

City of Bellevue  
Wilburton Commercial Area  
Citizen Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2017  
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-112

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeremy Barksdale, Sarah Chong, Glen Griswold, Matt Jack, Chris Johnson, Debra Kumar, Maria Lau Hui, James McEachran, Andrew Pardoe Daniel Renn, Lei Wu, Alison Washburn

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Shari Einfalt, Jay Hamlin, Don Weintraub

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bradley Calvert - *Department of Planning and Community Development*, John Savo – *NBBJ*, Keith Walzak – *NBBJ*, Nate Holland – *NBBJ*, Hannah Keyes – *NBBJ*, Darin Crabill - *NBBJ*

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Audio Recording, transcribed by Bradley Calvert

**1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Co-chair Wu.

Co-chair Wu asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda. Co-chair Barksdale proposed an amendment to the agenda to add an additional 30 minutes to the meeting time.

❖ **Action Item:** *The agenda and amendment were unanimously approved.*

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Co-chair Wu asked if there were any comments regarding the meeting minutes from the March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 meeting. There were no comments

❖ **Action Item:** *Mr. Jack made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. McEachran. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.*

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

Mr. McEachran stated that the Affordable Housing Technical Advisory Group would be taking a report to City Council on the following Monday (March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017). He also stated that the Human Services Commission would begin their needs assessment update in the coming months.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that the Planning Commission was continuing to move forward on Downtown Livability and that they recently held a public hearing. He also stated that the work the Planning Commission was conducting on Downtown Livability would be

applicable to the Wilburton Commercial Area study later. Mr. McEachran asked if that information could be found in the Planning Commission packets. Co-chair Barskdale confirmed that the information could be found in their packets and that there is a project website as well.

Mr. Renn stated that he emailed Jack McLeod of the Bellevue School District and Toni Pratt of the City of Bellevue about the Wilburton Elementary School. He stated that he informed them that the Wilburton Commercial Area could expect a large increase in population and that an entrance to the back of the elementary school would be a good idea. He stated that currently access to the school was entirely on Main Street and that he believed additional access from NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street would be a good idea.

Co-chair Barksdale asked if that could be included as correspondence and Mr. Calvert confirmed that it could be provided to the Committee. He also stated that he would include additional information from the school in their next meeting packet.

#### 4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### 5. CAC Survey Results and Vision Statement

Mr. Walzak referenced a graphic timeline to demonstrate what the Committee has covered and what to expect in the future. He stated that he wanted to point out the difference between the urban framework task and the alternatives. Mr. Walzak stated that the Committee would develop three alternatives for land use and transportation, but for this meeting the focus would be on the physical framework and composition such as parks, connectivity, and urban density. He stated that for this meeting it was important to get their preferences so that they could select bookend alternatives at the May meeting.

Mr. Walzak stated that once the alternatives were selected they would work towards establishing evaluation criteria. He stated that one of the alternatives would be to consider the existing zoning and then two additional alternatives. Mr. Calvert also stated that they have postponed releasing the market analysis as they continue to refine and research the “special opportunity.”

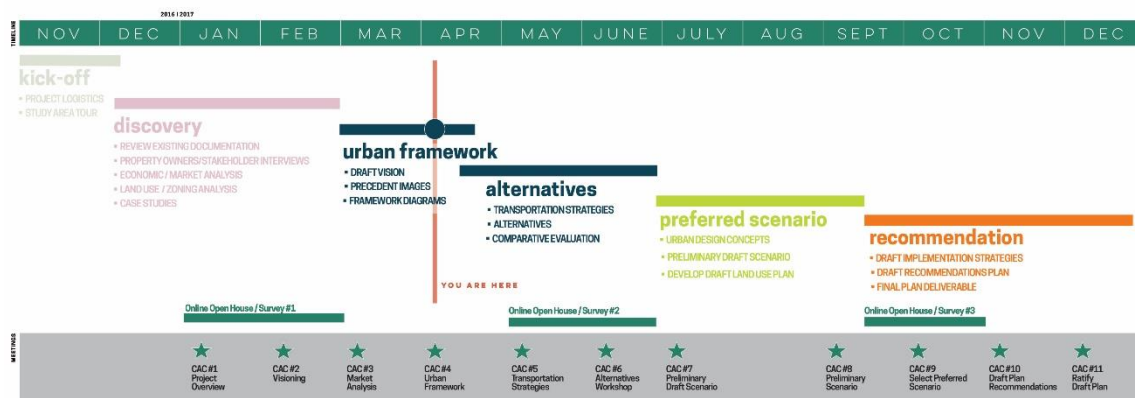


Figure 1 – Citizen Advisory Committee Timeline

Mr. Calvert stated that the process of adopting a vision statement at this meeting was not to establish a final vision statement. He stated that this was something that would change and adapt as new information became available. Mr. Calvert stated that between meetings

the Committee completed a number of surveys to identify priorities of the study area that were initially defined through conversations with the Committee, interviews with stakeholders, and public surveys.

Mr. Calvert stated that young professionals, entrepreneurs, a multi-cultural community, and artists were the ideas that emerged to the top based upon the question of “Who should the study area serve?” In regards to what character and use elements were important to the Committee, the following concepts emerged as priorities; community oriented businesses, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, trail oriented development, mixed-use, and public spaces and parks. Mr. Calvert then stated that each Committee member made an effort to create a draft vision statement, which the Committee members then voted on.

Mr. Calvert stated that the four highest rated draft vision statements were then selected and incorporated into a single vision statement that was created by staff and the Committee co-chairs. He stated that the Committee was to discuss and analyze the draft vision statement, and amend as they saw fit, in preparation of adopting a draft vision statement.

The draft vision statement;

*“The Wilburton Commercial Area is Bellevue’s next urban mixed-use community that enhances livability, promotes healthy living, supports economic vitality, and serves the needs of a diverse population. As Bellevue’s cultural and innovative hub, it serves as a regional and international destination that connects people and fosters community by leveraging its existing assets to define a unique sense of place and character.”*

Co-chair Wu stated that the individual statements that were crafted were much more detailed, and she asked if the concept of what makes a good vision statement could be discussed. Mr. Calvert stated each of the vision statements submitted were great and ranged in complexity. He stated that the goal is for the statement to be brief, high level, and can be referenced upon each action item to evaluate whether the goals and vision are being met.

