, or as otherwise directed, an analysis is done of the city's concurrency system. The 2016 iteration was recently completed and it found that currently the overall average within the Eastgate MMA is 0.64, well under the standard. Only one of the seven system intersections is currently exceeding the standard.

Ms. Byers said the SEPA analysis that happens at the project level has three tiers. The first standard under state law is significant probable adverse impact. If it is determined there is that kind of an impact, the focus turns to whether or not it can be mitigated. Mitigation for long-range concurrency can include reducing the size of the development to generate fewer trips; delaying development until the city or others provide the needed improvements; constructing the needed improvements; or paying the money for the improvements. For mid-range mitigation, developers can pay traffic impact fees at the rate of \$4703 per net trip generated. Short-range mitigation can include a review of intersection operation, trip generation, and other transportation issues.

Ms. Byers said the issues raised by the public during the open house and as the study moved forward centered included the degree to which the park and ride is full and what will be done about transit. She said she raised the issue with King County Metro planners and found that the document they have posted to their website is only a visioning document that represents the first step in their planning process. It is a very general document that does not even include projects. No mention is made of expanding the Eastgate park and ride, but that does not mean it will not happen. She said she learned that the cost of a new park and ride facility runs approximately \$80,000 per space, so Metro is looking at ways to use the space they have more effectively, including encouraging walking and biking to the park and ride, and permitting carpool parking. It is true that some who are parking at the Eastgate facility are actually going to Bellevue College, and the college is taking steps to keep that from happening.

Metro continually reviews its routes for crowding, levels of service and on-time service. Changes are formally made on an annual basis, but they also adjust in response to customer input. Metro has a regional grant to increase the speed and reliability for Route 245 that runs between Factoria and Kirkland, and improvements there may help with the Eastgate corridor as well. Currently, Route 271 makes a circuitous route using Eastgate Way and 148th Avenue SE before going through the Bellevue College campus. The Bellevue College connector plan would have the buses using Kelsey Creek Road, Snoqualmie River Road and 142nd Place, reducing the county about \$500,000 annually, decreasing the time it takes to get to the campus, and decreasing the amount of bus traffic on 148th Avenue SE.

Mr. Cullen said the CAC put an enormous amount of work into developing the Eastgate/I-90 land use and transportation project. One of the concerns raised early on was wanting to see the corridor revitalized in a way that would result in a minimal need for additional transportation improvements. Since the CAC completed its recommendations, there have been no less than 35 presentations made to various groups, including the City Council and the Planning Commission, regarding the project. All of that work has brought the project to its final phase, which is the Land Use Code amendments. The proposed amendments clearly address what the CAC recommended relative to the physical constraints, the need for economic vitality, mobility, land

use and transportation integration, connectivity, transportation infrastructure, environmental sustainability, urban design quality and coherence, and incorporation of the Mountains to Sound Greenway. A large number of groups were involved ranging from businesses to residents.

A great deal of technical analyses were done and background reports were drafted. Taken together, the work shows the proposal does not represent a casual thought to change some land use zoning districts and to create some new ones; there is an enormous amount of weight and planning that has gone into it. The proposal represents the work to translate the direction given into zoning districts and Land Use Code amendments.

Mr. Cullen briefly reviewed the FAR and maximum building height for each of the new proposed zoning districts and demonstrated how the proposal reflects what the CAC called for. He allowed that transportation is currently an issue for the area but stressed that it has been accounted for in the transportation facilities work program. Improvements have been put into the financially constrained 12-year TFP that will eventually end up in the seven-year fully funded CIP.

(7:34 p.m.)

