

City of Bellevue
Wilburton Commercial Area
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

July 6, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-108

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeremy Barksdale, Sarah Chong, Shari Einfalt, Jay Hamlin, Matt Jack, Chris Johnson, Debra Kumar, James McEachran, Andrew Pardoe Daniel Renn, Alison Washburn, Don Weintraub

MEMBERS ABSENT: Glen Griswold, Maria Lau Hui, Lei Wu

OTHERS PRESENT: Bradley Calvert - *Department of Planning and Community Development*, Kevin McDonald – *Transportation Department*, Ariel Davis – *Fehr & Peers*, Chris Brieland – *Fehr & Peers*, Lisa Grueter – *BERK Consulting*

RECORDING SECRETARY: Audio Recording, transcribed by Bradley Calvert

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Co-chair Barksdale.

Co-chair Barksdale asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda.

- ❖ **Action Item:** *Mr. Pardoe motioned to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamlin. The agenda was unanimously approved.*

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Co-chair Barksdale asked if there were any comments regarding the meeting minutes from the June 1st, 2017 meeting. There were no comments.

- ❖ **Action Item:** *Mr. Pardoe made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 1st, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamlin. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.*

3. Communication with Boards, Commissions, Stakeholders, Public, and Meeting Updates

Mr. Calvert stated that staff would be presenting at City boards and commissions over the coming weeks regarding the release of the Draft *Grand Connection Framework Plan* for sequence one of the work. He stated that the plan was available online for review. Ms. Kumar asked if staff would be sharing feedback about the plan with the Committee. Mr. Calvert responded that staff would share following the Committee's August break. Ms. Kumar asked if the comments were posted online. Mr. Calvert responded that they were not and were received via mail or email.

4. Public Comment

Ian Morrison stated that he was present on behalf of the Morelli family and the Eastridge Corporate Center. He stated that he wanted to follow up on the discussion on the height and density concepts south of Main Street. Mr. Morrison stated that they supported the Committee's desire to create a southern node in support of transit oriented development opportunities. He stated that the Committee seemed concerned about height. Mr. Morrison stated that Eastridge Corporate Center site could satisfy the Committee's needs and concerns regarding this portion of the study area.

Mr. Morrison stated that the site (Eastridge Corporate Center) was in the walkshed of two light rail stations. He stated that it was a site that would really leverage a transit oriented development investment. Mr. Morrison referenced the southern edge of the property and the Committee's concern on the impact of building height. He stated that the topography would allow the building height to nestle into its change of grade and could support the vibrancy of residential uses compatible with the park and walkability of the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Morrison asked the Committee to consider the heights of 120' to 160' for their area within the Wilburton Commercial Area in support of a southern node, leveraging transit-oriented development, and taking advantage of topography.

Gardner Morelli stated that he was speaking on behalf of the Morelli family. He stated that they believed that their property could achieve the goals and objectives of the Committee while mitigating concerns. Mr. Morelli stated that their property has the topography that would allow a building height and scale that still supports the vision of the Committee. He stated that they heard the Committee's concerns about the perception of height east of 118th Avenue NE, and that they agreed it may not be appropriate for taller buildings. Mr. Morelli stated, however, the Eastridge Corporate Center site was unique because of its topography and vegetation. He stated that the sloping site would allow them to take advantage of greater heights that would be less perceptible. Mr. Morelli stated that at the September Committee meeting they would present additional information on how they would develop the property in line with a future vision.

Steve Kramer stated that he represented KG Investment Properties and owned the sites between NE 6th Street and the Trader Joes. He stated that they have had several meetings about making the case for at grade crossings for the Eastside Rail Corridor with the County and the City. Mr. Kramer stated that he wanted to talk about throughputs on sites. He stated that their concept included the Grand Connection bisecting their site and a 40' elevation change between 116th Avenue NE and the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Kramer stated that their goals were to activate the Eastside Rail Corridor and that the Grand Connection should meet the goals of connecting through the site.

