

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

November 12, 2014
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Laing, Commissioners Carlson, Hilhorst, Tebelius, deVadoss, Walter; Councilmember Stokes

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Hamlin

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Stokes

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Chair Laing who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Hamlin who was excused.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Warren Halvorson, 13701 NE 32nd Place, said he served as part of a group of about 100 people put together by the city. The findings with regard to technology and neighborhoods were particularly interesting. Technology is a trend and a driver, not only for neighborhoods but also for businesses and companies like Puget Sound Energy. It took only a few years for wireless technology to take over wired landlines. The same may be the case for the electrical transmission business as solar panels, batteries, wind power and conservation continues to reduce demand. The city neighborhood study showed a deep concern for safety, health, and aesthetics. Undergrounding is a critical issue and deserves more comprehensive dialog and visioning. Electromagnetic fields and the corona effects are concerning to many, particularly when changing from a 140KV to 230KV line. Any new or major utility element beginning with the words "work with" must be suspect and frankly should not be used in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Tebelius told Mr. Halvorson it would be helpful to have his ideas and suggestions relative to the policies written down.

Ms. Heidi Dean, 11661 SE 56th Street, spoke as president of the Newport Hills Community Club. She noted the closure of the Red Apple, Hallmark and the pharmacy in 2009 and Bank of

America in 2011. On November 6 the Chinese South China restaurant closed its doors after ten years in Newport Hills. Multiple businesses are struggling, including Bill Pace, Cloud Nine, Newport Hills Mailboxes and Shipping Center, and Kumon Learning Center. The community club does the best it can to help direct customers to the Newport Hills Shopping Center businesses through events and social media promotion, but there is only so much that can be done by the organization to combat the real problem, which is the property owner's apathy about the appearance of the center and re-tenanting. From overflowing garbage cans to sporadic landscape upkeep, tired-looking awnings and sign scars, the shopping center simply looks sad. The lack of activity at the shopping center has triggered an increase in graffiti and break-ins over the last couple of years. The community appreciates the support of the Council in approving signs on Coal Creek Parkway announcing the Newport Hills Neighborhood Shopping District. The signs are a nice start but they are not enough. What is needed is a major overhaul of what is there, or redevelopment. The shopping center property manager has assured the community that there are plans for the property, but those claims have been made before. Since 2000 there have been two feasibility studies done on the center, both of which reached the conclusion that the property could be most successful if redeveloped as a mixed use center to include multifamily housing. Over the last year and a half the city has identified and brought forward multiple potential buyers and/or development partners, but the property owners have rejected all offers. The community is being held hostage by a property owner who has no real vested interest in the community, largely because the city does not have codes in place that address commercial blight. Help from city staff is needed to follow up on the suggestion of Councilmember Robertson to use the Municipal Research and Services Center to see how other cities treat commercial blight; that organization only works with city staff. The plight of the shopping center is complicated in light of the recent sale of the Mutual Materials brick factory to a company that intends to put a large mixed use development on the site that is less than half a mile from the entrance to the neighborhood at SE 60th Street. The developer has already approached Newport Hills business owners about moving to their site.

Ms. Catherine Taylor, 10885 NE 4th Street, spoke as senior local government affairs representative for Puget Sound Energy. She said PSE appreciates the relationship it has enjoyed with the city working on long-range planning issues aimed at ensuring that the city's electric and natural gas customers will have safe, reliable and dependable power. PSE partners with the city on multiple projects that contribute to the long-range plans of the city, including growth and development. The Energize Eastside project has been part of the city's Comprehensive Plan since 1994, though not by name, and is one of a number of PSE projects designed to implement the long-range plans of the city. She offered to give a detailed briefing to the Commission on the Energize Eastside project at any time convenient for the Commission.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to revise the agenda by moving item 11 ahead of item 5, and to approve the agenda as amended, was made by Commissioner Walter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

5. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW

A. June 25, 2014

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Walter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

B. July 9, 2014

Commissioner Walter referred to the fifth paragraph on page 6 and pointed out it should read "There also was consensus around the notion of limiting the number of rooms to four and the total number of occupants to four plus one."

