

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

January 23, 2008
7:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Robertson, Vice-Chair Bach, Commissioners Ferris, Lai, Mathews, Orrico, Sheffels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Michael Bergstrom, Emil King, Radhika Nair, Department of Planning and Community Development; Phyllis Varner, Utilities Department

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Robertson who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Lai who arrived at 7:25 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram offered to take comments from the Commissioners regarding the draft stormwater management program during Old Business.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Inghram said June 25 has been selected as a potential retreat date.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Lisa Brandenburg, Chief Administrative Officer for Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, said the organization is pursuing the purchase of a city-owned property in the Bel-Red corridor to the northeast of Overlake Medical Center. She said the organization has as part of its strategic plan the goal of improving access to services and bringing services closer to the patients. The intent is to construct a major outpatient center on the site offering as many as 20 different pediatric subspecialties and outpatient surgery. The support from the community to date has been very strong. Children's has close partnerships with both Overlake and Group Health as well as with a number of pediatricians on the Eastside. The plan is to develop in two phases, with the first phase being a building large enough to accommodate five years' worth of growth. The intent is to have the building constructed and operational within a two-year period.

Mr. Patrick Gordon with Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects said he is working with Children's Hospital on the design for the Eastside facility. He said the site, which is the former jail site off of 116th Avenue NE, is currently zoned Office and Light Industrial, though the preferred plan shows the site as appropriate for office and medical office uses. The plan is to construct the facility in two phases, with the objective of being operational in 24 months. There are two prime issues that need to be addressed. The first is the issue of timing relative to the entitlement and planning work necessary before construction can begin in early 2009. The second issue is the need for flexibility, specifically a land use designation and zoning overlay for the site similar to the medical institution zone which allows for increased height and density and specific medical uses.

Ms. Pamela Toelle, 14845 NE 13th Street, directed her comments to the triangle area of the Bel-Red study area and said the area is in no way connected with the Bel-Red subarea; it was included in the Bel-Red corridor study by administrative decision. The land is in fact in the Crossroads neighborhood. Institutions redraw boundaries over time, but such actions cause disruptions. Redrawing the boundaries for the triangle area will have the same effect and will impact local residents. The area is historically, geographically and economically tied to Crossroads. The study committee proposed no change in the land use and suggested the area should be allowed to develop under the existing Crossroads plan. The Planning Commission should recommend to the City Council that the triangle area remain in the Crossroads subarea. With regard to transportation, she observed that improvements for the areas of Bel-Red/Overlake area that will be most impacted, namely 148th Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road, and 148th Avenue NE and NE 20th Street, are not proposed until 2014-2020. She agreed with the need to cooperate with the city of Redmond.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None
7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS
8. STUDY SESSION
 - A. Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan

Project Manager Michael Bergstrom said there are two fundamental elements associated with the work to develop a plan for the Meydenbauer Bay park. First is the creation of a significant waterfront park on Meydenbauer Bay intended to be a communitywide asset. Second is a land use component intended to connect the park once it is completed to the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods; the second component involves looking at land uses that lie adjacent to the park boundary.

Mr. Bergstrom shared with the Commissioners a map depicting Downtown Park, Wildwood Park, and the publicly owned Meydenbauer Bay Park area. He noted that Meydenbauer Beach Park exists to the west, and all of the properties to the east that are highlighted on the map, including the marina, are now under city ownership.

The first property to be acquired by the city was the Meydenbauer Beach Park site; that came under city ownership in the 1950s. No additional acquisitions were made until the 1990s when there were several purchases made leading to a quarter mile contiguous stretch along the shoreline totaling about ten acres of land. All acquisitions have been from willing sellers. The two most recently acquired properties are the Bayview Village Apartments and the property just

to the west of 99th Avenue NE (the Cich property).

Planning for the project was kicked off in 2007. The Council adopted a land use moratorium on roughly a dozen parcels in the planning area as many of the older properties were starting to redevelop, primarily involving the conversion of apartments to condominiums. The intent of the moratorium was to allow the city time to look at land use strategies that could entice those property owners to redevelop in a manner that would yield public spaces or other public benefits that would help support the park use.

