

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

February 27, 2012  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room 1E-113  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Lee, Deputy Mayor Robertson, and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, Davidson, Stokes, and Wallace

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Robertson called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition.

The meeting resumed at 6:50 p.m., with Mayor Lee presiding.

2. Oral Communications

- (a) Bill Hirt said he received a response from City staff as a follow-up to his comments before the Council on January 23. The email explained that Sound Transit has not had the necessary funding to fully evaluate the use of the I-90 lanes for light rail. He stated that it is absurd that Sound Transit has not found the money to study HOV lanes on the outer bridge. Mr. Hirt suggested that Sound Transit wants to operate light rail instead of buses on the I-90 bridge. He expressed concern that the email from City staff appears to justify Sound Transit's past actions and future delays. Mr. Hirt submitted his comments in writing as well.
- (b) Bruce Nurse, Vice President of Government Affairs, Kemper Development Company, spoke regarding the proposed HOV toll lanes (HOT lanes) on I-405. He submitted copies of an article that reviewed a recent U.S. General Accounting Office audit of 14 highway pricing projects. The article is entitled *A Lukewarm Report Card for High-Occupancy Toll Lanes* and was published in The Atlantic Cities. Mr. Nurse said the study requested by the state legislature last year will not be available until October, but WSDOT plans to start buying equipment for HOT lanes in July. He suggested waiting until the next state legislative session in order to make a more informed decision on the effectiveness of

HOT lanes. Mr. Nurse said the GAO report indicates that revenues generated by HOT lanes are not significant but are barely covering operating costs.

- (c) Dick Paylor, representing the Eastside Transportation Association, asked the City Council to be a leader with regard to the I-405 HOT lanes. He said the proposed project should not move forward until the report ordered by the state legislature is completed and vetted by the public and elected officials. Mr. Paylor said the I-405 Master Plan does not authorize or include HOT lanes, except to identify them as a potential item for future study. The first phase of funding for the proposed HOT lanes comes from gas taxes approved by voters who were promised general purpose lanes. Mr. Paylor said that, last year, Bellevue expressed support for the HOT lane plan subject to certain conditions, and none of these conditions have been met. The Chamber of Commerce Legislative Coalition, which includes 10 Eastside Chambers, opposes the current HOT lane plan. Mr. Paylor said an interim report of the State's Cambridge Systematic Study was provided to the Transportation Commission last December. The report states that tolls cover 50 percent to 80 percent of expenses for similar projects around the country, as opposed to generating revenue.
- (d) Bill Popp, an Enatai resident, referred to meeting packet materials indicating that Bellevue is a leader in tolling and pricing for funding and managing traffic congestion. He observed that this is not consistent with the Council's past comments to staff. He spoke against the I-405 HOT lanes plan, noting that the Highway 167 HOT lanes have not met projected revenues. He asked the Council to direct staff to communicate to the State that the City does not support HOT lanes on I-405, and to go on the record as continuing to support the I-405 Master Plan as adopted with two general purpose lanes in each direction. Mr. Popp said that modeling does not support the assertion that dual express toll lanes can offer a 30 percent more efficient system than an equivalent carpool-general purpose lane system. He noted the summary of items included in the I-405 Master Plan, provided on page 3-30 of the Council meeting packet.

Mayor Lee said that staff will review the I-405 issue and address tonight's comments.

### 3. Study Session

#### (a) Council Business and New Initiatives

##### (1) Motion to Change Formats of April 2 and April 9 Council Meetings

Deputy Mayor Robertson said there has been a request from staff to switch the formats for the first two Council meetings in April.

- Deputy Mayor Robertson moved to switch the format of the April 2 Council meeting to a four-hour Study Session, and the format of the April 9 Council meeting to the Study and Regular Session format. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Davidson noted that memos have been distributed regarding the drug dependency treatment center in Bellevue, and requested additional information from staff.

City Manager Steve Sarkozy said staff will provide an update.

Mayor Lee noted an event sponsored by the Eastside Sustainable Business Alliance scheduled for the next morning in City Hall to address “The Business Case for Solar.”

(b) Regional Issues

(1) PSRC Growing Transit Communities Partnership

Joyce Nichols, Interim Director of Intergovernmental Relations, opened discussion regarding the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Growing Transit Communities Partnership.

Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Planning Manager, described a \$5 million HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) grant program known as the Growing Transit Communities Partnership. The purpose of the partnership is to study opportunities for coordinating other development with the regional bus and light rail systems. The program encourages the consideration of mixed use development at transit stations where appropriate. However, the implementation of any of the recommendations will be initiated locally through the City Council.

Mr. Inghram noted that Councilmember Davidson serves on the partnership’s oversight committee, and Emil King and Mr. Inghram have been coordinating activities at the staff level. Mr. Inghram introduced Mary Pat Lawlor and Michael Hubner from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) for the presentation.

Ms. Lawlor said the program is sponsored by HUD’s Office of Housing and Sustainable Communities, and is a partnership of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The partnership grant funds were received in August 2010, and PSRC is the lead fiduciary agent. The goal is to implement the adopted Vision 2040 Plan, which includes the Transportation 2040 Plan and Regional Economic Strategy. She noted the list of project partners which includes cities, counties, developers, educational institutions, nonprofit groups, public housing agencies, and transit agencies.

Mr. Hubner described the scope of work, which focuses on current and planned light rail stations along high-capacity transportation corridors in the Puget Sound region from Everett to Tacoma. The work program will develop corridor action strategies, a regional equity network to engage lesser served populations and areas, and an affordable housing strategy. The partnership is awarding small grants to assist in these efforts. The purpose of the program is to promote housing choices in association with transit services. Three demonstration projects are receiving subgrant funding: 1) Northgate transit-oriented development (TOD) in Seattle, 2) Tacoma South

Downtown subarea plan, and 3) Decision Commons visualization planning tool (University of Washington project).

Ms. Lawlor explained that the central Puget Sound region was certified as a Preferred Sustainable Community by HUD in 2010. This qualifies prospective eligible applicants in the region to be awarded two bonus points in HUD-specified funding competitions.

Ms. Lawlor reviewed the Corridor Action Strategies timeline. A kickoff event was held in September, although the three-year grant period started in February 2011. A number of task force meetings and public meetings are planned throughout the study process which extends to early 2014. The next meeting of the East Corridor Task Force is March 15. Quarterly meetings are held for the Regional Equity Network, which meets next on March 8, as well as for the Affordable Housing Steering Committee and the Oversight Committee, which meet next on May 1 and May 18, respectively. The Existing Conditions Report will be available in May, and a housing and commercial market analysis has recently been initiated.

Councilmember Davidson referred to the concept of social engineering. He said that some Bellevue residents are concerned about the impacts of potential transit-oriented development on existing single-family neighborhoods.

Mr. Hubner acknowledged that TOD is not appropriate for all station locations, and the type of development that could occur will vary as well. With regard to the Regional Equity Network and equity grants, Mr. Hubner described the objectives of encouraging community participation in the process and pursuing an equitable distribution of impacts and benefits.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Ms. Lawlor said the Regional Equity Network Committee and Affordable Housing Steering Committee are peer committees, and they are informing the work of the task forces and the Oversight Committee. Some individuals serve on more than one committee.

Councilmember Wallace commented on growth targets, and questioned how discussions will move forward to determine how much growth each area needs to accept. He noted the City of Seattle's extensive public process related to the Roosevelt light rail station planning, which includes an upzone to allow increased building heights. He said it is important to recognize that communities and neighborhoods differ in terms of what types of growth can reasonably be accommodated. As an additional issue, he noted that high-density development will increase the demand for infrastructure funding.

Mr. Wallace said he would like to see the partnership take a strong interest in suburban transit stations and to consider how they differ from urban stations. He questioned whether consideration has been given to the costs to provide TOD from the private sector side. As an example, zoning to 90-foot building heights would not be feasible because the Fire Code does not allow heights above 70 feet without changing the construction type, which adds to costs.

Ms. Lawlor said that, in addition to creating a roundtable of developers and major employers, the market analysis group is working with the Urban Land Institute in Seattle to convene a technical assistance panel to vet these types of issues. She said there are developers on the Oversight Committee as well.

Emil King, Strategic Planning Manager, explained that he and Mr. Inghram are participating on an East Corridor Task Force, which includes cities and developers. The focus is on this specific planning phase and the issues for the Eastside that differ from Seattle.

Councilmember Chelminiak concurred that stations in and outside of Seattle should be viewed and planned differently. He noted that the City of Seattle does not favor park and ride lots. However, they do make sense outside of Seattle. Mr. Chelminiak speculated that 20 percent to 30 percent of individuals in a TOD would utilize transit services. Mr. Inghram confirmed that this was a realistic estimate and noted that some very successful TODs might exceed 40 percent.