Mr. McEachran asked who completed the final write up of the draft vision statement. Mr. Calvert responded that it was completed between the Committee co-chairs and himself, utilizing the four most preferred draft vision statements.

Mr. Renn stated that he felt the vision statement should include the unique characteristics such as the Eastside Rail Corridor and Grand Connection and would help highlight what those important assets are. Co-chair Barksdale responded that the Committee should think about not being too granular and ensuring that the current state of the vision statement would provide the flexibility to accommodate those elements that the Committee is interested in. He stated that this would not be the only way that the vision would be expressed, and that there will be other elements to the recommendations that would provide additional detail. Mr. Renn stated that many of the other sample vision statements acknowledge the individual assets but that he agreed each one didn’t have to be acknowledged.

Mr. Calvert stated that the future design principles and urban design guidelines would also address more specific elements. Ms. Washburn asked if there would be opportunities as the Committee established criteria to come back to the vision statement and reflect on

its applicability. Mr. Calvert responded that they would revisit the vision statement to ensure the values of those decisions were applicable and that the vision statement reflected the decisions of the Committee.

Mr. Renn asked if this would be included in the next packet. Mr. Calvert responded that the adopted Committee statement would be included in the meeting packet, including any changes made during the meeting. Ms. Kumar asked if the purpose of the statement was to guide future decisions. Mr. Calvert responded that it was.

Co-chair Wu stated that they should assume there would be key items through the process where they would return and review the vision statement. Mr. Calvert stated that the vision statement would be considered for preferred alternatives, decisions on transportation elements, and design principles, in addition to several other opportunities. Co-chair Barksdale stated that if an item came up that didn't appear to fit the vision statement it would be a good time to review the vision statement for potential modifications or to evaluate potential decisions as applicable to the statement.

Co-chair Wu stated that if the vision statement is something they feel comfortable with in regards to prior decisions and discussions that it may be a good idea to agree on the current vision statement for the time being. Co-chair Barksdale asked if there were additional comments.

Mr. Griswold stated that he thought it was a good vision statement that wasn't too long and covered all of the main assets and topics discussed. Mr. Pardoe stated that he felt it captured much of what the Committee had begun to strive for. He stated that he felt it also inspires directions that have been considered such as a regional or international destination, but also opens up opportunities for additional considerations. He stated that the vision statement should encourage design, more than just govern future design.

Ms. Kumar stated that in addition to the existing assets she felt that they would also be creating new assets, and asked if the word existing should be removed from the vision statement. Mr. Griswold stated that he felt the word existing should remain and that many of the other concepts listed in the statement addressed the future assets that would be created. Ms. Chong stated that she liked the vision statement and that she felt she strongly connected with the last portion that addressed connecting people and fostering community. She stated that she thinks that should be a focus. Ms. Washburn stated that she believed this was a good framework, and looked forward to referring back to make sure that it was still what they were looking for.

Mr. Renn stated he had no objections to the vision statement as long as there was an opportunity to return to it. Mr. Jack stated that he liked that it provided clear direction but also opportunity for flexibility. Mr. McEachran stated that he felt the vision statement was significant in the words that it captures. Mr. Johnson stated that he didn't find anything objectionable in the statement, but he wanted to make sure that it was tracking with the Council Principles. Mr. Calvert stated that the Council Principles remain a guiding force, and as referenced in the survey the draft vision statements were to also align with the Council Principles.

Ms. Lau Hui stated that it seemed like it was casting a broad net and could apply to anywhere in Bellevue. She stated she hoped it would become more specific. Mr. Griswold stated that this was more of a vision and not necessarily a map. Co-chair Wu stated that she felt there were elements such as urban mixed use, and cultural innovative hub as elements that are not in Bellevue yet. Co-chair Barksdale stated that there are

assets in Wilburton that also are not present in other parts of Bellevue. Ms. Lau Hui stated that she felt they needed to become more specific as they move along.

- ❖ **Action Item:** *Mr. Griswold moved to adopt the vision statement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Renn. The vision statement was unanimously approved for adoption.*

## 6. Property Owners Presentations

Mr. Calvert stated that in addition to the Citizen Advisory Committee there was also a Property Owners Panel, where property owners were invited to engage in the process so that they can provide their opinion and feedback. He stated that there were three to four strategic locations in the process where the property owners would be engaged with the Committee. Mr. Calvert stated that some of these meetings may include discussions and dialogue between the property owners and the Committee and in other cases, such as this meeting, the property owners would be presenting to the Committee.

### *Etsekson / Rosen Property – 411 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE*

Joseph Tovar introduced himself as a representative of the Etsekson and Rosen families. Mr. Tovar referenced an aerial photo of the property and that it was on the western edge of the property with direct access from Interstate 405 and 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He stated that the Hammer property and City owned property (Lincoln Center) were directly north. Mr. Tovar stated that the subject project was approximately 5 acres, and combined with the Hammer and Lincoln Center property, made about 12 acres. He stated that this seemed like a major opportunity to think about coordination and collaboration in the



future.

Figure 2 – Property at 411 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE

Mr. Pardoe asked what the current use of the property was. Mr. Tovar responded that the current use was a Ford auto dealership. Mr. Tovar referenced the location of the future light rail line and stations, stating that the property would be equidistant to both stations (Downtown and Wilburton). He also referenced the location of the Grand Connection in

relationship to the property.

Mr. Tovar referenced an image facing west, and stated that the value to improvement ratio was relatively low and made it prime for redevelopment in the future. He referenced a case study image (Atlantic Station – Atlanta, Georgia) as to what could be on the property in the future. He stated a mix of uses, vitality, and activity could exist on the property.

Mr. Tovar stated that in the image there were shops and offices surrounding the public or semi-public space, and that there was a direction relationship between the public and private investment. He stated that many people could be coming from outside the district as well in the district. Mr. Tovar then introduced Michele Estekson.