Mr. Pat Callahan, CEO of Urban Renaissance Group and Touchstone, 215 River Road Northwest, Bainbridge Island, said he has been involved in the local office market for about 19 years. He said he has been advocating for zoning changes in the Eastgate/I-90 corridor since 2008. He noted that he had attended every single one of the CAC meetings. Currently, what is proposed to be the TOD zone is a sea of parking. The investments made in the transit center total some \$65 million and the proposed land use changes are designed to take advantage of that significant investment. As proposed, however, there is a requirement for residential to be included in the master development plan, but including that requirement would be a mistake. Allowing for residential is a good idea, but going from what is there now, where there are absolutely no amenities, to an amenity rich walkable environment is going to be challenging to achieve economically. The concept talked about with the CAC included making sure density can be gradually increased through the construction of two 12-story buildings, thus producing enough mass to have the amenities and enough income to invest in a pedestrian corridor in the zone. Once that is done, residential can be considered in the zone. It will be too difficult to finance a residential tower in the middle of an office park in the initial phase. Building height to allow for 12-story buildings will be needed to support all of the costs of getting to the next phase of development. The stories above the fourth floor will have commanding views of the Mountains to Sound Greenway and that will bring in rents that justify the development. In practice, that will require building heights of 170 feet, including rooftop equipment. Additionally, driveways should be added to the list of permissible interruptions given the importance of driveways to the flow of traffic in the corridor. The street grid that is in the development actually conflicts with some of the street grid that is in the planning documents, and it would be preferable to have some consistency.

Mr. Jack McCullough, 701 5th Avenue, Suite 660, Seattle, said the penultimate page of the packet distributed to the Commissioners shows the street grid that is included presently in the plan. He pointed out that one of the streets intersects with the probable location of a future tower. He noted that also included in his handout were specific recommendations for change to the proposed Land Use Code amendments. He said the 45-foot allowance for parking structures needs to be increased by about ten feet to allow for retail on the ground floor. With regard to residential, he noted that the language of 20.25P.020.B.1.a says the master development plan must indicate where residential will go, and in fact says it must guarantee that residential will be developed. The guarantee is the issue. There is no historic market for multifamily in Eastgate, so there is no demand and no proven ability to get it done. The guarantee could result in having the opposite effect of what is intended. The CAC report includes a section that suggests a policy requiring some residential, but the report provides the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan amendments looked at by the Commission about 18 months ago and which the Council adopted about a year ago. Those Comprehensive Plan amendments, S-EG-1, S-EG-2, S-EG-3 and others, talk about ensuring that the TOD center can be developed with significant density. To require a guarantee up front would be inconsistent with those policies in that it will prevent the development of the TOD in the near term. Alternative language should be included that calls for preserving locations for future multifamily development, and for not precluding multifamily development.

Chair Hilhorst pointed out that the discussions to date have included the need for housing close to the college. She asked where the break point is. Mr. Callahan said Bellevue College was well represented during the CAC process, and that triggered several discussions about the college's plans. The space by the south entry was identified as a potential location for housing. The problem with the TOD site is that there is not enough density yet to support a six-story residential building. The idea is that once the college finished building out its residential plan for the campus, the TOD site will become a natural site for more housing, including the bridge to the campus from a parking structure, but that is 20 or 30 years in the future.

Commissioner Walter said much has been said about the cost per parking stall and the need for additional height to support the investment. She asked where the revenue source would be if the garages were built with no surrounding development to support it. Mr. Callahan said there are currently five buildings that collectively equal 250,000 square feet. The thinking is that the two additional towers totaling 500,000 square feet in the middle of the project will help to create a place. Support for the parking garage would come from the 750,000 square feet, and that level of density would in turn support coffee shops, lunch places and other amenities.

Mr. Dan Phillips, 4211 135th Place SE, said an increase in commute delay is an increase in commute delay. Concurrency should be targeting improvements. An A would be holding the line, and a C would be not making things any worse than it would be through normal growth in the region, maybe one percent. Allowing an increase of 26 percent or so would not be any better over leaving things as they are. It is not clear as to where all the data is coming from or its timing. During the summer months traffic is always lighter because school is out, and if the studies are done in the summer things could seem okay. Transportation improvements need to be

