

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

January 21, 2014  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Lee

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition.

The meeting resumed at 6:38 p.m., with Mayor Balducci presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Report on the Findings of the 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update

Acting City Manager Brad Miyake opened staff's presentation of the 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update. The update information is used by the Human Services Commission to formulate recommendations for the 2015-2016 Budget as they relate to the Human Services Fund and to federal Community Development Block Grant funds.

Patrick Foran, Director of Parks and Community Services, introduced Jim McEachran of the Human Services Commission. Mr. Foran said that special populations are identified for human services purposes including elderly residents and veterans. The City has operated the probation program for misdemeanor offenders for approximately the past 30 years, and he believes it is helpful to identify them as a special population as well. There has been a fair amount of discussion of how the collective impact concept is appropriate to this special population and on how to integrate services between the Police Department, prosecutors, and the Parks and Community Services Department.

Emily Leslie, Human Services Manager, said the Needs Update is one of the primary sources of data used by the Human Services Commission to guide its funding recommendations. Preparation of the update involved compiling the results of more than 600 resident surveys via phone and online; input from approximately 200 consumers, 43 providers of human services, and 20 community focus groups; key informant interviews; and data from other sources (e.g., U.S. Census).

Michael Yantis, Chair of the Human Services Commission, presented the key issues identified by the Commission including affordable housing, the increasingly diverse population, aging population, mental illness/substance abuse, and continuing support for families and caregivers.

Mr. Yantis said the production of affordable housing between 2008 and 2012 was considerably below targets to meet the community need and below the previous 15 years of affordable housing production. He suggested that Bellevue consider becoming more proactive in the development of affordable housing.

Alex O'Reilly, Human Services Planning Coordinator, described the increase in diverse populations, older adults, mental illness, and substance abuse.

Ms. Leslie presented the next steps. The Human Services Commission will continue to discuss funding focus areas through February and issue a call for proposals from the community in March. Bellevue participates in a joint application process with 16 other cities in King County. Recommendations for 2015-2016 funding will be presented to the City Council this fall.

Mayor Balducci thanked the commission for their work.

Councilmember Robinson said she has participated in this process through her involvement with the Bellevue Network on Aging. She referenced page 118 of the Needs Update report and said she does not agree that the aging population points to a need for increased assisted living facilities. She said there are many older adults, including above 85 years old, who remain relatively independent. She would like to focus on providing housing for independent senior communities like Silver Glen.

Referring to page 133 of the report, Councilmember Robinson noted that this section on people with disabilities does not mention those with hearing loss. She suggested there are things the City could do to enhance their quality of life related to the use of public facilities.

Councilmember Stokes said he appreciates the work and looks forward to the final product and moving forward with implementation. Noting his past experience with the Bellevue School District and the Eastside Pathways program, Mr. Stokes said he has always been impressed with the amount of information compiled and tracked by the City.

Councilmember Chelminiak thanked staff and the commissioners for their work. He highlighted that inadequate public transportation was rated as the top household problem. He said it is remarkable to see that, in 1996, 71 percent of the Bellevue School District student population

was Caucasian and now that figure is 44 percent. He said this highlights the increasing international influences on the community.

Councilmember Chelminiak noted the 14 percent of the population without healthcare and observed that it will be interesting to see, over the next couple of years, whether and/or how the Affordable Care Act influences that number.

Councilmember Robertson commented that, with regard to diversity, outreach can be difficult to households who speak a language other than English. She acknowledged that the school district is working to enhance its outreach. Ms. Robertson said the City is in the process of a diversity initiative and one potential outcome is to create a centralized translation service. She observed that this will be a great tool to use for general and human services outreach.

Councilmember Robertson expressed an interest in exploring the extent to which residents continue to need assistance due to unemployment. She concurred with Councilmember Chelminiak's interest in the impact of the Affordable Care Act. She would like information on whether the plans are providing meaningful coverage.

Deputy Mayor Wallace thanked the Human Services Commission and staff for the comprehensive report. He said it has been an honor to serve as Council liaison to the Commission for the past two years, and he appreciates their hard work.

With regard to affordable housing, Mr. Wallace offered his continued input, as a real estate professional, on vital strategies to address the issue. He would like to continue to participate in those discussions and he believes there are opportunities to find more cost-effective solutions. Although the City is not currently meeting affordable housing targets, Deputy Mayor Wallace noted that Bellevue has funded requests from ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) over the years.

Deputy Mayor Wallace recalled that the Bellevue Police Department, social services providers, and King County have been working together over the past year to address the issue of human trafficking. He did not see that mentioned in the Needs Update report but he hopes that remains a continued focus as there has been some success in this effort.