Ms. Estekson stated that she was speaking on behalf of her family who owned the property along with the Rosen family. She stated that she agreed with the points that Mr. Tovar made about the future opportunity and vision for the study area. Ms. Estekson stated that they believed that their property, along with the Grand Connection and the City owned property could create an iconic heart for the urban neighborhood. She stated that in addition to easy access to light rail, bus rapid transit, Interstate 405, and the Eastside Rail Corridor the property was essential to a number of long term uses that are essential to a long term viable neighborhood. She stated that this included grocery and houseware stores, pharmacies, coffee shops, and restaurants within a short walk. She stated that these uses add to the viability of commercial or residential uses on the property.

Ms. Estekson stated that the family had deep roots in the community as residents of the Eastside, their offices located in Bellevue, and their family has been engaged in commercial real estate in the region for almost a century, since 1917. She stated that they see the opportunities for the Wilburton Commercial Area as a legacy for the community.

Adam Rosen introduced himself as a representative of the Rosen family, and co-owners with the Esteksons of the subject property. He stated that they have operated a family business in the area for over a century. Mr. Rosen stated that they rarely seen a situation with such a maximum benefit for the community and the property owners as being complementary. He stated that regardless of the use, the location advantages of the site cannot be overstated. Mr. Rosen acknowledged that the site was flat and with minimal environmental constraints and has unobstructed views to the west and would not block views from the east. He also stated that the property is large enough to accommodate developments with large floorplates, desirable by modern businesses and technology companies, and currently unavailable in downtown.

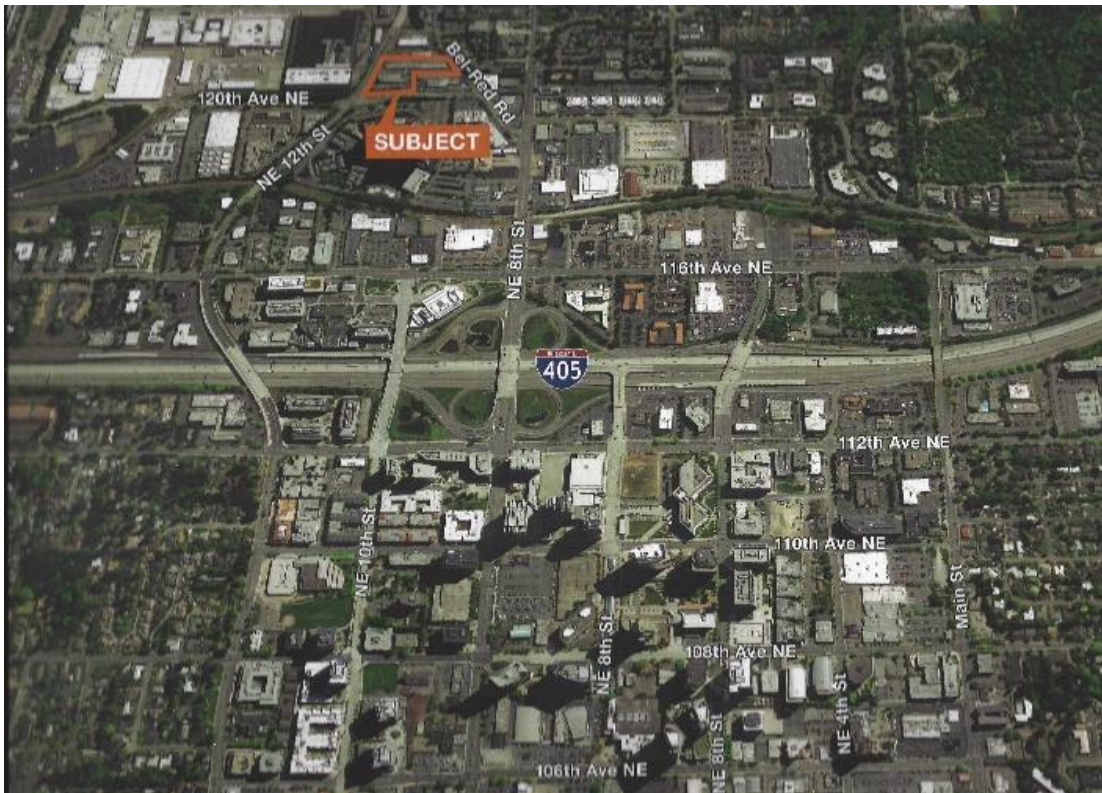
Mr. Rosen stated that the case studies shown by NBBJ (March meeting) demonstrated ways to create great urban places. Mr. Rosen stated that Olympic Village in Vancouver was the largest LEED Platinum neighborhood, and as a result was a desirable place for people to live and work while serving as a top attraction for tourists. He stated that if guided by an ambitious vision, the Wilburton Commercial Area can be a place that everyone can be proud of while serving as a model for large scale urban planning and development.

Mr. Tovar referenced an image of Olympic Village in Vancouver, and acknowledged some similarities. He stated that the Committee should think big and boldly. Mr. Tovar stated that much of that vision would be dependent on private investment.



Mr. Renn stated that the Ford dealership was recently completed, and asked what the property owners thought the timing might be for change. Mr. Tovar responded that the dealership had a lease for the next ten to twelve years, and that the property owners had an option to extend the lease after that, but were interested in other opportunities. He also stated that it was possible that terms could be agreed upon for the dealership to relocate before the lease were to expire. Mr. Tovar stated that was largely contingent on the opportunities for future use.

Todd Woosley stated that he was one of the owners of Brierwood Properties and was a member of the City of Bellevue's Transportation Commission. He stated this his father served on three Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committees. Todd Woosley stated that his brother David and mother were also in attendance for the meeting, and that they were longtime owners of the Brierwood Center. He stated that he was a land use consultant and transportation professional with 30 years of experience on Bellevue real estate issues. Todd Woosley stated that his brother T.J. would also be presenting, about the history of the property.



T.J. Woosley stated that it was ideally located between the Spring District and the Central Business District. He stated that the property was closer to I-405 than half of the Central Business District. T.J. Woosley stated that he and his brothers Todd and David purchased the property from their parents due to its long term redevelopment potential.

T.J. Woosley referenced an image that showed their newest building on the site, built in 1974. He stated that Goose Pub and Chown Hardware were located there. He stated at some point it would be time to redevelop the property. He referenced an image from 1971 and acknowledged several recognizable features and older uses. T.J. Woosley stated that it was important how quickly things can be change and to think big.