made before the construction happens, but it looks more like the city is hoping it will happen. If the cornerstone of supporting more automobiles is adding an additional lane on each side of I-90 between 150th Avenue SE and Issaquah, there is a problem. More development will mean more people coming into the area by car. There is hope that some will come by bike and some will come by bus, but the transit center is near capacity already and the park and ride is full. There are quite a few amenities already in place for people who work in the area, and food trucks pick up a lot of the slack. Changing the OLB to allow for more people and more traffic in the area should certainly be support for the businesses that are there. More businesses could be added to the first floor of buildings. One concern is having bigger buildings that will require more energy to be used, and with more HVAC systems running there will be more noise, all of which will impact people immediately adjacent to the area. It is a good proposal to keep building heights down so they do not interfere with existing residences, but there are other considerations, including traffic. Any parking garages put in should have direct access to the freeway to reduce traffic on surface streets.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 20 hands were raised in support.

Mr. Clark Kramer, 15531 SE 37th Street, spoke representing the Trailer's Inn RV Park. He noted that the site is under consideration for a zoning change to NMU. He said he has been involved in seeking a zoning change since 2007. As proposed, the site will be afforded an FAR of 2.0, but the limitation of having 1.0 FAR being for affordable housing bring everything to a halt. From the economic standpoint, no one will redevelopment the site. The site should be given an FAR of 2.5. The site is unique in that it was originally a gravel pit and is currently zoned General Commercial (GC). The site stands ready to be redeveloped. With an FAR of 2.5, it would be possible to include between 65 and 75 affordable housing units in the project. Under GC, the site is allowed to do a number of different things. Going to NMU will take away the ability to have auto dealerships, paid parking lots, auto garages and other uses from a site that is directly adjacent to the freeway. If there are to be restrictions relative to lot coverage, and 1.0 FAR for affordable housing, and a removal of the currently allowed uses, the property will actually be devalued. The currently allowed uses should continue to be permitted.

Mr. Ross Klinger, 500 108th Avenue NE, Suite 2400, said he is the listing broker for the Kramer family's Eastgate RV site. He said he has an unprecedented number of buyers interested in property of that type. The city and the region needs new apartment units and it is up to the Planning Commission to adopt a reasonable land use alternative that allows an FAR of 2.0 and a new zoning district. The Puget Sound vacancy rates are at 3.3 percent, which is below the 20-year standard of 5.0 percent. The Puget Sound area added 61,373 residents in the last year, surpassing the seven million mark. In January 2016, 10,700 people moved to the area, which is 600 more than the same month in 2015. The Puget Sound economic forecast is for the region to add 125,500 jobs over the next three years. A total of 12,500 new residential units came online in 2015, and 15,000 new units are expected in 2016. The unknown is where all those people are going to go. More units available will mean fewer rent increases. The market can easily support a residential project on the RV site.

For the benefit of Chair Hilhorst, Mr. Klinger clarified that there is enough of a market demand for housing. He added that in the past nine months the LIV project in Bel-Red has gone from 92 units leased to 408 units leased, an average of 35 units per month. The demand is there.

Mr. John Shaw, 4555 193rd Place SE, Issaquah, spoke as director of multifamily acquisition for American Classic Homes. He said while close, the proposed NMU zoning misses the mark. The proposal for an FAR of 1.0 for market-rate housing and 1.0 for affordable housing, there is no economic viability for the developer, primarily because it costs the same to build the affordable units but the allowed rents are lower. As proposed, the NMU zoning on the RV site will yield a very skinny seven-story structure with no affordable housing. American Classic Homes builds affordable units into every one of its projects, and it can do so because of incentive-based zoning. In Seattle the multifamily tax exemption program allows for up to 25 percent of the building to be affordable because of the tax credits. In Bel-Red, essentially 20 percent of the bonus FAR goes to affordable, making it economically viable to build them. There is a clear demand and the company wants to build a project on the RV property, but the limitations are a concern. The site is viable since it will be five stories of wood over two stories of concrete, an approach that supports where rents currently are. However, ten- or twelve-story buildings require solid concrete and the rents in the Eastgate area will not support the cost. American Classic Homes wants to provide affordable housing, but as proposed that would not be possible. A traffic engineer was hired to do a peer review of the report done, but was directed to consider an FAR of 2.5 on the RV site. He found the net result of going from an FAR of 1.0 to 2.5 would be a half second delay at the intersection by the car dealership.