Mark Woerman stated his comments regarded block permeability. He stated that the KG site provides unique opportunities to allow the Grand Connection to meet the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Woerman stated that the grade change between 116th Avenue NE and the Eastside Rail Corridor created challenges and their concept of the Grand Connection flying over and meeting their potential podium and Eastside Rail Corridor could create the hallmark location in the study area. He stated that he sees the connection being activated on both sides with retail and plazas. Mr. Woerman stated that the relationship with 116th Avenue NE will also be very important. He stated that additional block permeability on their property would only diminish the vitality that is possible with the Grand Connection and Eastside Rail Corridor.

T.J. Woosley stated that he represented Brierwood Center across from the Spring District. He stated that their property is within the walkshed of two light rail stations. Mr. Woosley stated that he wanted to encourage the Committee to consider all of the potential transportation projects that could occur as part of the performance measures and the SEPA process. He stated that included changes to I-405, 124th Avenue NE, NE 2nd Street and more. Mr. Woosley encouraged that these projects be included so to not constrain the opportunities in the Wilburton Commercial Area.

5. Tactical Urbanism Projects

Co-chair Barksdale stated that he wanted the Committee to discuss their ideas in greater depth and to assess feasibility. He stated that he wanted to narrow the projects down to one project per team. Mr. Pardoe stated that he was inspired by the Bicycle Sunday event on Lake Washington Boulevard in Seattle. He stated that the event allows users to bicycle along the I-90 corridor and down to Seward Park and would close Lake Washington Boulevard to car traffic. Mr. Pardoe stated that these events attract people from all over and that a similar opportunity existed in linking the Downtown Bellevue Park to the Eastside Rail Corridor in some form of a protected route. He stated that getting across the highway would be the biggest challenge due to the unfriendly crossings.

Mr. Jack stated their idea was to activate the Eastside Rail Corridor just south of NE 8th Street. He stated that bringing in food, seating, and music could create a vibrant experience that is desired for the study area. Mr. Jack stated that it would also present an opportunity to consider the crossing of NE 8th Street by creating a temporary at grade crossing and provide their feedback on how to navigate the crossing. Mr. Hamlin stated that their second idea was to use one of the parcels such as the school district bus parking lot for food trucks and other community oriented activities. Mr. Renn stated that he believed anything that happened just south of NE 8th Street would need to happen pretty rapidly because the area would turn into a construction site soon for light rail. Co-chair Barksdale asked when construction would begin. Mr. Hamlin stated that some fencing has already gone up, but there could still be time. Co-chair Barksdale stated that he would categorize the ideas based on opportunities to learn and opportunities to generate excitement to develop a priority list of ideas.

Ms. Washburn stated that her and Ms. Kumar's idea was based on the *Enliven Wilburton!* event that was held in the fall of 2016 and built upon the ideas developed by Mr. Jack and Mr. Hamlin. She stated that the team could replicate the concept to talk about what could come from the project, and the ability to overlook much of the Committee's topics. Ms. Washburn stated it would be fairly easy to execute and could earn multiple wins. Ms. Kumar stated that it could be done on different weekends at different locations. She stated that there could be food trucks, music, and local vendors that could be tied into temporary improvements along 116th Avenue NE. Co-chair Barksdale asked if it would be one event or multiple. Ms. Washburn stated that it was a question of feasibility, and what is most effective and engaging with the community. Mr. McEachran stated that he saw an opportunity for inter-generational activity.

Ms. Chong stated that her and Ms. Lau Hui's idea was to install five to eight art installations throughout the study area. She stated that it encouraged collaboration and could encourage people to visit more parts of the study area. Co-chair Barksdale stated that it wouldn't need to be an event but could be a temporary installation.

Mr. Johnson stated that his team's idea could include ongoing engagement and encounters. He stated that the idea developed from the Grand Connection charrette. Mr.