Todd Woosley referenced an image of the Spring District looking west and the changes to the Central Business District. He stated that their property was just south of the Spring District. Todd Woosley encouraged the Committee to think broader than just the immediate area. He stated that the location right between the Spring District and Central Business District allows the area to be a great complement to those urban areas. Todd Woosley stated that this success would be dependent on the Committee.

Todd Woosley stated that flexibility would be important due to the unknowns. He stated that a form based code would be important and that what goes on inside the properties is an unknown so flexibility to create an urban environment is important. Todd Woosley also stated that the multi-modal transportation aspects are remarkable and that the area could be a gateway between Downtown and BelRed. He also stated that it was part of the Innovation Triangle of Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond.

Todd Woosley stated that the vision would be dependent on the transportation infrastructure and that it was distinguishable for the Wilburton Commercial Area. He referenced I-405, 520 and other major arterials in addition to sidewalks and bike lanes, but the two light rail stations created a transit oriented development opportunity. Todd Woosley referenced the BelRed planning process and stated that they developed an example as to what could happen if they had 4.0 floor-area-ratio and 125' building height rather than current zoning. He stated that it would fit in with the Spring District.

Todd Woosley stated that the development could be an innovative, world class, mixed-use development with office and residential. He stated that the Committee should think big and long term. Todd Woosley referenced the East Main CAC and their recommendation for 5.0 floor-area-ratio with a building height of 300' and an average of 250'. He referenced a political kick off campaign and the idea that the sky is the limit if we do it right. Todd Woosley stated that the process was moving well and towards the City's vision of embracing the future while respecting the past.

Mr. Johnson stated that there is review of the Downtown Livability code currently underway and whether Todd Woosley had any input on what the setbacks for the Wilburton Commercial Area should look like if building heights were allowed up to 300'. Todd Woosley stated that if the economic capacity was available for each site then public amenities could be more economically feasible. He also stated that at this level they were not talking about setbacks it was more about form, height, and density. Todd Woosley stated that there does need to be a big enough lift. He stated that the East Main CAC had building details that could be applicable to the Wilburton Commercial Area.

Mr. Pardoe asked if the Woosley's vision was similar to the East Main vision. Todd Woosley stated that their vision was similar, particularly since there wasn't a single family neighborhood impact such as East Main.

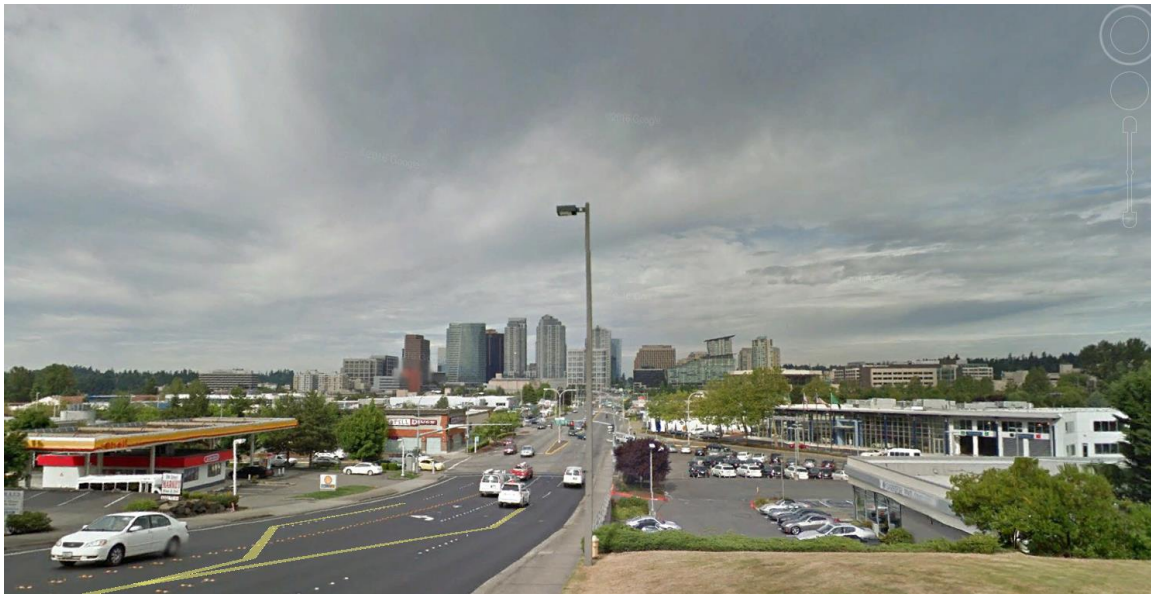


*Bill Finkbeiner – 12011 BelRed Road*

Bill Finkbeiner stated that he had been in the area for 17 years and worked in an office building his father built on the corner of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He stated that he has managed the building and started a few businesses at the location. Mr. Finkbeiner stated that the neighborhood was really unique.

Mr. Finkbeiner stated that the investments being made in the neighborhood would create a foundation including the Spring District, the Wilburton East Link station, the improvements to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Eastside Rail Corridor, and the Grand Connection. He stated that the light rail station was extremely important, particularly as the station would be an urban station with no parking.

Mr. Finkbeiner referenced the cluster of stations in the immediate area, with four of them encompassing the Wilburton Commercial Area in a walkshed. He stated that the densities from the East Main CAC were applicable in the Wilburton Commercial area, particularly without a bordering single family neighborhood. Mr. Finkbeiner also stated that topography was an advantage for the study area. He stated that the area was similar to a bowl and that the change in topography could allow for more heights and still not feel overwhelmed. Mr. Finkbeiner stated that the hill allowed for preserving the Wilburton Hill neighborhood views.



*Figure 4 – View Facing West from 12011 BelRed Road*

Mr. Finkbeiner stated that he had studied the diagrams that outlined potential cores of the study area and felt that it should be larger than the examples provided. He stated that if the Committee wasn't aggressive in zoning that the neighborhood would still look the same in 10 years. Mr. Finkbeiner stated that the buildings were leased up and the rates were increasing so unless it is really worth the time for redevelopment it wouldn't happen. Mr. Finkbeiner referenced an image from his property that shows the change in elevation and that it presented opportunity.