Mayor Balducci said there have been discussions in recent years about foster children, especially those who age out of the system. She questioned whether related services are offered in Bellevue beyond youth shelters and general youth services.

Ms. O'Reilly said data on youth needs is included in the report. However, she acknowledged that foster children could receive a more targeted focus. Mayor Balducci said she would like to see the Human Services Commission explore the issue.

(b) Presentation by Puget Sound Energy on the Energize Eastside Project

Mr. Miyake opened staff's presentation on the Energize Eastside project, which is an 18-mile transmission line from Redmond to Renton.

Mike Brennan, Director of the Development Services Department, introduced Booga Gilbertson, Vice President of Operations, Puget Sound Energy and Andy Wappler, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, PSE.

Ms. Gilbertson provided an overview of the Energize Eastside project designed to accommodate growth and to build new electric transmission infrastructure to ensure dependable power. She said that Bellevue and Eastside communities are the fastest-growing region in the state.

Mr. Wappler described Bellevue's growth since the initial electrical power infrastructure was installed in the 1960s for a population of 13,000. While PSE's system has grown as well, Bellevue is experiencing increased residential density, especially in the Downtown. Mr. Wappler said the system will begin to cause reliability problems as the demand increases unless the infrastructure is expanded. The electrical system is critical to support the area's economic growth. While energy conservation helps in terms of accommodating capacity, it does not provide benefits for system reliability or resilience.

Ms. Gilbertson provided greater detail on the current PSE system including areas of higher demand and how electricity reaches Bellevue and the Eastside. The purpose of the Energize Eastside project is to provide a key transmission line between PSE's Sammamish Substation in Redmond and Renton. She presented photos of the monopole structures that will support the transmission line.

Ms. Gilbertson said PSE is beginning its public outreach process, which will continue throughout the year. Permitting and final design are targeted for 2015 and 2016, and construction will begin in 2017. Ms. Gilbertson described the potential route segments identified by PSE, noting that additional alternatives can and will be considered.

Mr. Wappler described upcoming public engagement activities which will include the participation of a Community Advisory Group. This group has six members from Bellevue representing the City, Bellevue School District, community members, and major employers. This group will work with the three subarea committees to work more closely with neighborhoods.

Mr. Wappler said the first Community Advisory Group meeting is scheduled for January 22 in Bellevue. Open houses are scheduled for January 29 (Redmond) and January 30 (Renton).

Mr. Brennan introduced an overview of the City's policies and code framework that will guide the process of siting facilities within Bellevue.

Carol Helland, Land Use Division Director, said the City's permitting and electrical facilities framework is incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan, which is administered through the application of the Land Use Code and in compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The policy and regulatory milestones include the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update,

2005 Lochleven Substation upgrade, the 2008 addition to the Comprehensive Plan Utilities Element regarding sensitive siting designation policies, and the 2009 Land Use Code implementation standards related to the sensitive siting policies. The latter includes both procedural and substantive components including requirements for a siting analysis before PSE files a permit and heightened public outreach.

Ms. Helland described the community involvement requirements included in LUC 20.20.255. They are expected to complement the planned public route discussion described by PSE. In 2014, the City's SEPA process and alternative siting analysis will run parallel to PSE's Community Advisory Group and public outreach process. The conditional use permit (CUP) in 2015-2016 will be guided by decision criteria, design standards and mitigation measures referenced in the Land Use Code to ensure context sensitivity.

Ms. Helland said she was asked about the quasi-judicial nature of PSE's permit applications. She reminded the Council that the conditional use permitting process could become quasi-judicial and the Council would be called on to sit as judges regarding the issuance of the permit. She said PSE is not contemplating applying for permits until 2015, so the Council is not currently in a quasi-judicial window. Ms. Helland said one thing that could trigger that window is if the ultimate alignment proposed by PSE travels through the East Bellevue Community Council area. Should that occur, the matter becomes quasi-judicial immediately upon application. Ms. Helland said an appeal would be another avenue for forwarding the application to the City Council as a quasi-judicial matter.

Councilmember Stokes noted that the current transmission line through Bellevue is 115 kV and the new transmission line is 230 kV. He questioned the implications in terms of the structures and any potential danger.

Ms. Gilbertson said the 230 kV poles are taller and larger, and the wire configurations have larger wires than the 115 kV line. The 230 kV poles also have larger insulators at the top. Ms. Gilbertson said the same dangers exist with both sizes of infrastructure, for example, a vehicle striking a pole or direct contact with a line. On the positive side, the 230 kV wires are farther away from the ground and the public because the poles are taller.

