

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

June 27, 2011  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room 1E-113  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Mayor Davidson

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Lee called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately one hour to discuss one item of potential litigation.

At approximately 7:20 p.m., the City Clerk announced that the Executive Session would continue for approximately 30 more minutes.

The meeting resumed at 8:29 p.m., with Deputy Mayor Lee presiding.

2. Communications: Written and Oral

- (a) Renay Bennett commented on an article in *The Seattle Times* regarding payments that Sound Transit has been ordered to pay to one of its contractors because Sound Transit's light rail design in Seattle was deficient. She spoke in favor of the East Link B7 alignment through Bellevue, but expressed concern about the recent report by ARUP, the City's consultant, on that alignment. She was troubled by ARUP's work with Sound Transit and the use of some of Sound Transit's assumptions and/or data.
- (b) Joe Rosmann, representing Building a Better Bellevue, said that members of the group have been following the preparation of the ARUP report. He said Sound Transit has stated that its preferred light rail alignment through Downtown Bellevue is at least \$140 million less expensive than the City's preferred tunnel. Mr. Rosmann commented that he believes the B7 route studied by ARUP can be less expensive than Sound Transit's proposed options. He shared findings from a report completed on behalf of Building a Better Bellevue, and noted that additional information from the report will be released later in the week.

3. Study Session

(a) Introduction of Liepaja and Kladno Exchange Students

City Manager Steve Sarkozy welcomed this summer's Sister Cities exchange students.

Inta Gotelli, Bellevue Sister Cities Association, introduced the exchange students and thanked the families for their support.

Christine Corbitt, a senior from Issaquah High School, will participate as an exchange student in Liepaja, Latvia. She said she is excited to have this opportunity.

Samanta Kaleja, a junior from Liepaja, said she is grateful for the chance to come to the United States, and she believes this will be an unforgettable experience.

Elliott Roberts, a junior from Skyline High School, looks forward to traveling to Kladno in the Czech Republic.

Eliska Machackova is visiting from Kladno and is happy to be participating in the program. It is her first visit to the United States, and she enjoys the friendliness of the people.

Emma Petersky, a junior from Interlake High School, said she is looking forward to the opportunity to travel to Kladno.

Petra Vorackova, an exchange student from Kladno, said she is enjoying her time in the United States.

Deputy Mayor Lee congratulated the students, noting that he is proud of the opportunities provided by the Bellevue Sister Cities Association. The exchange students were welcomed individually by each Councilmember.

(b) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Robertson commented on the Bellevue Regional Library parking garage project, and noted that the Library Board has offered to come before the Council to provide a report. Myrna Basich, City Clerk, said staff will coordinate a briefing by the Library Board.

Councilmember Balducci requested information regarding the City's plan for emergency preparedness and the operation of emergency shelters.

(c) East Link Light Rail B7-Revised Alternative Final Analysis Report

Mr. Sarkozy noted ongoing discussions regarding the East Link light rail B7-Revised alignment. ARUP, the City's consultant, will present its final report on June 29 during a public open house.

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman recalled that the Council initiated the study of the B7-Revised light rail alignment earlier in the year. The purpose was for ARUP to produce as much information as possible to allow the Council to evaluate the alternative and compare it to other options. The final report will be presented during the open house on Wednesday, June 29, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.

The first open house was held on January 25 with 185 attendees, which generated more than 200 comments on the proposed B7-Revised alternative. The second open house was on March 8, and approximately 230 citizens attended.

Maher Welaye, Senior Project Manager, referred citizens to the City's East Link web page for more information and the opportunity to submit questions for the June 29 open house.

Deputy Mayor Lee said he was pleased to see that the second open house attracted more residents from different areas of the community. Mr. Sparrman confirmed that there is widespread interest in the project.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Mr. Sparrman said the final report has essentially no substantive changes from the interim report presented in May. The report analyzed the B7-Revised alignment, A2 Park and Ride lot alternative, cost and ridership issues, and opportunities for cost savings. Mr. Sparrman confirmed that removing the station at the Red Lion site reduces ridership. In further response, Mr. Sparrman said that the ARUP study did not address the B2M alternative. However, ARUP was asked to look for opportunities for reducing costs and/or enhancing the B7-Revised alternative.