Mr. Johnson asked that if Mr. Finkbeiner's reference to flexible zoning was to height and form or permitted uses. Mr. Finkbeiner replied that it was height and form, and that

height should compensate for increased connectivity or open space. He also stated that flexibility in uses is critical, particularly how quickly the “hot” uses change. Mr. Finkbeiner referenced a prior project and the relationship to how quickly the sentiment from one use to another has changed rapidly.

*Eastridge Corporate Center – 11811 NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street*

Jessie Clawson introduced herself as the land use attorney for the Morelli family. Lance Mueller introduced himself as an architect representing the Morelli family, and Gardner Morelli introduced himself as a representative of the Morelli family. Mr. Mueller stated that he wanted to reiterate what the prior groups stated regarding growth of Bellevue and opportunity in the study area.

Mr. Mueller stated that the two existing buildings were approximately 90,000 sf and were two and a half stories. He stated that they were built in the 1980’s. Mr. Mueller stated that the buildings were across from Wilburton Hill Park and were on the southeast corner of the study area. He stated that the site had a lot of slope and that from the Lake Hills Connector to the South and Main Street to the north there was a change of 65 feet. Mr. Mueller stated that the buildings were in a transition zone with a 35’ building height and 0.5 floor area ratio. He stated its original zoning was for residential estate.

Mr. Mueller stated that the site is covered by significant trees, as well as sites adjacent. He stated that on Main Street there were significant views. He referenced the land use code that stated the transition zone no longer applied if the property were to no longer be used for residential, allowing for its current office use. Mr. Mueller referenced the proximity to the Eastside Rail Corridor and the East Main light rail station as well as the future elementary school. He stated he thought it was a great opportunity to increase density.

Mr. Mueller stated that there were two access points, but none from Main Street because of the buffer. He referenced a section drawing of the existing site to demonstrate the change in topography. Mr. Mueller referenced a second sketch that depicted a five story wood framed structure over a concrete podium, stating that this was likely a concept that didn’t make sense to demolish the existing structures for. He referenced a third sketch that exhibited buildings that were closer to 85’ in height, which would likely be an office use. Mr. Mueller stated that this would be approximately a floor area ratio of 2.0, which is still substantially underutilizing the site. He stated that with the slope it would still make sense to consider taller buildings.

Mr. Mueller referenced a final sketch that depicted buildings of 125’ in height and that this should be the minimum height for consideration in order for redevelopment to make sense. He stated that this presented an opportunity for plazas, underground parking, and a mix of uses. Mr. Mueller stated that the existing buildings were successful and that a substantial change would need to occur to make redevelopment feasible.



*Figure 5 – Aerial View of Eastridge Corporate Center*

Mr. Morelli stated that he had attended all of the meetings, and that the feedback from the neighborhood regarding demographics and history were very important. He stated that he believes this property is a great opportunity for redevelopment to complement downtown, and create a central living district. Mr. Morelli stated that this was an opportunity to diminish the role of the car, and to develop an area that has mobility dictated by walking and not driving. He stated that the current buildings may be out of place for the long term vision.

Mr. Morelli stated that the success of the current buildings afforded time to let the district develop, and then they could invest in change as long as the codes were in place for that change. He stated that this property could be an anchor to the southern portion of the study area.

Ms. Clawson stated that McCullough Hill has been involved with work for other developers, citing the BelRed corridor, and was encouraging maximum flexibility based on existing code. She stated that the BelRed code already felt a little outdated and constrained. She stated that it felt too specific based on location and constrained what developers can do. Ms. Clawson stated that she hoped this zoning would be long range and stay in place for an extended period of time.

Mr. Pardoe stated that their slides showed 125' building heights, and he asked if that was their recommendation. Ms. Clawson stated that the context of the site as a border of the district and Wilburton Hill Park as well as the slope warranted an opportunity to consider taller building heights. She stated that without enough height and density it wouldn't make sense.

Mr. Renn stated that he was involved when the original buildings were built and stated that the 20' buffer was for the park. He stated that he hoped any development on the property would be engaged with 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE due to the increase in traffic from the

future Wilburton elementary school on Main Street.

Mr. Johnson asked what they thought the appropriate building height maximum should be given their location on the edge of the study area and abutting different uses, with economic forces aside. Mr. Mueller responded that it was hard to answer without knowing what would happen across the street. He stated that it would have to be put in context on what will be to the north and that the Eastridge site shouldn't be higher. Mr. Mueller stated that the Morelli family would like to be as high as possible but that he didn't know of a magic number. He stated that the floor area ratio would need to be at least 3.0 to 4.0. Mr. Mueller stated that if there were floor plate restrictions like in BelRed then building height would need to accommodate. He emphasized flexibility in the future. Mr. Morelli asked if the use of surface parking would change in the future. Mr. Mueller responded that was the purpose of light rail and to reduce the dependence of drivers and the opportunity to reduce parking.

#### *KG Investments – 430 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE*

Steve Kramer introduced himself from KG Investment Properties. He stated that KG was a commercial real estate development and investment company, headquartered in Bellevue. Mr. Kramer stated that they have been active promoters of the Wilburton Commercial Area for over a decade and made their first investment in the area in 2005. He stated that their site was over six acres and was at the confluence of light rail, the Grand Connection, and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Mr. Kramer stated that this was at the heart of the entire Wilburton Commercial Area and presents an opportunity to create a development that will then cascade through the entire study area. He stated that in order to realize the potential around all of the public infrastructure that density will be needed in order to drive the employment, residential, and retail opportunities. Mr. Kramer stated that this will be important in creating the vitality and iconic sense of place for the study area. He introduced Arlan Collins of CollinsWoerman Architects.

Mr. Collins stated density is needed to justify the public infrastructure. He stated that 300' building height and 6.0 floor area ratio was appropriate for this site. Mr. Collins stated that all of the connectivity of the Grand Connection, Eastside Rail Corridor, and NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street came together at this location. He stated that this density would need a public space of world class quality, creating an opportunity for something truly unique.

Mr. Collins stated that placemaking would be important and stated that they had a video showing these opportunities. He stated that the placemaking would need to be authentic, identifiable, and memorable. Harold Moniz of CollinsWoerman stated that the video is intended to be inspirational and not intended to be a design proposal. Mr. Collins stated that it was still very early in the process.