The City Council appointed a steering committee in March 2007 and adopted a set of planning principles for the project. In April a consultant team was hired. Several public outreach meetings were conducted, and by September some preliminary alternatives were produced.

The preliminary alternatives are very conceptual and were designed to display an array of choices. They set the possible character, intensity of development and different approaches to entering the park from Main Street and 100th Avenue NE. They also identify possible areas for redevelopment of older structures. Each of the alternatives includes a concept for the waterfront park, though at the time the alternatives were delivered to the steering committee the focus of that group was on land use, primarily because of the need to work through those issues before the land use moratorium expired at the end of January 2008.

In December a hybrid alternative was developed. The committee expressed a desire to investigate the possibilities for public access through the upper block area, either visual or pedestrian. The group discussed the types of redevelopment that might need to occur in order to bring that about. After a fair amount of market and view analysis, the committee concluded that there is not a lot of view to be gained for a variety of reasons, and that the level of economic incentive necessary to convince property owners to redevelop their properties would be substantial. The notion of increased density that would result in increased building heights as an incentive was very controversial. Ultimately the steering committee concluded efforts relative to the upper block should be put into the surrounding street system instead.

A different set of circumstances exists in the area south of Main Street. Within this block there are two condominium buildings. Between them is the Chevron station on Main Street, then to the south is one of the Bayview Village Apartment parcels, and further south is the Meydenbauer Apartments. The Chevron and the Meydenbauer Apartment properties could redevelop in the foreseeable future.

The plan presented to the steering committee in December includes closing 100th Avenue NE/Bellevue Place SE to traffic and absorbing it into the pedestrian corridor between the future park and the downtown.

The main focus for the upper block is to improve the pedestrian experience along the rights-of-way, much of which could occur within the rights-of-way through the incorporation of better signage, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, surfacing, artwork and other amenities. The committee wants to pursue some redevelopment incentives, not to a degree that would result in significantly more density and taller buildings, but possibly enough to tip the balance for a property owner looking for options to be pulled in the direction of full site redevelopment rather than converting an existing building to a new use, all in exchange for a public amenity along the street edge.

The committee at its January meeting reached consensus regarding the area south of Main Street. What they would like to see happen is the facilitated redevelopment involving the Chevron property, the Bayview Apartments, and the Meydenbauer Apartments in exchange for creating

public benefits that would essentially extend the park experience up through private property through the creation of terraces, view overlooks, and linking the Downtown Park to the waterfront through the use of water features. Some retail would be allowed further south than currently allowed in order to activate the public space. Some increase in density would be required, controlled through FAR; existing height limits would not be increased. The steering committee expressed a desire to investigate the development of shared underground parking for the properties, which could add parking for the park use itself.

The steering committee is looking at the possibility of changing the design character of Meydenbauer Way SE as it wraps around the south edge of the block; the area would have more of a pedestrian feel with surface treatment and landscaping. The roadway would no longer connect with Bellevue Place SE. It will be necessary to make sure there is adequate provision for emergency and service vehicle access.

The primary concerns for the neighborhood are access, congestion, surrounding development in the works already, existing traffic volumes on Main Street, and left-turn movements across Main Street. The fire department believes it will have adequate access provided all of the street standards are maintained. The transportation department does not see the closure of 100th Avenue SE as a major issue; those who use the route currently will need to find another way to cross Main Street. They have looked at installing all-way stops on Main Street, replacing the signal at 102nd Avenue NE; their modeling shows that would actually improve the traffic flow substantially over current conditions. Although it is physically possible to keep 100th Avenue SE open, that would eliminate interaction between both sides of the street.

Mr. Bergstrom said the consensus of the steering committee regarding land use included a list of deferred issues, each of which will be addressed going forward. The list includes final design details for a closed 100th Avenue NE leading to the park, and what will happen to the property to the west of that road. There is some interest in having a landscape treatment or form of some kind to create an edge to help frame and anchor the entry to the park. The Vue Condominium, formerly the Imperial Apartments, gets access from the lower corner where the road now terminates, so it will be necessary to make sure they will retain access in one form or another.