Councilmember Chelminiak referenced Dr. Davidson's earlier comment on social engineering and observed that the I-90 Lacey Murrow bridge could be considered a significant example of social engineering that enabled growth to areas east of Seattle. Mr. Chelminiak said he would like to see affordable housing as part of transit-oriented development in the Bel-Red corridor.

Deputy Mayor Robertson said one finding of the Light Rail Best Practices Committee was that Park and Ride lots are key to transit ridership. San Diego's light rail system is one of the most successful in the nation and has many Park and Ride lots.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Inghram said that Arthur Sullivan of A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) is on the Affordable Housing Steering Committee. Hopelink is represented on the Regional Equity Network.

Ms. Robertson said that a number of Bellevue residents are concerned about the circles on the map around the South Bellevue Park and Ride/Station and Surrey Downs light rail station. She noted that TOD is not feasible or appropriate at these locations. She said that TOD should be focused on where it is warranted and where it is likely to be successful. Ms. Robertson said the South Bellevue and Surrey Downs locations do not meet these two criteria. She suggested it would be helpful to refine light rail/transit maps by removing the designations for potential TOD at these Bellevue stations. Ms. Robertson thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilmember Balducci thanked staff for the presentation and questioned the end product of this effort. Ms. Lawlor said the study will produce Corridor Action Strategies with recommendations on housing, development, financing, and other issues. The Regional Equity Network will provide four rounds of smaller equity grants, one of which is funded through Hopelink on the Eastside. Ms. Lawlor said the information will ultimately tie into the Transportation 2040 Plan and Vision 2040 Plan.

In further response to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Hubner said the area was fairly early in the implementation phase for light rail when the Vision 2040 Plan was last updated. There is now

more certainty about the future of a high-capacity transit system in the region, which provides an organizing framework for planning for growth. He characterized the framework as a strategic action plan for the region.

Councilmember Balducci observed that the City has already done this planning with regard to the transit stations to be located in Bellevue. She hopes the work of the partnership will provide support for Bellevue's direction as opposed to trying to impose a new direction. Mr. Hubner said the partnership wants to be sure to involve everyone in the region in the study and discussion.

Dr. Davidson said he did not mean to imply that social engineering is a negative concept. He acknowledged that it is done routinely through zoning and updating the Comprehensive Plan. However, he wants to be sure that such decisions continue to be made by local government.

Councilmember Stokes expressed general support for the program. He is pleased to hear the acknowledgement that the South Bellevue Park and Ride is not an appropriate candidate for TOD. He concurred with Ms. Robertson's suggestion to modify related maps to reassure residents in this regard.

Mayor Lee expressed support for the goal of creating a strategic action plan. He noted his efforts to meet with federal agencies to discuss the City's Bel-Red Plan to create a sustainable community.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Inghram clarified that the grant funding goes toward the Growing Transit Communities Partnership and not directly to individual cities.

Mr. Lee wants Bellevue's Bel-Red corridor to be at the top of the list as a demonstration project. He encouraged the partnership to work closely with cities to address their specific issues and community character, and to ensure that local authority is preserved. He encouraged efforts to obtain federal funding for implementing projects in the Bel-Red corridor.

Mayor Lee thanked staff for the presentation.

Mayor Lee recognized Bill Grace in the audience, who will be participating in the Neighborhood Forum event on February 29, *Sharing Responsibility for the Common Good*, at City Hall.

At 8:03 p.m., Mayor Lee declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:14 p.m.

## (2) Animal Control Services Update

City Manager Steve Sarkozy reported that King County's Interlocal Agreement with 26 cities for animal control services expires at the end of December 2012.

Sheida Sahandy, Assistant to the City Manager, recalled that King County has been providing animal control services for 26 jurisdictions and unincorporated King County since mid-2010.

Staff is not seeking Council decision at this point. However, the City is obligated to provide notice to King County by May 1 regarding its intent to enter into a subsequent agreement.

Ms. Sahandy described the scope of animal control services including field services, shelter and adoption services, licensing, and criminal investigations. Field Services include the dispatch of animal control officers in response to resident calls and the enforcement of licensing, leash and clean-up laws.