Johnson stated it would be nice to break the events methods that would break the study area down to a human scale through design concepts. He stated their goal would be to create spaces along the corridor that could break the corridor into small pieces that could encourage chance encounters. Co-chair Barksdale stated that he could see that relating to the art installation as well. Mr. Weintraub stated it would be interesting to incorporate speakers as well to help them see the full vision.

Mr. Renn stated that his team wanted to distribute information to local neighborhoods. He stated that there was an upcoming newsletter for the Wilburton Hill neighborhood and he would like to get something out to them to describe both the goals of the planning effort as well as the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Renn stated that they could effectively reach over 900 residents. He stated that he was also wanting City staff to set up an informational table at the September 10th Wilburton Hill community picnic. Mr. Renn stated it was a chance to speak with 100 to 150 residents. He stated it would also be nice if a member of the Committee were also present.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that the other idea developed by him and Mr. Pardoe was to temporarily close the NE 6th Street bridge to help people better understand the Grand Connection. He stated this could be done over the weekend for a day and could include activities to better understand user expectations of the Grand Connection.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that Mr. Calvert could be a resource for teams, and that there was some synergy to merge ideas. Mr. Calvert stated that the teams could think about what the next steps would be and what resources would be needed. Ms. Kumar stated that she was curious as to when King County would begin rail removal. Mr. Calvert stated that he believed that some locations would potentially see removal later this year. He stated that the Wilburton area would be later because of Sound Transit construction.

Co-chair Barksdale stated it would be a good idea to decide if there were opportunities to combine projects, at the meeting. Ms. Kumar stated that some of the ideas seemed to be transportation improvements and others could be placemaking improvements. Mr. Jack stated that his and Mr. Hamlin's idea would work well to address the Committee's big question of how to cross NE 8th Street. Mr. Hamlin stated that could be linked with the other Eastside Rail Corridor ideas. Mr. Pardoe stated that images could be used to show everyone what the concepts are. Mr. Renn stated that the lights would need to be synchronized due to traffic concerns from the neighborhood if an at grade crossing were to be pursued. Mr. Pardoe stated that a train used to cross there and NE 4th Street didn't exist before and there were no issues. Co-chair Barksdale stated it would make sense for Mr. Jack's teams and Ms. Washburn's teams to merge.

Ms. Washburn stated she liked these ideas because it could really inform the public. She stated that many of the Committee members' ideas have been formed by walking the study area. Ms. Washburn stated that these ideas could get the public walking and think about what could be in the same manner. Co-chair Barksdale asked which of the other ideas could be formed into near term projects. Mr. Renn asked Mr. Calvert if he felt that he could produce the flyers for the neighborhood newsletter. Mr. Calvert stated that the City could produce them. He stated that if thinking about timing and resources the teams should focus on Mr. Jack's idea first. Ms. Kumar stated that it would also be interesting if some of the parking lots would be willing to open up to activation such as food trucks and live music. Co-chair Barksdale stated that seemed like a longer range idea as it is based on excitement. Mr. Johnson stated that the removal of the rails could also create a nexus for a special event.

6. Transportation Discussion on Block Permeability and 116th Avenue NE

Mr. Calvert stated that staff was going to present some updated graphics regarding height and density. He stated that the graphics had been refined and will be part of the Environmental Impact Statement. Mr. Calvert provided a brief overview of the additional topics for the evening.

Mr. Calvert referenced a graphic that showed the refinements based on the discussion from the prior meeting. He acknowledged the Medical District and that despite the color on the graphic it represented a no change from existing built conditions. Mr. Calvert stated that under this concept the entire study area would represent just under 13 millions square feet of development potential.

Mr. Calvert referenced a second graphic, and that the entire study area would represent just under 21 million square feet of development. He stated that these would be the bookends that staff would begin working with for the EIS. Mr. Calvert stated that staff was preparing to launch a second public survey that would pursue responses regarding height, density, character, and other topics. He stated that staff would provide the results of the survey to the Committee at the next meeting. Mr. Hamlin stated that the retail numbers in the charts the Committee received seemed surprising. Mr. Calvert stated that the numbers worked off of the economic analysis and that it represented the market forecast. He stated that Ariel Davis and Chris Breiland would now recap the Committee's last work session on block permeability and 116th Avenue NE.