The moratorium will expire on January 30 and the Council sees no compelling reason to extend it. There is now a land use vision on the table that may entice people to want to wait before investing in their properties. The steering committee will not meet in February and March to allow staff and the consultants to catch up on some technical work. When the committee starts meeting again the focus will be on the park planning process itself. At the conclusion of the process there will be Parks and Community Services Board discussions and hearings on the park master plan, with subsequent Council adoption, and Planning Commission discussions and hearings on the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code amendments and subsequent Council adoption.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bach, Mr. Bergstrom said the city only owns a part of the area designated on the map for residential development. The actual mechanism for developing the site has yet to be worked out, but the city will want to provide sufficient economic incentive to the two adjoining properties.

Commissioner Ferris said attendance at the steering committee by the public has been steady. Some of the early concerns were increased heights, especially in the upper block area but also in the lower block area. There has been quite a bit of concern voiced by the public about closing off

100th Avenue SE. The committee has spent a great deal of time talking about parking. People are concerned about having a concentration of parking because it will bring more traffic into an already congested area. There have also been differences of opinion as to what the park should ultimately be, including whether the boat moorage should be retained. It is unlikely that a solution will be found that will make all parties happy.

Commissioner Sheffels pointed out that when the area adjacent to the Botanical Gardens was up for development a public competition was held to select the architect most qualified to mesh the buildings with the park. She asked if there would be any reason to look at taking a similar approach for the development adjacent to the Meydenbauer Bay Park. Mr. Bergstrom said that approach could be considered.

Commissioner Ferris noted that the site marked “potential building” on the map has raised some eyebrows on the committee. Most seem to think the site offers an excellent opportunity to create a large plaza with a grand vista looking out over the lake.

B. Draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan

Mr. Inghram briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the boundaries of the subarea. He noted that the area is home to a number of significant light industrial tenants, including Safeway, and is adjacent to both the downtown and the Overlake area of Redmond, both of which are seeing significant growth. Accordingly, the 900-acre site is ideally situated.

Mr. Inghram indicated on the map the site selected by Children’s Hospital for their proposed Eastside facility.

Commissioner Ferris asked if Children’s Hospital would otherwise require a Comprehensive Plan amendment if the Bel-Red effort were not under way. Mr. Inghram said Children’s is in the process of sorting out how big the first phase should be, how many square feet and how tall it needs to be. Both from a land use and building size perspective, it is logical to conclude that a change from the Light Industrial zoning is needed and would be needed even if Bel-Red were not on the table. Their timing will be best accommodated because Bel-Red is under discussion.

Mr. Inghram reminded the Commission that the vision of the steering committee for the corridor is for an extraordinary and unique place. They envisioned an area with a concentration of housing and office, though to a lesser degree than what the downtown has. The area offers an opportunity for environmental sustainability, and an opportunity to create new neighborhoods and nodes supported by transit and other modes of transportation and supported by parks and open space amenities.

Mr. Inghram said the current focus is on how to take the steering committee vision and translate it into a subarea plan. Staff has been working to align the bubble diagram with specific parcels; has developed a preliminary street grid with a smaller block size for the local streets that avoids having an excessive number of arterial intersections and stream crossings.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Sheffels, Mr. Inghram said the initial thinking is that the policies developed should be specific to the Bel-Red corridor and not applicable citywide. He added, however, that the door has not been closed to applying the ideas to some other area in the future. The "slash N" designation on the map is intended to denote the nodes; the zoning designation will apply only in Bel-Red.

Mr. Inghram said staff is still talking about how the Children's Hospital parcel fits with the medical office designation to the north, which is not yet fully defined. To the south there would be a higher intensity area with higher allowed height limits that could be achieved only through the incentive system. The node area is relative small compared against the others because the station area is less certain; there are two possible locations, both of which are dependent on how light rail comes out of the downtown. One is near the crossing of I-405 at the north end of the Overlake Hospital site; the other is on the back side of Whole Foods. When the station location is defined, it may be necessary to do a subsequent Comprehensive Plan amendment focused on the node area around the station.

The node in what Wright Runstad has dubbed the Spring District is centered around a potential station at 122nd Avenue NE. It has an odd shape in recognition of the fact that there are several large parcels in the area, some of which have uses which have indicated no desire to redevelop. The vision for the core area includes a 150-foot height limit, whereas the non-core area would have a height limit of 125 feet.