Ms. Sahandy compared the current regional approach to potential sub-regional approaches for providing animal control services. One alternative is to renew the contract with King County to provide field, shelter and licensing services. A sub-regional model to consider is for the Bellevue Police Department to hire two to three animal control officers to provide field services for three to four cities (e.g., Bellevue, Kirkland, Mercer Island and Redmond). Each city would provide its own licensing services and contract with one shared shelter.

Ms. Sahandy presented a list of proposed guiding principles related to determining the best approach to animal control services. She described Bellevue's service usage for calls for services, shelter intakes, and the number of pet licenses sold to Bellevue residents. Renewal of the contract in 2010 sparked an enhanced effort to increase licensing compliance.

Ms. Sahandy said that 78 percent of Bellevue's calls in 2011 were considered non-emergency. She provided a comparison of actual 2010 and 2011 costs and projected 2012 and 2013 costs. The 2013 cost estimates are based on the proposed regional model for 2013-2015.

Responding to Mayor Lee, Ms. Sahandy said that transitional license revenue through King County, which was received in 2010 and 2011, was not included in the current contract for 2012. However, it is anticipated under the proposed regional model beginning in 2013. Ms. Sahandy noted that there is still time this year for the City and/or County to direct resources toward renewing the emphasis on licensing compliance.

Continuing, Ms. Sahandy compared the existing regional model and proposed regional model. The proposed regional model bases 80 percent of costs on usage and 20 percent on population, as opposed to the current 50-50 model. This is favorable for Bellevue because the south county cities tend to have a higher usage of services and lower populations.

Under the proposed regional model, the four current control districts, with six animal control officers, would be streamlined to two or three districts with five or six animal control officers. The County's goal is to keep each city's costs equal to or lower than 2012 cost estimates. Contract provisions will not be finalized until closer to the May 1 deadline for providing notice of the intent to renew the contract with King County.

Ms. Sahandy said that cities have requested greater participation in establishing service protocols under the new contract. A working group of cities will be involved with the County to address service protocols. There has been an agreement that no shelter capital costs will be passed on to the cities during the term of the proposed contract.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Robertson, Ms. Sahandy said the City's costs will vary somewhat based on the usage of services.

Ms. Sahandy displayed a slide of the three districts proposed for the 2013 Regional Model. However, this is dependent upon how many cities continue with a new regional contract. The Cities of Auburn, Kirkland, and Shoreline have indicated their intention to leave the regional system.

Ms. Sahandy said she will return to the Council on March 26 to provide further information, followed by an update and request for Council action on April 23.

Deputy Mayor Robertson thanked staff for the presentation. She questioned the ability of the County to implement certain cost-saving measures starting this year. Ms. Sahandy said the County is looking at implementing some measures sooner, including a move to permanent dog and cat license tags and bringing laundry services in house. In further response, Ms. Sahandy said that the negotiations include the consideration of continuing with licensing canvassing efforts.

Deputy Mayor Robertson recalled that, when animal control services were previously discussed by the Council, the costs associated with a sub-regional model appeared to potentially be lower. She expressed an interest in evaluating the extent to which Bellevue is subsidizing the overall regional model, given that Bellevue's service usage is relatively low. She suggested that costs be based strictly on usage. Ms. Robertson said she would be interested in the experiences of other cities and jurisdictions in managing animal control services.

Ms. Robertson suggested that, when the sub-regional model is compared to the proposed regional model, it would be helpful to have a table that outlines the projected costs under the sub-regional model, cost estimates under the 80-20 model, and cost estimates based on 100 percent of usage. She also would like projected revenues related to license canvassing efforts for one or all years of the contract renewal.

Councilmember Wallace questioned Kent's shelter costs. Diane Carlson, King County, said that Kent has the main shelter, which increases its usage, and there are no private or nonprofit shelters on the south end to ease the burden.

Mayor Lee said the City supports regionalism, and he would like to see equity in the sharing of the costs of animal control services. He wants to ensure that residents are receiving a benefit from the services. He expressed an interest in other cities that are providing their own services. Ms. Sahandy said she will provide additional information during the next update.

### (3) Legislative Update

Joyce Nichols, Interim Director of Intergovernmental Relations, noted the memo in the desk packet summarizing the budget released by the State House of Representatives last week. The

House budget contains reductions and cost shifts by the State that are estimated to cost Bellevue nearly \$1 million per year. Ms. Nichols said this includes permanently redirecting liquor excise tax revenues that currently go to cities to the State General Fund or to fund public health, as well as budget reductions that affect criminal justice services and Police officer training costs at the State Police Academy. Ms. Nichols said that one option for lowering training costs would be to consider an alternate training program. Ms. Nichols said that the House budget lowers the State's contribution toward criminal justice forensic lab services and District Court judges' salaries.