Mr. Collins narrated the video showing the Grand Connection leading into the property. He stated that a public space on the city owned property (Lincoln Center) made sense. Mr. Collins stated that the Eastside Rail Corridor could be animated with shops and services facing onto it. He stated that there should be more than one access point from the Eastside Rail Corridor to the development. Mr. Collins stated that 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE should be a signature boulevard, consistent with the Urban Land Institute recommendations, and lined with neighborhood goods and services. Mr. Collins stated that programmable open space is needed that supports concerts and farmers markets, as

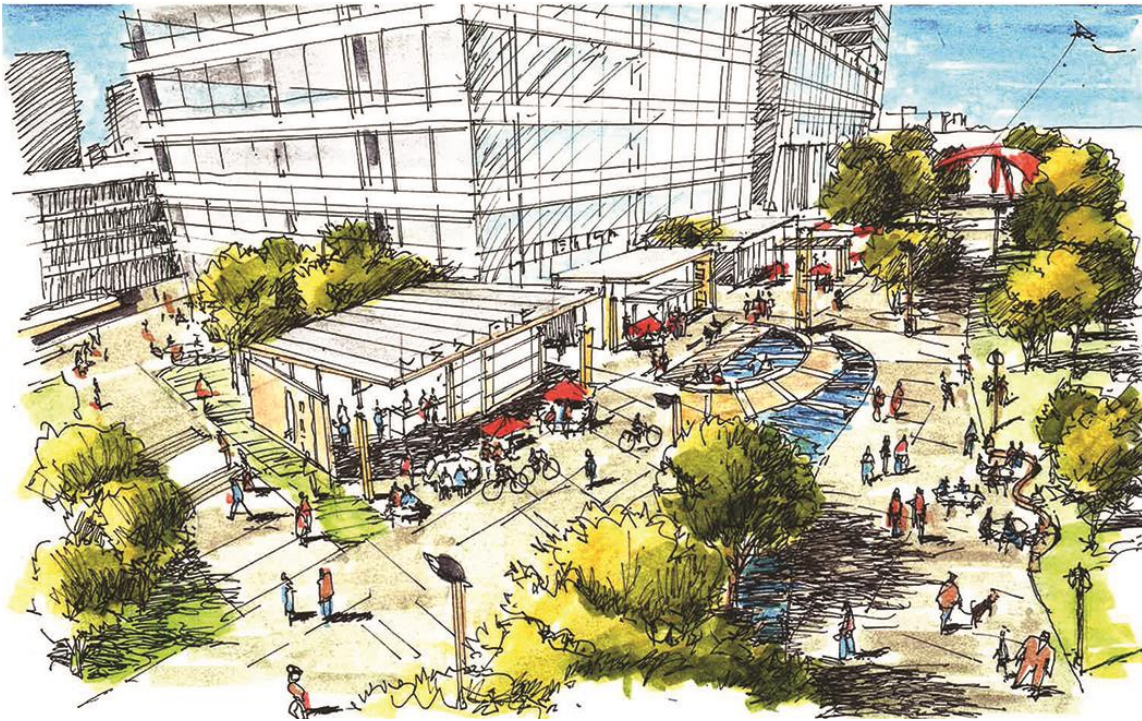


well as permanent recreation opportunities. He stated that daylighting the creek could be an asset for the community and the open space.

Mr. Collins referenced still images that showed the programmable open space on the city owned property. He referenced the Fisher Pavilion in Seattle as a precedent. Mr. Collins stated that exciting opportunities existed between the Eastside Rail Corridor and the development as a signature public space and regional destination. Mr. Collins referenced the Urban Land Institute report that 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE could be a signature boulevard, something that is absent from Bellevue. He stated that NE 6<sup>th</sup> should connect with 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. Renn asked if the subject property was currently mainly empty. Mr. Collins responded Volvo, Chevrolet, and Cadillac currently had retailers on the site. Mr. Kramer stated that this opportunity for change could be near term.

Mr. Calvert informed the property owners that there will be future presentation and workshop opportunities and in the interim they could submit additional information as part of the Committee's monthly packets.



*Figure 6 – Conceptual View Along the Eastside Rail Corridor*

- ❖ Co-chair Barksdale called for a five minute break.

## **7. Organizational Framework, Density, and Character Discussion and Exercises**

- ❖ Co-chair Barksdale called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Walzak referenced precedent images posted on the meeting room wall. He stated that these were different from the case studies presented at the last meeting. Mr. Walzak

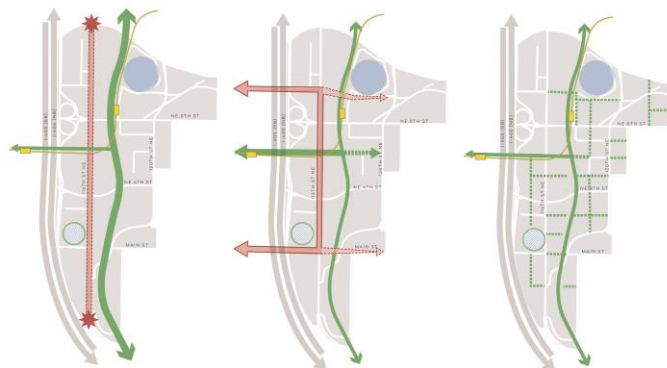
stated that the precedents helped to inform ideas, design guidelines, and design principles that will support the vision statement. He stated that the Committee members had the information in their packets and encouraged the property owners to study the precedents. Mr. Walzak noted the boards that represented the scale of public spaces and parks as important elements.

Mr. Walzak stated that the boards represented connectivity, sustainability, public space, and placemaking. He stated that issues of connectivity such as alleys, bicycle and pedestrian space, multi-modal streets, and shared streets would be particularly important. Mr. Walzak encouraged the Committee to study these in their own time. He stated that Mr. Calvert will also post the precedents to the project website for the property owners to view as well.

Mr. Walzak stated that they wanted to introduce the scenario modeling tool at this meeting. He stated that they wanted to exhibit the potential alternatives with the tool and that the current image represented the existing zoning. Mr. Walzak stated that the following graphic demonstrated development opportunities under existing zoning, in a medium range development scenario. He stated that there were existing limitations such as setbacks and building heights, as well as parking requirements. Mr. Walzak stated that this would be the baseline alternative for future analysis.