Ms. Gilbertson said the 230 kV line is necessary to meet the region's needs. She said that other utilities have 230 kV and larger lines in parts of the Eastside.

Mr. Wappler said the poles for the 115 kV system are 70 feet tall, and the poles for the 230 kV system are approximately 100 feet tall.

In further response to Mr. Stokes, Ms. Gilbertson said that more than 70 percent of the identified route segments already have existing PSE transmission facilities.

Councilmember Robertson said she appreciates the outreach to the public and the City Council. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Wappler said three Bellevue neighborhoods are represented

on PSE's Community Advisory Group: Bridle Trails, Wilburton, and Somerset. The Bellevue subcommittee represents 17 neighborhoods.

Ms. Robertson said she is happy to see this project moving forward in order to ensure reliability and needed capacity. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Helland clarified the potential segment through the East Bellevue Community Council area. Ms. Robertson said citizens have requested more detailed maps. Mr. Wappler said the Energize Eastside web site provides a map with the ability to view potential routes in proximity to a specific address ([www.energizeeastside.com](http://www.energizeeastside.com)).

Councilmember Robertson noted that residents would prefer to have underground electrical facilities. However, her understanding is that 230 kV lines cannot go underground. She questioned what measures will be implemented to mitigate visual impacts.

Ms. Helland said Ms. Robertson is referring to Comprehensive Plan Policy UT-39, which describes when it is appropriate to place utilities underground. Ms. Helland said the policy applies to distribution lines and not to transmission lines. She said distribution lines are being placed underground where feasible as new plats and roadway projects are completed. However, the mitigation of transmission lines typically involves avoiding critical areas and potentially sensitive neighborhoods (i.e., avoiding residential areas to the extent possible) as well as minimizing the visual impacts through the approach to topography, landscaping, and other factors.

In further response to Councilmember Robertson, Ms. Helland said Policy UT-39 requires that distribution lines are placed underground when a transmission line route is intensified through a corridor. However, the City cannot force residents to underground the section of line between the main distribution line in their neighborhood and their homes.

Ms. Robertson questioned the impact on electrical rates. Mr. Wappler said the rate impact will be approximately one percent and will not occur until 2018 or later. Referring back to visual impacts, Mr. Wappler said the current 115 kV corridor contains two sets of wooden H-frames, and the 230 kV lines will utilize single monopoles.

Councilmember Robertson questioned whether PSE is looking at the impacts on residents' views from their homes. Mr. Wappler said the Community Advisory Group and subcommittees will be able to provide input on that potential impact.

Following up on an earlier question, Ms. Gilbertson said it is technically possible to underground a 230 kV transmission line. However, this raises issues including significant trenching and destruction to vegetation to install the equipment. Large access vaults need to be installed every quarter mile, and overall system and equipment repairs take longer. Ms. Gilbertson said the cost of undergrounding a transmission line is three to six times higher than an overhead line.

Mr. Wappler noted that the higher cost of undergrounding transmission lines is borne by the locality that chooses to have it in their area. The cost of underground distribution lines is split between the utility and the municipality.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. Gilbertson said the transmission line project will require substation upgrades and/or additions, depending on the final route. Mr. Chelminiak thanked PSE for its work on the City's electrical reliability study. However, he noted that certain neighborhoods still have reliability issues. Mr. Chelminiak suggested that the benefits of increased reliability could go a long way toward mitigating the impacts of the new transmission line.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. Gilbertson said the 230 kV structures are very strong steel. Most of the 115 kV structures are wood. She recalled that damage during the 2006 wind storm was due to trees falling and bringing the lines down. In some cases that also took the poles down. She said the 230 kV system will have improved reliability during a wind storm.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Wallace, Ms. Gilbertson said there are currently two 115 kV transmission lines and six wires (three wires per line). If the current alignment is maintained following the public process, both lines could be upgraded to 230 kV lines. Ms. Gilbertson said the 230 kV poles can accommodate up to six wires.

Mayor Balducci said the City has a great stake in taking a strong interest in electrical reliability. It is important for neighborhoods and for businesses/commercial centers. Ms. Balducci said it is encouraging that PSE is starting its public process early with the City and its residents. She suggested it would be helpful to allow public comment during PSE's committee meetings.

Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Wappler introduced additional staff involved in the project: Nate Caminos, Sr. Local Government Affairs Representative; Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues, facilitator for the Community Advisory Group; Leann Kostek and Gretchen Aliabodi, Project Managers; and Jens Nedrud, Engineer.

Mayor Balducci thanked PSE for the presentation.

At 7:59 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

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