Councilmember Chelminiak questioned why ARUP and Sound Transit worked together, as noted during Oral Communications by Ms. Bennett. Mr. Sparrman said that the cost comparison between B7 and B2M, provided to the Council in May, was completed by staff using data provided by Sound Transit. ARUP worked with Sound Transit because the latter's ridership model is complex and designed in accordance with Federal Transit Administration regulations. Sound Transit agreed to input the variables selected by ARUP to run an additional analysis.

Councilmember Wallace recalled a determination during the study that the East Main Station had to be a straight configuration, resulting in additional property acquisition costs to displace two hotels. He asked why there was not further analysis of a curved station configuration.

Mr. Sparrman noted that this was addressed by ARUP, who found that Sound Transit's policy is to avoid curved stations. ARUP's study concluded that such a configuration was not a viable option.

Mr. Wallace requested more information on the details related to this issue, and the point at which the determination was made by ARUP. Mr. Wallace recalled that he was in favor of building a station that would not displace two hotels.

Mr. Sparrman indicated that staff's goal was for ARUP to produce as much information as possible before the Sound Transit Board chose its preferred alignment.

Councilmember Degginger recalled that Councilmembers originally identified a scope of work to be completed for approximately \$50,000, which was later increased. He observed that City staff adhered with the principles set forth by the Council to ensure an objective analysis, and ARUP completed the work requested by the Council. Mr. Degginger thanked staff and ARUP for their work.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Lee, Mr. Sparrman confirmed that ARUP discussed a number of alternate alignments at a conceptual level, and concluded that all would be equal to or more costly than the B7-Revised alternative under study. Mr. Sparrman offered to share the maps and drawings created by ARUP with the Council.

City Manager Sarkozy said that he reviewed drawings at the time as well and did not see any potential alignments that appeared to be better than the B7 options already identified.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Mr. Sparrman confirmed that citizens may submit questions in advance for Wednesday's open house meeting, or they may ask questions during the event.

Ms. Balducci noted that there are four Council meetings before the Sound Transit Board's anticipated decision. She would like to have a Council discussion and review of the public comments about the alternatives before the Sound Transit Board decision.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Lee, the City Clerk said that the Wednesday light rail open house will be noticed as a special meeting, in case there is a quorum of the City Council.

(d) Regional Issues

(1) King County Districting Committee Update

Alison Bennett, Policy Program Manager, explained that King County has established a Districting Committee to adjust the boundaries of the King County Council districts as a result of the population changes reported in the 2010 Census. The Committee has released four draft district maps for consideration.

Ms. Bennett said that all of the maps meet the Council's interest of having Bellevue in at least two districts (Districts 6 and 9). Draft Map 1 also has a small number of Bellevue residents in District 3. Mercer Island stays in District 6 with Bellevue, except in Draft Map 2. Issaquah is added to either District 6 or District 9 in Maps 1 and 2, and more of Redmond is added to District 6 in all of the maps, except for Map 2. All options maintain three County Council districts in East King County. The boundary between Districts 6 and 9 varies somewhat in the four draft maps. Ms. Bennett noted that the current districting map is in the meeting packet.

Councilmember Chelminiak opined that Draft Map 4 best represents the region. In this map, two districts (Districts 2 and 4) are fully contained within Seattle, and portions of Seattle are in Districts 1 and 8 as well. He believes this is a fair distribution, with three County Councilmembers representing Seattle. Draft Map 1 provides four County Councilmembers for Seattle, which seems too high to Mr. Chelminiak. He is opposed to Draft Map 2, noting that Mercer Island has a stronger connection to the Eastside than to Seattle.