Mr. Walzak stated that they wanted to discuss three main categories at the meeting including connectivity, public space, and neighborhood core. Mr. Walzak stated that connectivity was about high level moves that could represent an organizing principle for the study area. These examples and broad ideas included:

- Double spine of the Eastside Rail Corridor as a multi-modal corridor and 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE serving as a grand boulevard for north-south connections. Mr. Walzak stated that a benefit of these corridors being multi-modal and serving as a branding element to the Wilburton Commercial element. Mr. Savo stated that these concepts were to represent ideas and not designs, but they would influence where the investment in the study area would occur, and that would pose the question of where the Committee would like to see a majority of the energy and the investment placed. Mr. Walzak stated that another benefit would be opportunities for gateways. He stated that limitations included not expanding the east-west connections to other neighborhoods.
- East-west connections across the interstate including the Grand Connection, NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and Main Street. He stated this also presented the opportunity to extend and connect to the neighborhoods. Mr. Walzak stated that some of the benefits included strong connections to the Eastside Rail Corridor and 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He stated it also created variations of mobility. Mr. Savo stated that





it creates a loop with Downtown Bellevue, and implying a potential extension. Mr. Walzak stated that limitations included the need for the city to acquire easements for any new connections. Co-chair Wu asked what the circle on the diagrams represented. Mr. Walzak responded that it represented the existing wetland.

- Breaking up the scales of the blocks. Mr. Walzak stated that this would create more pedestrian friendly smaller parcels. He stated that some of the benefits would be better connectivity with the arterials, and creating a much more livable and pedestrian friendly area. Mr. Walzak stated that these connections could be streets or alleys and a number of different designs. He stated the limitations could be the impact of development opportunity on each parcel, but that these connections could also create value. Co-chair Wu stated that the options may be competing in terms of investment, but she saw opportunities to overlay the options and complement as well by creating complete connectivity. Mr. Savo stated that during the Committee exercise period they would have the opportunity to select and vote for more than one.

Mr. Walzak stated that there were five options for the distribution of public space. These examples and broad ideas included:

- A public space over the lid. Mr. Walzak stated that this would not actually be in the Wilburton Commercial Area but adjacent to it. He stated an advantage would be not using developable properties to create public space within the study area. Mr. Walzak stated that limitations included the significant cost.
- A large public space in the study area. Mr. Walzak stated that this would add value to the properties around the space, and that it creates a placemaking feature in the Wilburton Commercial Area.
- Multiple smaller public spaces. Mr. Walzak stated that this could include plaza spaces and neighborhood parks. He stated that the concept is to scatter them throughout the study area. Mr. Walzak stated that the advantages could be to create interesting connections between each space, it is not a singular infrastructure improvement, and there is an opportunity for diverse spaces. Mr. Savo stated that this was partially inspired by LEED Neighborhood Development. He stated that South Lake Union in Seattle was a pilot project for the program, and that there was ample public space created, and that the idea is a user should be able to walk a short distance between public spaces and parks.
- Expanding the Eastside Rail Corridor with nodes of activity along the linear park. Mr. Walzak stated that these spaces would complement the adjacent uses and provide different character and programming functions along the route. He stated that the major investment would be put into the Eastside Rail Corridor and the areas immediately around it. Mr. Walzak stated that one of the advantages was the momentum behind the Eastside Rail Corridor and its connection directly to the Grand Connection.
- Enhancing the natural systems. Mr. Walzak said that this option would seek to enhance, expose and utilize the natural systems such as the lake, wetland, and creek as amenities. He stated an advantage would be to support a sustainable approach, and a disadvantage would be the significant cost associated with the improvements.



Mr. McEachran asked if the lid over the interstate concept was similar to the Mercer Island lid. Mr. Walzak responded that yes it would be something to that effect. Mr. Savo stated that this was acknowledging an option that has already been proposed as part of the Grand Connection visioning process. He stated that this would be a public space shared between Downtown and the Wilburton Commercial Area. Mr. Calvert stated that the Grand Connection website had additional information on the current design proposals. Mr. Pardoe stated that it would be important to understand the scale of a potential lid. Mr. Walzak referenced Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, Texas as comparable in scale.

Co-chair Wu asked what the difference would be between expanding the Eastside Rail Corridor public spaces and the multiple smaller public spaces from a user perspective. Mr. Savo stated that the Eastside Rail Corridor option would create many different types and uses for public space such as pocket parks, water features, and playgrounds. He stated that the multiple public spaces option was more about getting people into the neighborhood.

Mr. Pardoe referenced a park on the Cross Kirkland Corridor that was a good example as to how the option of enhancing the Eastside Rail Corridor could work. Mr. Savo stated that it could be accomplished through public, private, or partnership means, but it would be important to have city control over some of the development.

Mr. Savo stated that the last category they wanted to talk about was density. He referenced the scale of the city blocks between Downtown Bellevue, Wilburton Commercial Area, Portland, and Seattle. Mr. Savo stated that it was important to eventually discuss scale of blocks.

Mr. Savo stated that the discussion on intensity and density is really about the number of people, floor area ratio, and building height. He stated that the Committee had heard a number of building heights from the property owners. Mr. Savo stated that this segment is to consider where the neighborhood core would exist.

Mr. Savo stated that the range of intensity could be single family neighborhoods to heights similar to Downtown Bellevue. He stated that an important break point is 85' as that transitions buildings into a high rise zone and changes the building code requirements.