Commissioner Ferris noted that one node is earmarked for mixed use/office, which allows for residential uses, while another is marked medical office. He suggested that the lines between office and medical office can be quite gray and asked how the city will be able to determine the difference and enforce the restriction over time once the buildings are occupied. Mr. Inghram explained that to some extent there is an overlap between all of the nodes. In the nodes that will be primarily residential, there may still be an allowance for some amount of office use to occur. Overall, the Land Use Code relative to the opportunities for uses, their sizes and how the uses are treated will be different in the different nodes.

Senior Planner Emil King said as the Zoning Code is flushed out it may be that both office and medical office will be allowed on the 116th Avenue NE corridor, possibly with a slightly different FAR allowance for each node. Medical office has a natural tendency to want to locate close to the hospital and that trend is expected to carry on into the future.

Commissioner Ferris said one way to incent medical office would be to allow them an increased FAR. Without such incentives, the natural forces of the market could end up pushing out medical uses from the very place the city wants them. Mr. King said the vision of the steering committee for the 116th Avenue NE corridor favored medical office without precluding other types of office uses. He agreed that careful attention will need to be given to the area when drafting the Land Use Code provisions.

Mr. Inghram allowed that a mixed use designation can serve to let the market determine which of the allowed uses should be built and when. The market ebbs and flows; during some years it

wants office, and during other years it wants housing. Of course the city could elect to take a more directive approach favoring one use over another. That is one of the questions that will be specifically discussed when the work focuses on the Land Use Code. The Comprehensive Plan language should state the long-term vision for the area; as drafted, the language calls for mixed use with a greater focus on office.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if there is definition of mixed use. Mr. Inghram said there is but added that the term is open as to whether the mix should be determined on a voluntary basis or by mandate.

Mr. King said a mix of uses can be encouraged through a master planning process for large parcels, but there are phasing mechanisms that can be used to encourage office and housing to occur in lock step.

Mr. Inghram said the node around 130th Avenue NE is envisioned to have housing and retail mixed use, with housing as the predominant use. The area outlined in red on the map would have a greater pedestrian and retail emphasis. To the south along Bel-Red Road would have retail and housing uses, and along Northup Way the focus would be on commercial uses.

Commissioner Ferris suggested that the node will need to maintain a sufficient number of jobs during the day to keep the retailers from dying on the vine in the predominantly residential area. Mr. Inghram said the steering committee envisioned a relatively modest retail square footage. Mr. King said there is a significant amount of existing retail in the area but said the issue of what happens there during the daytime hours is a point well taken.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that the retail street connects to 130th Avenue NE going north into the residential neighborhood. With a transit station at the node, it can be anticipated that there would be a fair number of people coming through connecting to the residential neighborhood or the transit station. The commercial activity on NE 20th Street will also play a role in activating the area during the day.

Mr. Inghram said the area to the east of the node is planned to continue operating as a commercial area similar to the existing General Commercial zone. MURH, which stands for mixed use/retail housing, would be similar to the Community Business zone. In the middle of the triangular area is Highland Community Park.

Mr. Inghram said there have been discussions with the Arts Commission regarding the designation of an arts district. He noted that details are still being worked out with regard to definition and how the area would function.

The node at 156th Avenue NE includes a light rail station on the Redmond side of the line. On the Bellevue side of the line the node would include a mix of housing and retail uses.

Chair Robertson asked why the area is being pulled into Bel-Red instead of leaving it in Crossroads. Mr. Inghram said the primary reason is the relationship with the light rail station and

the redevelopment opportunities that come along with it. There is value in having all of the light rail planning opportunities gathered into a single plan. Additionally, the vision for Bel-Red includes a new set of land use and zoning categories applicable only to the one subarea. The proposal includes the notion of redrawing the subarea boundaries to take the area out of Crossroads and place it in Bel-Red; an amendment to the Wilburton subarea would be needed as well.

Mr. King added that the steering committee spent a lot of time talking about the area. It has some unique locational characteristics in that it is within Bellevue but is next to a part of Redmond for which significant redevelopment is being planned. The current zoning on the larger triangular area is Office and Community Business. The comment of Ms. Toelle that the current recommendation is similar to the current zoning is applicable primarily to the height limits recommended by the steering committee, which is 45 feet along 156th Avenue NE, with up to 60 feet in the area currently zoned Community Business. The steering committee included in its recommendation allowing an FAR of up to 2.5, which is different from the existing zoning.