Mr. Breiland gave a recap of the work session from the last meeting regarding 116th Avenue NE and block permeability and connectivity. He stated it helped the design team develop concepts for the EIS and the sub area plan. Mr. Breiland stated that 116th Avenue NE is a major thoroughfare but there is a strong desire to make it multi-modal in response to future mixed-use development. He referenced a graphic that showed bicycle separation and wide sidewalks that creates a boulevard concept. Mr. Breiland stated that there is 83' of city owned right of way to work with. He stated that a 2015 city plan is a much grander vision at a width of 112'. Mr. Breiland stated that it provides bike lanes and on street parking, creating a boulevard concept. He referenced the work session graphic and that it blended concepts and attempted to fit within the existing right of way. Mr. Breiland stated that the Committee wanted to maintain a left turn lane to provide access to future developments, but also wanted to ensure planted medians were included as much as possible. He stated that the Committee wanted to create a 12' wide multi-use pedestrian and cyclist path. Mr. Breiland stated that the configuration does fit within the right-of-way, but acknowledged that there is precedent for the City to condition developments to provide pedestrian space outside of the right of way. He stated that it was very common in downtown for most sidewalks to be accommodated, in part or in whole.

Mr. Hamlin stated that he continued to consider Mr. Pardoe's previous comment about the trail not serving as a commuting route for cyclist through Wilburton. He stated that he didn't feel as if the Committee had considered that when developing a concept for 116th Avenue NE. Mr. Hamlin stated that it felt like it was a repeat of the Eastside Rail Corridor. He stated that the Committee should consider that the Eastside Rail Corridor will likely support slower biking and that 116th Avenue NE could support faster commuting cyclists. Mr. Pardoe stated that he agreed with that statement. Ms. Kumar stated that she believed that the existing plan looked great, and that if they could

encourage protected bike lanes she would be in support of the existing plan. Mr. Hamlin expressed concern about the width of 116th Avenue NE and asked if it was approximately the same as Bellevue Way. Mr. Breiland stated he would have to check, but he believed that Bellevue Way was slightly narrower. Mr. McDonald stated that NE 8th was likely wider than Bellevue Way.

Ms. Einfalt asked if the Committee believed on street parking was necessary. She stated she had concern when I-405 was backed up and the impact on street parking would have on traffic flowing through 116th Avenue NE. Ms. Kumar stated that if they wanted people to visit the study area parking would be necessary. Ms. Einfalt stated that she would hope they would plan for underground parking. Mr. Pardoe stated that the difference with underground parking is that it is private and there are no walk offs. He stated that if he goes to Seattle he can park on the street for a few hours, visit a store, a bookstore, and had breakfast in three hours without driving to each location. Mr. Pardoe stated that if he wanted to do that in Bellevue he would have to go to REI and park in their lot, and then if he wanted to go to a bookstore he would have to get back in his car and drive again. He stated that Bellevue has almost no common parking and requires users to drive between each business they visit. Ms. Einfalt stated that if the blocks were broken up they could also provide on street parking. She stated she had concern over the access of emergency vehicles when combining parking and traffic congestion.

Mr. Renn stated concern over the lack of access to the Wilburton Commercial Area from the Eastside Rail Corridor if it was intended for most bicycle traffic to be accommodated on the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Hamlin clarified that a multi-use path could still accommodate cyclists. Mr. Renn stated that a shared 12' path wouldn't be sufficient. Ms. Washburn stated that she felt they could provide more space by having the property owners contribute to the public space, and that there was precedent for that in Downtown Bellevue. She stated that she agreed with Mr. Pardoe and that users will still want to get off of the Eastside Rail Corridor and still want to cycle. Ms. Washburn stated more connections would be needed through the neighborhood.