Chair Laing called attention to the eighth paragraph on page 12 and asked to have the last sentence revised to read "He also suggested the term "weather protection" be used instead of "rain cover" because it is broader.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Walter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

C. July 30, 2014

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Walter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS,
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Commissioner Hilhorst said that along with Chair Laing she attended the most recent monthly meeting of the ~~Lake Hills~~ Newport Hills Community Club. The opportunity was taken to talk about what the Commission does and to explain the work to update the Comprehensive Plan. The meeting was well attended and there were concerns voiced about the redevelopment that is going on in Newport Hills and the loss of tree canopy. The issue of the shopping center came up as well. Time was spent in highlighting the importance of citizens actively seeking to understand and engaging in what is going on in the city.

Commissioner Walter said she attended the November 4 meeting of the East Bellevue Community Council where a presentation was given on the hot lanes coming to I-405. A question was asked about the status of the individual room rentals issue and it was stated that the matter has been forwarded to the City Council.

Commissioner Tebelius called attention to the fact that the city is being sued for not permitting a second marijuana retailer in the downtown. Chair Laing said the newspaper article incorrectly stated that the 1000-foot separation rule is a Bellevue rule; it is actually a state regulation. The proposed location of the suing party is directly across the street from the marijuana retailer that has been permitted by the city and who received its state license in the mail first. The city gave priority to the entity that received its state license first.

7. STAFF REPORTS - None

8. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments: Mountvue Place

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz briefly explained the annual process for Comprehensive Plan amendments and the role played by the Planning Commission. He noted that the Mountvue

Place application is the sole remaining amendment for 2014 and seeks to amend the Comprehensive Plan designation from BR-CR and BR-GC to all BR-CR on the 4.67-acre site at 14510 NE 20th Street.

Mr. Matz said the recommendation of the staff is to recommend approval of the application. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other goals and policies of the city for urban growth. If approved, the change will enable the goal for the Bel-Red subarea relative to developing a sustainable urban development pattern that dramatically reshapes the future of the subarea while allowing the area to transition gracefully from its past. The proposed amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city. The applicant has stated his intention to see the split zoning eliminated to allow for a unified development of the site under Bel-Red policy direction, thus advancing implementation of the Bel-Red subarea plan. The application meets the significantly changed conditions criteria in that the split designation was not identified during the Bel-Red planning process, and it was not foreseen that the split designation would prevent implementation of the Bel-Red retail/commercial district on the site. Additionally, historic amendments to the Bel-Red subarea plan never treated the subject site with any consistency.

The adjacent property also has a split zoning, but the split is drawn along an existing property boundary. That question was raised and dismissed during the geographic scoping.

Mr. Matz said a general analysis was conducted with regard to the development potential of Mountvue Place under the existing zoning standards and adjacent land uses. The transportation department was asked to estimate trip generation based on a build out of the site under a unified designation and they concluded that the increase in trips would not create unacceptable traffic impacts at the site's access point on NE 20th Street. Should redevelopment of the site occur, an actual concurrency analysis would be required.

There is a demonstrated public benefit associated with approval of the proposed amendment in that it would align with policies for urban growth areas redevelopment, and it would clarify the relationship between the site's designation and its evolving Bel-Red use.

Commissioner Carlson said he was not aware of any nearby property and business owners having weighed in on the merits of the proposed amendment. Mr. Matz said everyone within 500 feet received notice of the proposed action. No adjacent property owners have commented to date, and only one public comment has been received.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hilhorst. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Joe Tovar, 540 Dayton Street, Edmonds, spoke representing the applicant. He said the buildings on the applicant's site were constructed in the early 1980s and are nearing the end of their economic lives. He said the applicant is interested in redeveloping the 4.67 acres. Pictures of the site were shown to the Commissioners. The Bel-Red subarea plan calls for changing the monoculture of commercial uses that have existed there for decades to something with more of a mix, including a residential component. The proposal turns on the vision of the city for the subarea. The staff have it right in saying that the proposal meets all the criteria for approving a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The location is right for including a housing component given the shops, services and restaurants that lie within a five-minute walk of the site and is well served by public transit. The site is certainly suitable for development in general conformance with

adjacent land uses and surrounding development patterns; if it were not, the adjacent property owners would have spoken up. The split zoning does not follow any logical line, and the BR-GC zone does not allow residential uses. The Commission was urged to recommend approval.

Commissioner Carlson asked if there is a development in the Bellevue area that approximates what the applicant has in mind for the Mountvue Place site. Mr. Tovar said the development nearing completion on the old Angelo's site is close to what the applicant has in mind. That site is also designated BR-CR.