Commissioner Sheffels commented that the land slopes significantly to the west. The height limit of 60 down the hill will not exceed the heights of 45 feet on the far eastern portion.

Commissioner Ferris observed that the downtown area has long been encumbered by the superblock layout. He stressed the need to establish smaller street grids within the node areas. Assistant Planner Radhika Nair said the typical block size is around 320 feet for the 156th Avenue NE node. Mr. King said the 130th Avenue NE node street grid is between 300 and 320 feet; the block size at the 122nd Avenue NE node is between 350 and 375 feet. Mr. Inghram added that the street grid has been applied in accordance with the parcel layout. The parcel lines cannot be followed exactly because so many of them stagger, but by roughly following them there can be a logical progression of parcels redeveloping and filling out the street grid.

Mr. Inghram stressed that there will likely be tweaks to the land use map as the subarea plan process moves ahead. There are ongoing talks internally with regard to how the land use map will translate to a zoning map. He allowed that there may be some phasing of the zoning over time.

Turning to the policies, Mr. Inghram said the general policies attempt to capture the overarching themes for the subarea plan using a temporary numbering system. He briefly reviewed policies A-1 through A-4 and asked the Commissioners for comments.

Commissioner Orrico pointed out that the city is not necessarily looking at light rail. She suggested that the language of A-2 should be loosened to identify transit but not necessarily light rail. She said the other policies do a very good job of capturing the intent of the steering committee.

Commissioner Sheffels agreed to be less specific in A-2. Commissioner Mathews said he did not want to lose the concept altogether and suggested "...brought about by possible light rail transit..." Mr. Inghram proposed including specific reference to both transit and light rail and

the Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Bach questioned use of the term “new economy business” in the policies. Mr. King said the term generally refers to dynamic businesses such as software and biotech. Such businesses are locating in dense areas or downtowns that historically have been home to retail, banks and offices. There is a fair amount of video gaming businesses locating in Redmond, and they are considered new economy businesses. Mr. Inghram said staff could make an attempt to find a more easily understood term.

Commissioner Sheffels suggested that there should be policy language aimed at retaining and enhancing the medical center that is so much a part of the Bel-Red area.

Mr. Inghram said the nine land use policies offer more specifics. They focus some of the themes shown on the bubble map, such as the nodal development patterns around the light rail station opportunities. They recognize higher development intensity and height within the nodes.

Commissioner Ferris raised the hypothetical situation of a large existing distribution warehouse undergoing adaptive reuse in which the existing building is converted to accommodate a completely different use and asked if that would be permitted. Mr. Inghram allowed that staff has not fully thought through how conversion to a new use in an existing building would occur under the new policies. He noted that Policy G-5 encourages arts uses as appropriate transitional uses for existing buildings or areas as Bel-Red evolves over time.

Mr. King said generally adaptive reuse is a good thing. City Hall is a good example of an adaptive reuse. The overall direction of the steering committee on the light industrial issue was that they did not want to have any new light industrial uses come into the corridor, bringing with them noise and traffic impacts that would not be compatible with the new vision for the area. Staff certainly needs to put more thought into the practice, however.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lai, Mr. King said the particulars regarding an existing use being allowed to rebuilt following a catastrophic event will be hammered out in the Land Use Code. With regard to an existing light industrial use changing ownership, he noted that the steering committee did not talk a lot about that but were generally wanting to be lenient about allowing existing light industrial uses to continue on for as long as they want to. Mr. Inghram added that where a change of use is contemplated for an existing building, it must go through a land use permitting procedure that could potentially trigger requirements for conforming to the new policies and code.

Commissioner Lai asked what regulations would govern a new building constructed to replace an existing light industrial-use building that burned to the ground. Mr. King said zoning will be phased in throughout the corridor; it will not occur overnight. It would make sense for the light industrial and service uses reconstructions to have fairly similar density and dimensional standards to what the existing light industrial zone.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that the use on the Cadman site is an existing nonconforming use. If it

were to be destroyed, it would be treated somewhat differently.