Mr. Weintraub stated that he wanted to see the automobiles slowed down the most. He stated that if he were to be using the area with his child he would want to see the area much different from its current status of car being dominated. Mr. Weintraub stated he liked a wide multi-use path. He asked how the cars can be slowed down for a better shared space. Mr. Breiland stated that the narrower the pavement profile, and the more elements on the edge such as trees, traffic could be slowed.

Mr. Calvert stated that there is precedent for creating more public realm similar to the building sidewalk relationship of downtown. He stated that requirements can be established for sidewalks, planting strips, vegetation, and other urban amenities as a condition of development. Mr. Renn asked if walk off parking could also be required for developments. Mr. Calvert responded that it isn't something that can necessarily be required, but it could be incentivized. Mr. Johnson stated he felt the CAC concept for 116th Avenue NE was a good compromise, and that not all non-motorized transportation had to be accommodated on each street. He stated that some trips could take place between and on parcels and not all require the use of 116th Avenue NE. He stated that 116th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street still had throughput considerations and that speed and reliability needed to be considered.

Co-chair Barksdale stated the bike lane could be accommodated on other levels so that it could accommodate all levels of riders. As an example he stated that the shared path could exist, and there could also be a bike lane in the street. Ms. Kumar stated she

would like to see the streetscapes greener. Mr. Jack agreed with the comment, and that it could assist in calming traffic. Mr. Pardoe stated that raised crosswalks could also help slow traffic at key locations.

Ms. Davis stated that the next topic was block permeability. She stated that the density of connections and how frequent the connections occur was important. Ms. Davis stated that the type of connections were also important in addition to the quantity and density. She stated that they could be pedestrian pathways, alleys that have uses facing upon them, and shared spaces for multiple modes of transportation. Ms. Davis stated that they refined the initial graphic that the Committee generated at the June meeting to accommodate opportunities and challenges in the study area. She described a number of the options that were possible for new connections.

Ms. Davis referenced the updated graphic to address topography and likely development scenarios. She stated that they maintained many of the internal local streets at the heart of the study area that the Committee defined as important. Ms. Davis stated that many of the streets would stop at the Eastside Rail Corridor so to not create additional conflicts. She stated that there was a limited market for the alleys with addresses concept so they were consolidated in a specific location to assist in creating a specific character. Ms. Davis stated that the NE 1st right of way was just outside of the study area, but they considered a pedestrian connection through there to access the elementary school. She asked the Committee if there was feedback to the concepts.

Mr. Pardoe stated that he really liked the alleys with addresses concept. He cited a handful of examples in Bellevue and wanted to really encourage the concept. Mr. Pardoe stated that many of the pedestrian connections in Downtown Bellevue function as private spaces for offices and businesses. He cited the location at NE 2nd and 108th Avenue NE and conflicts with the existing business and obtaining access through the space. He said this was an important element to keep in mind. Mr. Breiland stated that the alleys with addresses were really to be without automobiles and focused on pedestrians to create an intimate and unique space.

Mr. Jack asked how to incentivize a developer to create uses along an alley. Mr. Pardoe stated that they could provide additional density or amenities for creating the alleys with addresses. Mr. Calvert stated that they will address this in implementation and that there are several methods to accomplish these goals, particularly if there is a specific character in a location that is desired. He stated that for this conversation it was important to identify where these things could happen and then discuss how to make them happen.

Ms. Davis asked if the Committee had any thoughts on the path to the school. Mr. Pardoe stated that he really liked the idea and that it could encourage more children to walk to school. Mr. Renn stated that a road through NE 1st would be better to provide access for the students coming from Downtown Bellevue. He stated that he has approached Bellevue City Council and the school district about the street. Mr. Hamlin stated that it is under consideration but cost is prohibitive.