Commissioner Hilhorst asked how many residential units can be expected to be put in on the site. Mr. Tovar said the city analysis estimated 180 units along with a combination of retail uses. He stressed that while the applicant has conducted some feasibility studies, no plans have been drawn up yet.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Tebelius, Mr. Matz said transportation staff were given numbers based on a build-out of the site under the current configuration and under what could happen if the amendment were approved. The conclusion reached was that development of the site would not create an unacceptable traffic impact. At the Comprehensive Plan stage, calculations are made based on a worst case build-out scenario. A concurrency analysis will be required on the actual development proposal. Mr. Tovar added that under the current designation at full build-out there could be as many as 228 evening peak trips generated; under the proposal, the number of evening peak trips would increase by almost 100. In the grand scheme of things, adding 100 trips to the thousands of trips that occur on NE 20th Street would not be a significant percentage increase.

Ms. Michele Etsekson with Active Investment Company, 14510 NE 20th Street, Suite 205, emphasized her interest in helping to implement the city's vision for the Bel-Red subarea plan and asked for help in removing the split zoning, which is an obstacle to redevelopment of the Mountvue Place site.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner deVadoss, Ms. Etsekson said Active Investment Company purchased the property in December 2012. It was at that time that the split zoning issue was discovered.

Ms. Etsekson confirmed that some 180 housing units could be developed on the site.

Chair Laing reminded the Commissioners that decisions made at the Comprehensive Plan level must be focused on the criteria alone. What a future project on the site might include is not one of the criteria.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and it carried unanimously.

9. STUDY SESSION

A. Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments: Mountvue Place

Commissioner Hilhorst commented that the proposal makes sense on its face. Congestion is certainly a concern. In time light rail will help to alleviate traffic in the area, but the line will not be operational for quite some time. Mr. Matz said the trip calculations are based solely on peak

trip generation standards. The analysis is predicated on a worst case scenario of building out to the maximum allowed. The Environmental Impact Statement associated with the Bel-Red subarea study presumed a certain amount of traffic to be generated through redevelopment. For the Mountvue Place application, transportation staff looked at the increment of change that would result from designating the entire site BR-CR. The conclusion reached was that redevelopment of the site under BR-CR would not create traffic impacts that had not been anticipated. The reality of development is always less than the worst case scenario.

Commissioner Carlson asked if redevelopment of the site will occur all at once or will be phased over time. Mr. Tovar said it is too early to say exactly what will happen. The first step to redevelopment of the site is to remove the split zoning that is keeping the site from being redeveloped at all. Commissioner Carlson pointed out that Northup Way is four blocks away; 148th Avenue NE is two blocks away; and SR-520 is eight blocks away. If there is going to be additional traffic, NE 20th Street is a good place to put it.

Commissioner deVadoss asked what the ultimate impact on the school district might be as a result of people buying lots in Bel-Red and looking to convert the sites to designations that allow for residential units. Mr. Matz said the city works closely in sharing land use information with the school district, but they do their own future forecasting.

Mr. Inghram noted that in 2008 the Bel-Red plan was presented to the school district board. There have been a number of conversations with them in the years since then about changes anticipated in both the Bel-Red corridor and in the downtown. The decisions about when to actually build a new school facility are up to the school district, however.

A motion to recommend approval of the Mountvue Place Comprehensive Plan amendment to change the Comprehensive Plan designation from BR-CR and BR-GC to all BR-CR on 4.67 acres at 14510 NE 20th Street was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz said the recommendation will be before the Council prior to the end of the year.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS (CONTINUED)

Councilmember Stokes took a moment to report that the Commission's work on the marijuana ordinance and the Land Use Code amendment were well received by the Council on November 10. He said the retreat on November 18 will be helpful and enjoyable.