Commissioner Ferris asked if the owner of an existing engine repair use would be allowed to redevelop his property under the new zoning and keep their engine repair business. Mr. Inghram said those are the kinds of issues that will need to be wrestled with as the Land Use Code provisions are crafted.

Turning to the urban design policies, Mr. King observed that currently there are some nice buildings in the area along with some good pedestrian features, but there are at the same time a number of areas in need of improvement. The goal is to make the corridor into an aesthetically beautiful and distinctive place with a strong sense of Bellevue and the Northwest. The urban design policies are important in that they will help guide the overall development of the corridor; they will be used to write the density and dimensional standards for the Land Use Code, and will be the impetus for the new design guidelines for the corridor. He reviewed the policies with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ferris suggested that in order to see vibrancy in each of the node areas it will be necessary to have a lot of shared touches by the various uses. He suggested using the term "...shared use placemaking..." instead of "...deliberate placemaking..." in C-1. Mr. King said language could be added to reaffirm taking that approach.

Commissioner Orrico referred to policies C-1 and C-6 and asked what is meant by use of the word "permanence." Mr. King said the general idea refers to the buildings and plaza/open space areas are done in a way to give the impression that it will be there for more than just a few years.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if design review could be used to accomplish the look and feel of permanence. Mr. King said staff will be bringing forward some potentially innovative techniques to encourage permanence.

Commissioner Orrico suggested that the issue of sustainability should be added to policy C-4.

Commissioner Ferris proposed encouraging in policy C-5 a variety of roofline treatments to avoid having several buildings side by side with identical square tops. Mr. King agreed that should be spelled out, especially in the design guidelines.

Mr. King suggested that the term "Northwest provenance" in the first sentence of policy C-7 could use some refinement. He said the intent is to encourage development that has a Northwest feel.

With regard to policy C-8, Commissioner Sheffels asked if there is a definition for "solar access" and if so if it is tied to the numbers per day or time of year. Mr. King said there are a variety of tools available to planners that offer a view to how a certain building will catch the light and where it will cast shadows. The general idea is not to put a prime public plaza on the side of a building that will rob it of the opportunity to have open sunlight.

Commissioner Ferris called attention to policy C-9 and noted that in the downtown incentives are offered to build structured parking, something the land costs dictate anyway. He suggested that the city should require structured parking in the nodes and save incentives for other things.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if the transit nodes themselves will determine if there will be structured parking just for the transit use. Commissioner Ferris suggested that that is a significant question. In most cases the nodes should not be a park and ride destinations for commuters, yet there will need to be some provision made for getting to and from transit locations for those who live outside the area. Commissioner Sheffels suggested that a policy regarding parking in association with transit stations is needed.

Chair Robertson commented that the Light Rail Best Practices committee members who recently toured light rail systems in San Jose and San Diego were informed that park and ride lots are key to the success of the light rail systems.

Mr. King informed the Commissioners that within the transit development nodes there likely will be maximum parking ratios established that will be somewhat lower than the suburban standard of five per thousand or so.

Commissioner Orrico asked if policy C-10 will prohibit building-top signage outright. Mr. King said that is the intent for the taller buildings. Chair Robertson suggested that such signs might be acceptable in certain corridors, such as along the freeway.

Mr. King noted that policy C-11 generally supports the use of public art, adding that the policy will be bolstered by a set of culture and arts policies.

Chair Robertson observed that as drafted policy C-11 could be interpreted to mean that the private and public sectors are encouraged to use public art rather than install or incorporate public art.

Commenting on the fact that the city does not currently own all the right-of-way that will be needed to construct NE 16th Street through the corridor, Commissioner Sheffels asked if there will be any policy language aimed at trying to keep existing businesses in the area as the right-of-way is acquired and uses move. Mr. Inghram said the city is holding out the hope and promise that it will be able to work cooperatively with properties as they redevelop. Policy language aimed at keeping displaced businesses in the corridor could be risky to include.

Commissioner Ferris suggested that "pedestrian functionality" as used in policy C-12 seems rather dry. Mr. King agreed to take another look at it. Commissioner Ferris also pointed out that if the blocks are built to the right size, midblock crossings will not be needed. Mr. King agreed but said they might be needed in some areas, so having the language in place would be a good idea.