Ms. Nichols said the House budget provides new revenue options including a 1/10<sup>th</sup> cent increase in the sales tax by the County by a councilmanic vote, a local option restaurant tax of up to 0.5 percent, and a county-wide utility tax of up to 6 percent on electricity, natural gas, and telephone utilities. It is possible that the legislation could enable King County to utilize any unused utilities taxing capacity of municipalities. Ms. Nichols noted that a 1/10<sup>th</sup> cent increase in the sales tax at the local level generates approximately \$5 million annually in Bellevue.

Ms. Nichols said one potential for cost savings to Bellevue is to delay implementation of the next NPDES permit until 2015. Another would be for the State to allow certain incentives for local governments to implement low impact development techniques. Some of the proposed low impact development techniques are untested, and they add to the cost of processing permits.

Ms. Nichols said the Senate was expected to release its proposed budget the following day. That budget could potentially involve an across-the-board budget reduction of 10 percent.

Ms. Nichols noted that the memo also provides updates on the status of priority legislation. The Governor is no longer pressing for State control over the collection of the local B&O tax.

Ms. Nichols explained that ESSB 6582 passed out of the Transportation Committee last week. It authorizes: 1) A Transportation Benefit District to impose a vehicle license fee of up to \$40 by councilmanic vote, 2) King County to impose up to a one percent motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) by a public vote or councilmanic vote, of which 62.5 percent would go to King County and 37.5 percent would be distributed to cities on a per capita basis, and 3) County authority to seek a gas tax increase of one to three cents per gallon with a public vote, to be used for transportation purposes.

Regarding the MVET noted above, King County requested an 80-20 split of the money with cities, based in part on an agreement established three years ago which states that new transit service would be provided at the time of Alaskan Way tunnel construction as a way to mitigate traffic impacts. Ms. Nichols said the City has not yet been able to obtain a copy of the agreement. However, this would result in reduced funding for countywide transit services.

Ms. Balducci said the effect of the agreement is that the County would not be able to provide any new transit services. A small portion of the monies would be passed through to cities for road projects. She said this is a complex issue, and it is difficult to assess the anticipated impact on Bellevue at this point.

Councilmember Davidson said he is disappointed that the King County Executive did not involve cities in the discussion of the MVET issue before approaching the state legislature.

Mayor Lee commented that the King County Executive invited a number of mayors to a meeting last week to discuss the issue and to win support for his proposal. Mr. Lee observed that it was not favorably received by the cities.

Mr. Sarkozy said he did not recall hearing, in the past, about this agreement to provide additional funding for the Alaskan Way viaduct transit services, and he is unsure as to how the discussion occurred. However, it does represent a potential threat to Bellevue transit services if the agreement is considered to supersede the previous agreement regarding the allocation of service hours.

Councilmember Chelminiak expressed concern about the potential decrease in bus service, especially given the increasing cost of gas. Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. Nichols confirmed that the vehicle license fee increase of up to \$40 requires that the City establish a Transportation Benefit District first. This would generate approximately \$4.4 million annually.

Councilmember Wallace observed that a high percentage of Bellevue bus riders use Sound Transit versus Metro service. Responding to Mr. Wallace, Ms. Nichols said the King County one percent MVET would generate approximately \$7.5 million annually. Mr. Wallace expressed concern about Metro salaries and the County's overall costs of providing transit services. Ms. Nichols said she will provide a recent publication that describes Metro's operational efficiency efforts.

Dr. Davidson expressed concern about the impact of MVET policies on Bellevue residents. He said these issues should be discussed before they are introduced to the state legislature.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Robertson, Ms. Nichols said that Bellevue's portion of the King County one percent MVET would be approximately \$3.4 million.

Mayor Lee encouraged Metro to work on implementing the Regional Transit Task Force recommendations.

Moving on, Ms. Nichols noted that SHB 2787 would allow the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to continue construction of the SR 520 bridge while certain appeals related to the shoreline permit process are pending. The bill is supported by groups who want to keep construction going in order to complete the project at a lower cost. At the end of the permit process, should there be a decision that the permits had been improperly issued, WSDOT would be responsible for reimbursing any appeal-related costs.