Chair Hilhorst asked about the site coverage percentages. Mr. Shaw said as written structures can cover 35 percent of the 3.3-acre site. It is also being proposed that the maximum pervious surface coverage should be 60 percent, and up to 80 percent if pervious surface, but the pervious surface installation costs are about double. Chair Hilhorst asked if more of the site were allowed to be developed with structure if there would be any advantage to a larger footprint coupled with a shorter building. Mr. Shaw said going that route would preserve views for nearby properties. Issaquah allows up to 80 percent pervious surface coverage but allows less height.

Commissioner Walter asked for a response to the comments from the public regarding traffic concerns. Mr. Shaw said traffic is always one of the first things analyzed in looking at doing a project. That is why at such an early phase a peer review has already been conducted. A number of things will be required as part of getting a building permit, including improvements to the intersection.

Mr. Brian Palidar with Group Architect, 1735 Westlake Avenue North, Seattle, said he served as principal in charge and the primary designer for the LIV project in Bel-Red. He provided the Commissioners with copies of alternative code language for the NMU zone. He said the FAR needs to be in the 2.5 range in order to be feasible, but there are also details that come with that number in order to make it all work. He proposed setting a base FAR of 1.25, and allowing an additional FAR of 1.25 through the provision of amenities such as affordable housing, at a ratio of five square feet for every square foot of affordable housing; senior housing; trail dedication;

improving pedestrian connectivity; parks and open spaces; and sustainable certifications. He said while the developer wants to see affordable housing included, not every development would choose to utilize all of the elements of the amenity system and as such they should be allowed to pay a fee in-lieu. Some of the proposed footnotes are items of concern. With regard to the LIV project, counting the cross sectional tower area, comes in at right about 40 percent lot coverage, which is more than the proposed 35 percent in the NMU. In Bel-Red, there is an allowance for up to 75 percent impervious surface pervious surface, whereas the proposal for the NMU is only 60 percent. It makes sense to have commercial and retail uses at the ground level, but it should be done where it makes sense; forcing everyone to do retail or office space could result in a lot of empty space.

Mr. Anthony Allison, 15053 SE 44th Street, said the concerns he and his wife have is the RV site that could end up being a site for affordable housing. The big issue is traffic and it does not seem that an R-20 site in that area will help what has been a problem for years. The schools are at maximum capacity already which means the teachers, students and parents are all stressed. He said his son's teacher has had enough and is moving. Until the school's catch up with the density, the kids will continue to suffer. There is no funding or plans to address the current bottleneck, so it will get worse. The zoning should not be changed until traffic is addressed. The area has seen an increase in crime as well, and he noted that he personally has been robbed three times in the last three weeks; increasing density will increase the crime. There is a clear demand for the housing, but the facilities are not in place to accommodate it. The RV site should be changed to R-20.

Ms. Angela Allison, 15053 SE 44th Street, said she has lived there for 15 years and every year has seen more and more traffic in the intersections, largely due to overcrowded freeways. She said every day in going to work she has to maneuver around the bottlenecks. She said she lives only seven miles from where she works, but the commute can take up to 45 minutes, especially to get home. She said her son's kindergarten and first grade teachers have both said they were moving away because the number of kids they have to deal with is just too much for them. The question is how many years it will take for school services to catch up with the demand.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 12 hands were raised in support.

Ms. Leslie Geller, 15102 SE 43rd Street, commented that Bellevue calls itself a city in a park, but often it feels more like a city in a parking lot. She said he has been in her home for 22 years and just completed a full remodel. She said she has always been happy with the neighborhood but after attending the open house and finding out what is being planned for the Eastgate corridor, frustration and anger set in. She said she would have reconsidered her remodel had she known. Traffic is a huge challenge. If there is going to be a 21 percent increase in traffic even if nothing is done, something should be done to mitigate that increase. The established neighborhoods will be the losers if the plans go forward.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 12 hands were raised in support.