****BREAK****

9. STUDY SESSION (CONTINUED)

B. Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Inghram explained that there is no intent to update the subarea plans as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. Some discrete policy amendments are called for, however. The Southwest Bellevue subarea includes a policy that says the primary access to Surrey Downs Park should be from 112th Avenue SE. Over the years that policy language has made perfect sense, but with the development of the East Link light rail line access from 112th Avenue SE will be

completely closed off and the primary access to the park will be from SE 4th Street. The character of the park will change and parks department worked with the community on revising the master plan for the park. That work has been completed but cannot be taken to the Council and the SEPA analysis cannot be completed because the plan is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if the community is aware of the proposed policy language change. Mr. Inghram said there has been a lot of public engagement in the master planning process for the park. They understand that the Comprehensive Plan amendment is needed in order to fulfill what the community wants to see for the park. Commissioner Tebelius asked if the Southwest Bellevue policy amendment could be approved and moved forward on a track separate from the overall Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Inghram said the schedule for updating the Comprehensive Plan will be sufficiently timely, though the parks department would love to see the specific policy change happen sooner. If necessary, the Council can be asked to act on an amendment out of sequence. The policy change will be included in the public review draft of the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Laing said he called a couple of active members of the Surrey Downs Community Club to remind them the policy issue would be discussed by the Commission. He noted no one from the Surrey Downs community was present at the meeting.

There was consensus to move forward with deleting Policy S-SW-27 from the Southwest Bellevue subarea plan.

Mr. Inghram informed the Commissioners that the intent is to initiate a process of sequentially updating the various subarea plans following completion of the Comprehensive Plan update process. The subarea plan work may include making some adjustments to subarea boundaries. The city has grown and changed over the past decade and some boundary revisions may be needed to better reflect the way neighborhoods identify themselves and to line up with school district boundaries. Because the individual subarea plans have individual policies, it is not possible to simply change the boundaries on the map; such an action would result in policies not matching with the properties they point to. The proposal is to include the subarea boundaries map in the Comprehensive Plan with explicit direction to consider modification for each individual subarea at the time each subarea plan is updated.

Mr. Inghram stated that over the years the city has heard public comments related to subarea boundaries. People in Crossroads have requested putting the Triangle area of Crossroads back into the Crossroads subarea. The area was considered by the steering committee early in the Bel-Red process prior to the passage of East Link and the determination of station locations; the steering committee also recognized what Redmond was doing on its side of Overlake. The Commissioners were shown the land use map of the area prior to the Bel-Red process and noted that for the triangle area there was a combination of Community Business and Office, with the boundaries following some property lines but splitting others. The Office portion matched the Unigard site across the street and created a lower height limit along 156th Avenue NE. One reason for including the triangle in the Bel-Red subarea is the gap that on the Bellevue map looks like a no man's land but is actually part of Overlake Village, a designated regional growth center in Redmond.

Continuing, Mr. Inghram said the concerns of the community have always been about size and scale of buildings in the triangle area, along with views toward the west, and the transition to the

residential area to the east. After the Bel-Red subarea update was adopted and the light rail station moved a thousand feet to the north, the argument was made that the triangle area was less transit oriented. While less accessible to rail users, the area is still a corner of the overall Overlake redevelopment area. Adoption of the Bel-Red subarea plan allowed for redevelopment of the triangle area properties by creating a more uniform zoning pattern. The use mix under the current plan is very similar to what was previously allowed, and the heights are quite similar as well.

Mr. Inghram suggested four options: 1) leave things as they are currently; 2) redraw the boundary to include the area in Crossroads subarea while maintaining the Bel-Red zoning; 3) move the area into the Crossroads subarea and create a whole new zoning category for the area; and 4) move the area into the Crossroads subarea and go back to the old zoning. In the opinion of the staff, maintaining the current Bel-Red subarea boundaries and zoning will serve the community the best relative to allowing for predictable development and regulating building setbacks, view corridors, and transitioning to Overlake Village. In theory the third option would work fine but would entail a lot of work to get to the point where things stand currently. The fourth option would be problematic relative to the development that has already occurred.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Tebelius, Mr. Inghram said the fourth option was proposed by the residents of the Sherwood Forest and Chevy Chase neighborhoods. It is possible they believe going in that direction would help them in their fight against redevelopment of the former Unigard site. During the Bel-Red process there was a deliberate move to retain 156th Avenue NE as a dividing line separating the more intense development to the west from the transition area to the east.

Commissioner Carlson asked what the concerns of staff would be relative to Option 2. Mr. Inghram said the concerns were largely focused on legal and technical issues. Permitting development with Bel-Red zoning by referencing Bel-Red subarea policies would be complicated, and some questions would arise as to whether or not the Crossroads policies would apply to the area. There may be a technical way to fix that by creating the overlapping inconsistency but somehow pointing back to the policies that apply.