Mr. Pardoe stated that current connectivity is not conducive to pedestrians. He stated to get from directions east or west of the Eastside Rail Corridor a pedestrian would need to walk to NE 8th Street or NE 4th Street and around. He stated right now there was no reason for that connectivity, but the future vision would need better access. Mr. Pardoe stated that until the future vision is further developed it would be difficult to say exactly where those connections could go and what the destinations would be.

Ms. Kumar stated that there is significant change in grade along the Eastside Rail Corridor and asked if stairs to connect had been considered. Mr. Calvert responded that there were certain locations where stairs could provide access to the Eastside Rail Corridor in addition to the Grand Connection. He stated that the grade change is more extreme south of NE 4th Street so it should be considered strategically where those connections occur. Mr. Pardoe highlighted the I-405 cloverleaf, despite it being out of their scope. He stated that it was a great opportunity to create more land by having a more urban interchange. Mr. Calvert stated that was a great point to bring up, and that just because it is beyond the study area that the Committee could not comment or make a recommendation on it.

7. Performance Measures

Mr. Calvert introduced Lisa Grueter from BERK Consulting to talk about performance measures. Ms. Grueter stated that the height and density alternatives that were generated are being incorporated as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. She stated it will include a number of issues such as design and views, but that they would also need to be screened against objectives such as the vision statement.

Ms. Grueter stated that one of the alternatives is a no action, which serves as the baseline under current plans. She stated that it would be compared and contrasted against the two CAC generated alternatives. Ms. Grueter stated that the environmental analysis would be broad, and does not analyze individual sites. She stated that key areas would be considered but not individual properties, or project level review.

Ms. Grueter stated that the three alternatives will be studied for form, open space, growth, and transportation. She provided a description of the growth, building forms, and the transportation improvements that would be analyzed consistent with the citywide Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Grueter stated that all three alternatives will be evaluated with and without a similar transportation system to understand the impacts of growth.

Mr. McDonald stated that the planning horizon is 2035. He stated that for both land use and transportation they will develop a reasonable foreseeable transportation network. Mr. McDonald stated that these projects include roadway capacity projects. He stated that the team looked at projects that have design investment and some level of financial commitment to demonstrate their feasibility to be completed by 2035. He stated that for the Downtown plan the City used a 2030 analysis, and for Wilburton they considered the next sequence of potential projects for 2035. Mr. McDonald stated that there could be other projects the Committee would like to consider, or they could choose not to include certain projects that may not be consistent with their vision for the study area. He stated that the NE 6th Street extension could be one of those projects. Mr. McDonald stated that they did not consider full build out capacity for transportation, as assumptions become unreasonable the further the forecasting goes out, which can include changes in transportation technologies.

Mr. Calvert stated that the Committee will likely hear from many stakeholders why specific transportation projects may or may not be included. He stated that Mr. McDonald explained the need for a reasonable commitment to a project and that the Committee should keep that in mind.

Ms. Grueter stated that since the Committee is still at a high level of evaluating public open space, the team elected to compare some of the concepts to the building form

alternatives as they have been evaluated further. She stated they did not want to try and align a specific strategy as they are still being evaluated, which is also similar to their approach with the Grand Connection.

Ms. Grueter stated that each alternative would also test the impacts on the natural and built environment. She stated that in their original briefing book they had the scope for the EIS. Ms. Grueter stated they were also asked to consider performance measures to bridge back to the Council principles and the subarea plan to evaluate how well the alternatives are meeting these principles. She stated that the performance measures are partially quantitative and partially qualitative. Ms. Grueter highlighted some of those measures and asked if the Committee wanted to provide input on the measures. This included design standards, development intensity, transportation level of service, transit access, and more.

Mr. Calvert stated there would be no meeting in August. He stated that when they return from the break they would be investigating character and aesthetic of the study area including buildings, streets, and open space. Mr. Calvert stated they would also begin discussing implementation. He stated that during their break he encouraged the Committee members to photograph their travels and places they like and don't like, and to bring that back for the September meeting.

8. Adjourn

Co-chair Barksdale adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.