Ms. Nichols said the bill was amended in committee to add language stating that WSDOT cannot contract for construction on SR 520 between I-5 and the western landing of the floating bridge until the state legislature has authorized tolls on I-90's floating bridge and/or has sufficient

funding to complete construction of the SR 520 bridge replacement and HOV program. This provision is expected to be the subject of much discussion.

Deputy Mayor Robertson observed that SHB 2787 is not on the Council's Legislative Agenda. However, it appears to be consistent with the Council's policies. Ms. Nichols confirmed that many of the policies reflected in the Council's State Legislative Agenda express support for completing the SR 520 bridge project as soon as possible. She believes this provides sufficient direction.

(4) Proposed Final 2012 Federal Legislative Agenda

Ms. Nichols noted the federal legislative update provided in the meeting packet. The proposed final 2012 Federal Legislative Agenda is provided beginning on page 3-23 of the meeting packet. Ms. Nichols explained that it was amended following the last discussion with the Council in January to revise the transportation investment priorities section to specify where they fit into state, regional and local plans. Staff plans to present the final 2012 Federal Legislative Agenda for approval on the March 5 Consent Calendar.

(5) Update on I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lanes

Ms. Nichols referred to comments earlier in the evening during Oral Communications about the I-405 express toll lanes. She suggested that staff review those and provide an update and response for the Council.

Councilmember Wallace observed that citizens are concerned about the potential for expenditures on tolling equipment before the I-405 HOT lane study is released in October. Also, he would like to know whether the City's conditions for supporting the project have been addressed, specifically the anticipated impacts to local streets.

Kim Becklund, Transportation Policy Advisor, clarified that WSDOT is delaying the purchase of equipment until the study is released this fall. She heard the testimony of the three speakers earlier in the evening. She said she would like to get the project schedule from WSDOT, and to compare the plans to Bellevue's conditions and concerns as stated in the Council's previous statement of conditional support. She proposed compiling this information into a table for the Council's review.

Responding to Mr. Sarkozy, Ms. Becklund said she would prepare that information within a few days.

Councilmember Wallace noted that forecasted toll revenues for the Alaskan Way/Highway 99 tunnel have been cut in half. Ms. Becklund concurred that the revenue assumptions and projections are in need of review.

Ms. Robertson questioned the time sensitivity of this issue. Ms. Becklund noted the lack of funding (\$1.2 billion) for the Bellevue to Renton segment. The State is aware that the bulk of

that project's funding will need to come from gas tax resources, and the state legislature is not expected to pass a funding package this session. Some new funding sources will need to be identified to get the I-405 HOT lane project moving forward.

(c) Discussion of Faith Communities Efforts to Address Homelessness

Dan Stroh, Planning Director, recalled that the Council requested a discussion of the efforts of faith-based communities to address homelessness. He noted that faith-based organizations have a long history of participating in housing projects. A summary of their activities is provided beginning on page 3-51 of the meeting packet. Projects include the Andrew's Glen apartments in the Factoria area, the Sophia Way women's shelter in downtown Bellevue, Tent City 4, the Eastside winter shelter at St. Peter's Methodist Church, and the homeless teen shelter at Grace Lutheran Church. Holy Cross in Factoria has a proposal currently under discussion, and the First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue plans to open youth family homes for students at the Eastside Academy.

Mr. Stroh said that community support for these projects varies. He noted the City's role as a development regulator to some extent. However, the provision of homeless services by a religious organization limits the City's role as a regulator. The City is a funder of housing projects through its membership in ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing), and a facilitator of projects in working with organizations and the community.

Arthur Sullivan, Director of ARCH, commented on the broad range of housing types, participants in housing projects, and issues/needs. He referred to meeting packet materials, which propose a cooperative approach to developing specific strategies that promote faith communities' role in housing and working in the most positive ways with the community. This process would begin with a Work Group of stakeholders (e.g., faith organizations, government agencies, nonprofits, and other interested parties) to identify broad issues and goals. If a consensus is reached that working cooperatively with faith-based organizations appears to be a feasible approach to providing a community benefit, the Work Group would host a Community Forum to share the results of its discussions with elected officials and citizens. The next step would be to identify a Demonstration Project to implement and refine the program. Mr. Sullivan said ARCH recommends involving as many players as possible from the beginning of the process.