Chair Laing suggested that options 1 through 3 are essentially the same; while called something different, they all get to the same place. Options 2 and 3 would create a great deal of procedure aimed at assuring consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning. He said his preference would be to eliminate from consideration options 2 and 3.

Mr. Inghram agreed to seek additional input from the neighborhoods ahead of the next Commission meeting.

Turning to the Transportation Element, Mr. Inghram noted that the policies guide programs and direct how the city invests in different aspects of transportation ranging from pedestrians to bicycles, cars and transit.

Senior transportation planner Kevin McDonald said he was involved in the work to develop and adopt the city's first Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act in 1991. He said he also participated in the first update to the plan in 2004. He noted that over the course of almost two years the Transportation Commission considered three primary drivers in developing policy recommendations for the Transportation Element: 1) consider and incorporate community input; 2) integrate best practices, trends and opportunities; and 3) reduce redundancy and

enhance clarity. A great deal of community outreach was done in which the Transportation Commission participated with other boards and commissions. Through the Bellevue's Best Ideas program, support for improved mobility received a lot of attention, particularly in the form of supporting mobility options and facilities that help people get around Bellevue in ways that are good for their bodies, the neighborhoods, the community and the environment. The Transportation Commission considered updates to the Transit Master Plan and new regional mobility strategies, changing demographics, Bellevue's role in the region, and new tools and techniques, and extracted policy recommendations from those best practices topics for inclusion in the Transportation Element.

Mr. McDonald said the Transportation Element contains 156 policies and has grown over time. Careful consideration has gone into the development of every policy through the years, but less thought has been given to how the policies relate to each other. The Transportation Commission zeroed in on each policy and focused on clarifying language and consolidating similar policies. The Transportation Element also contains numerous maps, tables and charts, most of which are required by the Growth Management Act and the Puget Sound Regional Council; they must be present in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan in order to be certified by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and certification is required in order to be eligible for some grants.

Mr. McDonald noted that the packet material highlighted the major policy recommendations that represent significant changed circumstances considered by the Transportation Commission. The East Link project triggered a shift in the organization of the transit policies. The policy recommendations reflect the fact that the city has acted relative to light rail, and they position the city well in anticipation of a future Sound Transit 3 ballot measure. The Transportation Commission incorporated policies from the recently adopted Transit Master Plan and simplified the transit section substantially to remove redundancies. Several policy recommendations that flowed from the Downtown Transportation Plan initiative were determined to have a citywide application and those policies were extracted from that plan and housed in the Transportation Element.

One of the topics that captured the attention of the Transportation Commission and warranted several study sessions was the notion of developing multimodal level of service standards. The city now considers only the vehicle traffic impacts related to new development, and that fact fell flat with the Transportation Commission which wanted to be able to engage the community in a discussion of how policy and development proposals affect or can be affected by facilities related to getting around by walking, biking and transit as well as by vehicles. Instead of just looking at the function of moving vehicles through an intersection, the Transportation Commission wanted to look at level of service standards for all modes of travel.

The Transportation Commission also focused on the policies in the Transportation Element related to neighborhood protection. The current policies are focused on things like speeding traffic and spillover parking. The neighborhoods wanted the conversation broadened to include a wider range of solutions to match the transportation-related issues that have the potential to adversely impact neighborhood quality of life and safety.

Commissioner Walter said it is obvious the Transportation Commission put a lot of work into the Transportation Element policies. She suggested, however, that it could use one more pass to weed out some inconsistencies and incorrect references. The document is voluminous and not easily read. People began leaving their cars at home when the price of gas rose, but now that the

price has fallen there is a renewed focus on travel by automobile. The policies are forward thinking, but to some degree they must be taken with a grain of salt. Mr. McDonald pointed out that the packet includes the raw materials that show the work of the Transportation Commission. There are some references to tables and figures that no longer exist or that will exist in a different format, and all of that will be addressed.

Mr. Inghram said the work of the Transportation Commission will be used in developing a readable full draft with all policies, tables and maps. He stressed that the packet materials were intended to show the work of the Transportation Commission to date. The draft to be developed will be subjected to additional review by the city's boards and commissions as well as additional public input before it gets tied up into a single package by the Planning Commission and forwarded to the City Council.