Ms. Sue Israel, 1709 134th Avenue SE #9, said her main concern is traffic. It can take 15 to 20 minutes to travel from Factoria to Eastgate when in fact it should take less than five minutes. Coming down 148th Avenue SE to go to 150th Avenue SE in front of Albertsons, it can take 15 minutes, but it should not take that long. The city should look at the traffic before approving a rezone. The city and the state should work together to get rid of the traffic before allowing more people into the area. She said where she wants to go she cannot take a bus or ride a bicycle.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 14 hands were raised in support.

Ms. Esther Drukman, 1709 134th Avenue SE, #15 said she loves the vision for the Eastgate area, but there has been no evidence presented for how the plans could be carried out with the amount of cars on the streets. She said she was told at the open house that she did not need a car, that she could take a bus, but she said at her age taking the bus or riding are not options. Nothing has been said about where those who will work in the big buildings will be able to park. The public is confused and angered for the fact that they cannot get around the streets quickly and efficiently. It takes 30 minutes to get to work three miles away.

Chair Hilhorst noted that ten hands were raised in support.

Ms. Linda Nohavec Belliveau, 3273 163rd Place SE, said she understands that a great deal of work goes into planning, but said she was just learning about the process. She said she and many of her neighbors were not notified, so it is alarming to find out the work has been going on for six years. The map shows no greenbelts, no wetlands and no parks other than Robinswood Park. With regard to traffic, she asked what the 0.9 LOS equates to in terms of seconds of delay per stoplight. Traffic mitigation usually means just putting in one more stoplight somewhere. It appears that no one has looked at or addressed the cumulative impacts. She said she no longer commutes but chooses to work out of her home, and when she does go out she makes sure it is between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 14 hands were raised in support.

Mr. Brian Hartman, 2969 14nd Place SE, #9, said his home is very close to Bellevue College and his concerns are primarily in regard to transportation changes in the area. He said he is not opposed to many of the changes as proposed but are concerned with many of the details, including the increased traffic. The road that goes through the college campus is already close to housing units and the increased traffic will need to be buffered. The intersection off of 142nd Avenue SE that provides access to the college is a multiway stop and some changes are proposed to it, though it is unclear how that might change the entryway into his residential complex. Residents of the complex have seen an increase in crime and it is unclear what will happen if more students are moved through the area. He said he also did not receive notice of the process.

Chair Hilhorst noted that eight hands were raised in support.



Mr. Jonathan Loch, 6129 127th Place SE, said it is a privilege to be part of a community discussion where everyone can express their view. He said he is not a resident of the Eastgate area but rather lives in Newport Hills but certainly is a member of the larger Bellevue area. He said it has been said that affordable housing will only be feasible if an FAR of 2.5 is allowed due to economics. He said he and his wife grew up in south Bellevue, met and got married, sought graduate degrees out of state, and returned to the area to be close to family. However, it has not been possible to find any housing that is affordable, so the decision was made to move in with his parents. He said the desire is still to have a place of their own, and that will require having housing that is affordable, and to have it in the Eastgate corridor would be very convenient. Having transit options would be very important, including bike options.

Chair Hilhorst noted that five hands were raised in support.

Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE, said traffic and transit is an important part of the Eastgate project. The CAC even put it in the name of its report. Much has been heard about the Land Use Code, but the CAC recommendation included city street improvements, Metro improvements, Sound Transit improvements, WSDOT additional lanes on I-90 in addition to the Land Use Code. The city is ignoring all the rest of it and is just going ahead with the Land Use Code. The need for infrastructure is clear and it feels like the city cares enough about Eastgate to exploit it but not enough to invest in it, and not enough to invest in the CAC-recommended surface street improvements. In the Transportation Facilities Plan, the projects shown in red represent capacity improvements, and there are no red projects anywhere near Eastgate. No work will be done on any of the projects identified in the TFP in Eastgate in the next 12 years. The proposed levy does not include any Eastgate projects either. The city does not care enough about Eastgate to pressure Metro to make improvements in a timely manner. The Eastgate project is based on transit, which is Metro, and Metro's recently released draft long-range plan does not have any enhancements starting for another nine years. Transit cannot be used if there is no room to get on the bus, so that means the 9000 to 10,000 additional residents will be driving to and from work on Eastgate's roads. Little has been said about Appendix B, the transportation strategic report. It has been said that the LOS standard for the area is 0.9, and according to the Comprehensive Plan that is a D-. According to LUC 14.10.30, Eastgate is allowed to be a D- and that up to four intersections can exceed that level. The strategy report identifies the congested intersections. Staff talked about the LOS conditions as of 2009 but did not say that four of the intersections at that time would violate the standard even without growth, and that another four were close to violating the standard. Traffic is much worse now than it was in 2009 so those additional intersections have to be over the level of service. The intersection of 150th Avenue SE and SE 38th Street is shown at level A, the best possible, but the map in Appendix B shows the same intersection as red or heavily congested. That is an indication of how much worse traffic has gotten. Without traffic and infrastructure improvements to mitigate the Eastgate project, it would violate the city law.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 13 hands were raised in support.

Ms. Betsy Hummer, 14541 SE 26th Street, voiced appreciation for the work of Michelle Wannamaker on NextDoor to get such a great turnout. It is unfortunate that the city notification process is lacking at so many levels. It is something that needs to be addressed on a citywide basis. Traffic is the issue most talked about. She said it sometimes takes her 30 minutes to go from her house to the South Bellevue Community Center, a distance of only two miles. It is not just those who live and work in Eastgate, it is the surrounding areas. It is known that there is cut-through traffic from the south end of the county over to 150th Avenue SE trying to avoid I-405. There is also cut-through traffic on Newport Way that impacts the Eastgate area. People in Factoria, many of whom work at T-Mobile, use different church parking lots in the Eastgate area, which brings in additional traffic. Part of the problem is the limited options for getting across the freeway; more overpasses are needed.

Chair Hilhorst noted that 13 hands were raised in support.

Mr. Todd Woosley, PO Box 3325, spoke representing the Kramer family. He spoke in favor of the alternative feasible zoning code. He agreed that traffic in the area is awful and said he hates congestion as much as anyone. It will be necessary to work together to solve the issues. He said the state has agreed to fund a pair of new lanes on I-90 between Eastgate and Issaquah. The project, which was not anticipated by the CAC, is in design and will help to relieve the morning and evening commutes. It is not the only improvement needed, however. The intersections that have been identified in city plans need to be improved, but there is no funding currently identified for them. The Council is considering a levy that would in part generate funds for transportation improvements, and there will be three open houses next week. He said he would not be supporting the project for the Eastgate RV site if it did not fit in. Statistically, the potential half-second delay at intersections is not the problem. He shared with the Commission a short video showing how the proposed project would fit in with the NMU zoning. He noted there would be up to 75 affordable units and many more market-rate units. The site is one of two that was identified in the CAC report as having become economically obsolete. The site is nicely buffered from the neighbors by the existing trees. The existing city right-of-way on the property could be improved to provide access to the Mountains to Sound Greenway. He also shared with the Commissioners a rendering showing what a project with an FAR of 2.5 could look like.

Chair Hilhorst noted five hands raised in support.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and the motion carried unanimously.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

(9:01 p.m. to 9:05 p.m.)

### 13. STUDY SESSION

A. Proposed Land Use Code Amendments: Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project

(9:05 p.m.)

Chair Hilhorst reported that given the time the study session would be postponed to the Commission meeting on July 13.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

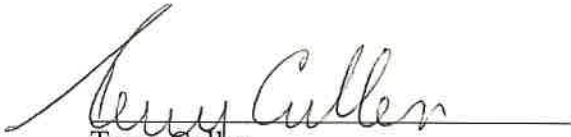
(9:06 p.m.)

15. ADJOURN

(9:07)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner deVadoss and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Hilhorst adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

  
Terry Cullen  
Staff to the Planning Commission

  
Date

  
Michelle Hilhorst  
Chair of the Planning Commission

  
Date