Deputy Mayor Robertson believes that faith-based communities are an important part of the solution for affordable housing, and she supports the proposed approach in general. Responding to Ms. Robertson about the Holy Cross rezoning request, Mr. Stroh confirmed that the church submitted a Comprehensive Plan Amendment proposal to change a property designation from single-family R-5 (five units per acre) to multifamily medium density. The intent is to build some type of affordable housing project.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Sullivan said it is envisioned that the Eastside Homeless Advisory Committee, as well as other regional organizations addressing homelessness, would be involved in the proposed overall effort with faith-based communities. He suggested further discussion with those groups to help identify appropriate participants for the initial meetings. Mr.

Sullivan said this recommended initiative has been discussed with the ARCH Executive Board and is included in the ARCH 2012 Work Program presented for consideration under the next agenda item. Mr. Sullivan said it would be helpful to have at least one City Councilmember from the Eastside cities to serve on the stakeholder group.

Councilmember Chelminiak thanked staff for their work, and noted his involvement with the Eastside Human Services Forum and the Committee to End Homelessness. A new target group that agencies are beginning to address are homeless teenagers and young adults. One current effort is a plan by the First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue to open youth family homes for students at its Eastside Academy. Mr. Chelminiak acknowledged that projects are not always endorsed by the community.

Mr. Chelminiak said he supports partnering with faith-based organizations. He suggested involving individuals with general experience in housing issues on the Work Group, and he agrees that it would be good to have a Councilmember on the work group. He noted that one relatively new idea under consideration within the region is providing sites for car camping by homeless individuals.

Councilmember Balducci noted past conflicts between residents, churches, and local government in discussions about Tent City. She likes that this proposal is attempting to involve everyone early in the process to avoid conflicts later in process. She suggested notifying individuals who have been active in past discussions and processes (e.g., Tent City planning) about this proposed initiative.

Ms. Balducci believes that the City's role should be to contribute to providing safe and stable housing options. She is not willing to rule out any options. While she prefers to think of housing as a home/roof, she does not want to preclude the consideration of any alternative, including car camping.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff for the presentation and expressed support for the proposal. He noted the increasing number of homeless children and families, and expressed support for partnering with faith-based communities. He suggested focusing on the shared values that everyone has to take care of those in our community.

Mayor Lee expressed support for the proposed approach and for involving the community as much as possible.

Councilmember Wallace said he would like be involved in this effort. He noted that he needed to leave at 10:00 p.m. and that he supports the ARCH work program as presented.

- Councilmember Balducci moved to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m., and Councilmember Chelminiak seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(d) ARCH 2012 Administrative Budget and Work Program

Mr. Sullivan referred Council to the 2012 ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) Work Program and Administrative Budget provided in the meeting packet. The overall budget increased by four percent this year; however, member cities' contributions will not increase. He explained that ARCH will receive a small grant from the PSRC Growing Transit Communities Partnership, discussed earlier in the evening, as well as a national grant related to ARCH's home ownership programs.

Mr. Sullivan explained that two areas of emphasis for 2012 are: 1) Collocating housing projects with other public and private projects, and 2) Working on the ability to use funds to secure a parcel of land for a future program, while continuing to work for a year or more to pull the full project funding together. ARCH's first housing project in Bellevue was Brandenwood Apartments for senior adults, which is located adjacent to the North Bellevue Community/Senior Center. The ARCH Executive Board will continue to work to identify ways to supplement the Housing Trust Fund as well.

Noting the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, Deputy Mayor Robertson said the Council is not interested in, and would like to discourage any planning on a regional or local level of, development intensification of the South Bellevue area.

[Councilmember Wallace left the meeting at 10:03 p.m.]

Ms. Robertson referred to the Countywide Planning Policies update on affordable housing targets, and noted that she is the Bellevue representative to the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). She asked Mr. Sullivan to follow up with Paul Inghram of Bellevue staff to compare the City's and ARCH's positions.

Mr. Sullivan clarified that ARCH's role is to be part of and support the Interjurisdictional Team (IJT) that provides staff support to the GMPC. ARCH is not an independent player, but works to bring all of the different interests together to determine common goals and interests. ARCH is an interlocal agency whose work is targeted to support the City's efforts and interests.

Ms. Robertson said it would still be helpful for her to get the input of ARCH on this issue via Paul Inghram.

Mr. Sarkozy said the budget and work plan will come back to the Council for formal approval.

At 10:06 p.m., Mayor Lee declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

kaw