Mr. Inghram said an open house is scheduled for January 31 at City Hall. Copies of the subarea plan and maps will be on display, and some of the key principles will be highlighted in an

attempt to garner public feedback. The next Commission discussion regarding the Bel-Red subarea policies will be focused on housing. A panel discussion with both for-profit and non-profit housing developers will be pulled together to offer insight to the Commission with regard to the mix of incentives.

On February 27 representatives from all of the boards and commissions working on the Bel-Red subarea plan will meet with the Planning Commission. They will offer comments with regard to the sections of the plan they are focused on. In March and April attention will be given to the Land Use Code and the design guidelines. Another joint boards and commissions meeting will be slated for the second quarter of 2008. The Commission will also need to hold a public hearing before forwarding a recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Inghram proposed holding an additional Commission meeting on February 6 in order to keep on schedule. It was agreed to tentatively schedule the extra meeting for that date.

Commissioner Ferris commented that there are a number of housing incentive tools being used in the San Francisco and Seattle areas that Bellevue may want to investigate. If Bellevue is going to model its strategies on the tools used by other cities, they should at least be tools that have proven to be effective.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Robertson commented that other boards and commissions are served food prior to their meetings. Mr. Inghram said those groups that begin at 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. do have a light supper provided. He said he would be willing to investigate how providing a meal to the Planning Commission would fit into the budget, and noted that the Commission is always free to adjust its starting time.

Commissioner Sheffels observed that the official starting time for the Commission has always been 7:00 p.m. In years past, however, when the schedule was full the Commission has elected to start an hour earlier, and on those occasions a meal was provided. She said she would be happy to see the meetings start earlier if that would mean getting out earlier.

It was agreed to put the issue on a future agenda for discussion.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Phyllis Varner, of the Utilities Department, reminded the Commissioners that a public meeting on the draft stormwater management plan was held on January 9. At that time it was decided that the Commission should have more opportunity to review the document and provide comments or recommendations to the Environmental Services Commission.

Commissioner Ferris commented that the plan appears to be prescriptive and mandated, leaving little room for input. Ms. Phyllis explained that the plan has direct ties to the Shoreline Master Program, and the plan will also directly impact redevelopment in the upcoming years.

Mr. Inghram allowed that the Commission has not begun its review of the Shoreline Master Program yet. The fact that the stormwater management plan will also have an impact on the redevelopment of parcels should also be of interest to the Commission, though there is little flexibility in how the federal mandates are applied.

At the direction of the Commission, Mr. Inghram agreed that staff would draft a letter acknowledging the involvement of the Planning Commission in both the study session and the public hearing for the stormwater management plan, and indicating that the Commission had no specific comments.

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 6, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried without dissent. Commissioner Lai abstained from voting.

B. January 9, 2008

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Orrico. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried without dissent. Commissioner Lai abstained from voting.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Walter Scott with ((inaudible)) Commercial commented that the issues of diversity, neighborhood texture and pedestrian linkages are intertwined with each other. He noted that during the Bel-Red corridor study steering committee process there were calls from the public for the city to be as flexible as possible in determining zoning designations for the various areas. History has shown in places like Ballard in Seattle and the Pearl District in Portland that when left to their own devices developers will create diverse environments purely for economic reasons. He said his company owns two parcels in the corridor, one of which is in a node area across from Overlake Hospital. If the concern is that the site will develop with offices for high tech uses rather than medical office, the way to promote it is to reduce the restriction on maximum parking and allow higher height and a greater FAR for medical uses, given that medical uses operate under different physical constraints. The other property owned by his company in the corridor is to the north of the Wright Runstad property on 120th Avenue NE. That area has a beautiful view of the Metro bus maintenance facility and under the proposal will be zoned residential. Given that the maintenance facility will not be an optimal view for residents, the better move will be to convert the site to retail uses. What is needed is the maximum amount of flexibility possible with the zoning designations.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 10:11 p.m.

Paul Ingram
Staff to the Planning Commission

3/26/2008
Date

Jennifer Robertson
Chair to the Planning Commission

3/26/08
Date