Councilmember Wallace concurred with comments about Draft Map 2. He said it would be helpful to overlay Metro's subareas over the map to determine whether any of the options are potentially more favorable in terms of Bellevue and Eastside transit service levels. He likes the idea of having Bellevue residents in three districts, and favors Map 1.

Councilmember Degginger questioned the appropriateness of District 9 boundaries, given that Bellevue has different issues than smaller communities to the south. He believes it would be helpful to have a district encompassing both Seattle and the Eastside. He is disappointed in the options, and does not believe that Bellevue's interests will be well served. Bellevue represents less than 10 percent of the population in one of the districts.

Councilmember Balducci questioned the broad boundaries of some of the districts. She suggested that communities to the south are more similar to each other than, for example, some of these smaller communities are to Bellevue within District 9. She observed that Bellevue residents might be best served by two full districts, rather than having a small percentage of the population as a minority in a third district.

Ms. Bennett indicated that the boundaries are generally based on trying to balance the populations of the districts.

Councilmember Robertson agrees with keeping Mercer Island on the Eastside, and she prefers Map 4. She thanked staff for bringing this information to the Council.

Deputy Mayor Lee said he shares concerns about having a small percentage of Bellevue residents in one of the districts. He believes it is important for Bellevue to provide input into the process.

Councilmember Chelminiak suggested that Bellevue might be better off contained within one district, perhaps paired with Newcastle.

Councilmember Degginger commented that much of District 9, which includes part of Bellevue, is unincorporated. He suggested that a district containing South Bellevue, Newcastle, Issaquah, and even into the Sammamish Plateau would make more sense in terms of issues and commonalities.

Councilmember Robertson is not in favor of placing Bellevue into a single district. She believes that residents are better served with two County Councilmembers. She noted that District 9 County Councilmembers have included Bellevue residents.

Ms. Bennett questioned whether the City Council was interested in sending a letter to the Districting Committee with feedback and suggestions.

Councilmember Degginger said it would be appropriate to express concerns about Bellevue being included in a district that is primarily unincorporated. If Bellevue is to be included in two districts, he suggested that the boundaries should be based on commonalities between areas. While Bellevue has had local representation on District 9, that might not always be the case.

Councilmember Balducci concurred with Councilmember Degginger's comments, and expressed support for sending a letter stating that Bellevue would like to see an option that more appropriately divides the Bellevue and South County populations.

Mr. Degginger observed that Bellevue has more in common with Issaquah, Sammamish, Newcastle, and Renton than it does with Enumclaw, Covington, and the unincorporated areas.

Councilmember Degginger asked that staff draft a letter to circulate for Council comment.

Deputy Mayor Lee concurred.

Councilmember Wallace noted that the Council's previous letter asked that Bellevue be kept in two to three districts. He supports Draft Map 4.

Councilmember Chelminiak reiterated his support for Map 4.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Ms. Bennett said the redistricting process must be completed by the end of the year. Councilmember Balducci observed that Map 4 is essentially consistent with the principles previously set by the Council. She suggested stating Bellevue's interest in being joined with areas with similar interests.

Councilmember Robertson stated that at least three Councilmembers have expressed support for Map 4.

As a final item, City Manager Sarkozy reported that revenues are performing below the levels projected in the financial forecast and 2011-2012 Budget. Construction sales tax revenues are low, as are B&O (Business & Occupation) tax collections. The City anticipates cutting an additional 2-3 percent in budget expenditures for 2011 and for 2012, and the limited use of reserves is an option as well. Staff is working to develop a plan for Council consideration.

Deputy Mayor Lee commended the City Manager for alerting the Council early about the budget situation.

Mr. Sarkozy noted that the economy is not rebounding as previously anticipated.

Councilmember Wallace stated his recollection that the City had forecasted a six percent year-over-year increase in sales tax revenue for the current and future biennial budgets. Noting the structural reset with the last budget process, he questioned whether impacts beyond the current biennium need to be reassessed.

Mr. Sarkozy said that adjusting the budget now should provide alignment with the long-term forecast.

At 10:00 p.m., Deputy Mayor Lee declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

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