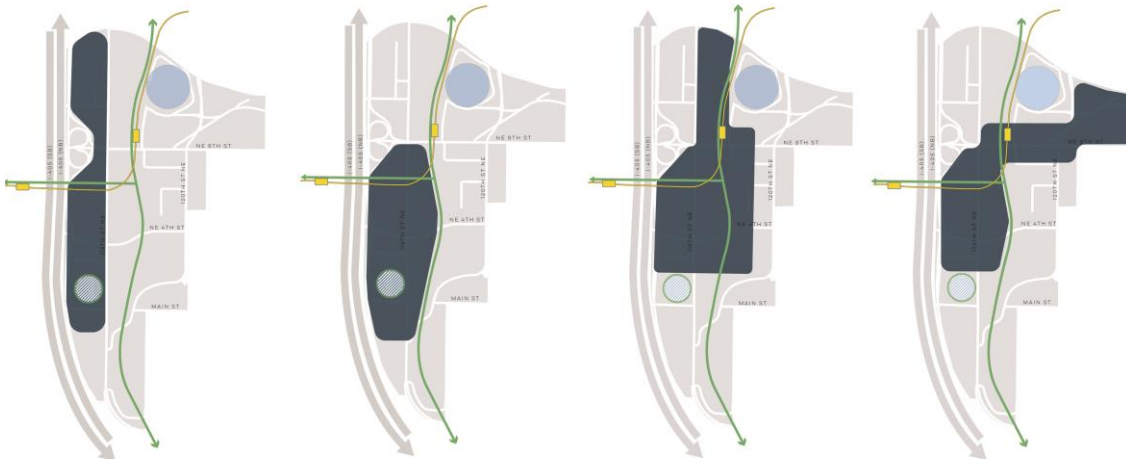
Mr. Savo stated they would review some initial ideas to consider and that the Committee would then have an opportunity to redraw the neighborhood cores as part of an exercise. These initial ideas included:

- West of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Mr. Savo stated that this option sought to expand Downtown Bellevue across I-405 and to 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE but no further. He stated this would include the Medical District down to Main Street. Mr. Savo

stated that the core could be many different heights, but from there the committee would help to determine how many times and where development would step down from the core.

- Expansion to the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Savo stated that this option would create more density closer to the light rail station and the Eastside Rail Corridor. He stated that this would include the wetlands, but this prompted the discussion on how far south and north the neighborhood core should be. Mr. Savo stated that this option extended to NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street but does not include the Medical District.
- Following the Eastside Rail Corridor and light rail as a spine. Mr. Savo stated that this would take the core closer to the northern edge of the study area.
- Transit Oriented Development. Mr. Savo stated that this option expanded the core around the transit station and sought to connect with the Spring District to the north and further east.

Mr. Savo stated that these options were provocations and not designs, and to get the Committee to think about where the core of study area should be located. Co-chair Wu asked what the typical bookends would be between the core and the rest of the study area.



Mr. Savo stated that wasn't calculated. He stated that there is no specific recommendation on how much of the study area should be the core, and that the Committee would help define that. Mr. Savo stated that it would likely be inappropriate to consider the entire study area at maximum height and density. Mr. Pardoe asked how this related to the market demand for space. Mr. Savo stated that was hard to determine this early, and that a bold approach should be taken but not pushing the entire study area to the maximum.

Mr. McEachran asked how tall the Bravern development was. Mr. Calvert responded that Microsoft tower was 200' and the residential towers were 250'. Co-chair Wu asked how the core should serve the study area. Mr. Savo stated that the discussion on core is about density, and that the uses could be a mix and include public space.

Mr. Walzak stated that there were two exercises. He stated that the first was a dot exercise for the Committee to express their preferences for connectivity, public space, and neighborhood core. Mr. Walzak provided them with instructions on how many dots

each Committee member had and to distribute them for each category and options available. Mr. Calvert explained that the property owners could conduct the same exercise on the maps posted outside of the meeting room.

❖ Committee members participated in the dot exercise.

Nate Holland from NBBJ stated that he wanted to introduce the Committee to the computational design tool. He began by exhibiting the preferences that emerged from the dot exercise, and demonstrated that the modeling tool could be updated live based on discussion and preferences by adding in additional options. Mr. Holland exhibited the change of height and density, and stated that more options would be built into the model as the alternatives were refined.

Mr. Savo stated that assumptions such as podium height and size are assumed for the time being and that the numbers would be adjustable as the Committee moved forward. Mr. Savo stated that his was intended to give a rough idea for scale. Mr. Holland exhibited a number of perspectives that showed how the views may change based on height and density. Mr. Savo stated that scale could change based on building use and tower separation. He stated that those elements were not being addressed at this moment.

Co-chair Wu asked if the tool would be used to illustrate what the different alternatives might look like. Mr. Holland stated that the tool is intended to be used as a visualization and data tool. He stated that in future meetings they could potentially consider the number of residential units, parking needs, and other more refined decisions. Mr. Holland stated that this tool would help the Committee understand the outcomes of the decisions that they would be making. He stated that it is not intended to be a final representation of the buildings.

Ms. Lau Hui stated that it seemed like they would be able to provide more information with the tool. Mr. Savo stated that they would be able to provide snapshots and views as the model becomes refined. He stated that a three dimensional model would allow them to understand context. Mr. Holland stated that based on the dot exercise the public space would be located over the interstate and it could be seen that it would not impact the development potential within the study area.

Mr. Pardoe asked what the floor area ratio numbers would be. Mr. Calvert stated they were not getting that detailed at the moment, but that this exercise was to understand where the maximum intensity and density would occur. He stated that once they understood that distribution they could then refine height, floor area ratio, and floorplate sizes.

Mr. Walzak stated that the Committee had a box of crayons and maps available. He referenced the building height transect and instructed the committee to color sections of the map based on where they felt the building heights should be distributed, starting with the core. Mr. Walzak stated that there were six zones and that they could choose as many of them as they felt appropriate.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that the Committee members could complete the exercise at the meeting or take it home. Mr. Calvert stated that the Committee members could scan or photograph their results and then email to him once complete. Mr. Holland referenced a heat map graphic that shows the results of a similar exercise completed at the NBBJ office as representative of the Committee results.

Mr. Renn stated that high rise buildings near Lake Bellevue were not practical due to soil conditions. He stated that this was ignoring real world elements. Mr. Walzak stated that the exercises would inform future refinement to consider those challenges. Co-chair Barksdale stated that the current phase was vision, and that this was intended to start a conversation on how to manage the vision. Mr. Calvert stated that this was a starting point. He stated that this was able to get initial thoughts on areas, but that refinement would occur based on those challenges and a number of other factors and constraints. He stated that the Committee needed a starting point to begin working those factors into. Co-chair Wu asked if the members could also describe the concepts. Mr. Calvert stated that supporting text could be provided.

## **9. Adjourn**

Co-chair Barksdale adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.