Mr. Inghram clarified that the Transportation Commission is charged by the Council with working on transportation issues, and their work will inform the Transportation Element. The Planning Commission has charge of the entire Comprehensive Plan, of which the Transportation Element is one piece. The Planning Commission must take the wider view, including making sure there is consistency between land use and transportation, and to that end some tweaks to the policy language developed by the Transportation Commission may need to be made by the Planning Commission. However, every caution should be taken to avoid developing two separate recommendations for the Council to consider.

Commissioner deVadoss asked which policies in the Transportation Element were the most controversial. Mr. McDonald said there was not so much controversy as there was complexity. The notion of multimodal level of service and concurrency has the potential to be controversial, but currently it is just complex because there are so many different factors to consider. The work program the Transportation Commission will engage in after the policy language is adopted could identify controversies in light of how to evaluate different modes with respect to each other, priorities and public investments. Commissioner deVadoss suggested it would be helpful if the bulleted items on page 51 of the packet were to be prioritized. Mr. McDonald allowed that they are random and could be ordered in some way.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner deVadoss, Mr. McDonald commented that the Transportation Commission was very forward looking in the way it focused on best practices, trends and opportunities. There also was concerted effort put into scraping clean the convoluted policy language to yield the clear intent. Time was spent on making sure the Transportation Element is readable and provides direction to move forward with a strategy of mobility that makes sense for the present and into the future.

Commissioner Hilhorst asked if there will be a clear definition of what "multimodal" means. Mr. McDonald said there is no established definition of the term in the Comprehensive Plan. A work program in the future will be required to create a definition, or a series of definitions depending on specific circumstances. Multimodal is a term of art used by transportation planners and means looking at all applicable modes of transportation to provide overall mobility. In the context of Bellevue, the term does not include airports, whereas in the context of the city of SeaTac and Burien it does. In Bellevue it refers to walking, bicycling, transit vehicles and private vehicles. Commissioner Hilhorst suggested that a definition would be of great value.

Commissioner Hilhorst asked what neighborhoods the Transportation Commission reached out to for feedback. Mr. McDonald said the Comprehensive Plan update team reached out to all

neighborhoods in the city. The outreach took many different forms, including community meetings, electronic correspondence and surveys. The Transportation Commission extracted from the feedback the input related to the topic of transportation. There were no separate Transportation Commission-facilitated neighborhood meetings.

Commissioner Tebelius asked how many total trips for all modes of travel are constituted in the city on a daily basis. Mr. McDonald called attention to the table on page 139 that lists number of trips by Mobility Management Area. He said adding up all the trips would total more than 1.2 million. Currently trips by pedestrians and bicycles are not measured so their totals within the total number of trips are unknown. In the downtown at the intersection of NE 4th Street and 108th Avenue NE, during the evening peak there are more pedestrians going north-south than there are cars, but in other subareas there are likely more cars than pedestrians.

Commissioner Tebelius commented that a pedestrian trip includes someone walking from the office to get lunch during the noon hour. Mr. McDonald said it depends on whether or not a walking trip crosses the boundary of a Transportation Analysis Zone. The downtown has 43 Transportation Analysis Zones, each corresponding to a block. If a person walks from their office to a restaurant within the same block, the trip is not counted. Crossing from one block to another does count as a trip. Currently the default mode for any trip across a Transportation Analysis Zone boundary is the car, unless it can be shown that a different mode was used. The 853,000 daily trips in the downtown are all anticipated to be person trips that cross a Transportation Analysis Zone boundary, but it is known that not all of them are by car. The proportions, however, are unknown because the model is not sophisticated enough to yield that information.

Commissioner Tebelius said her suspicion was that trips by other than car are small by comparison. The problem with the term "multimodal" is the reality that people are driving their cars substantially more than they walk or bike. Trips by pedestrians and bicycles will never come close to the number of trips by car and transit, and using the term "multimodal" puts them on the same level. Mr. Inghram clarified that no attempt has been made to put them on the same level or to say they are equal. The focus is on drafting policy language that captures a more complete understanding of the mobility that is occurring in the city. The policy language is clear in calling for identifying a way to figure out trips by individual mode. Mr. McDonald added that in the context of a policy that would advance the notion of multimodal level of service and concurrency, there must be a data-driven model with better data on pedestrians and bicycles.

Chair Laing commented that the predominant land use in Bellevue is low-density single family neighborhoods. The draft transportation plan, however, other than paying lip service to preserving neighborhoods and shielding them from the impacts of light rail, ignores the predominant land use, both in Bellevue and regionally. The focus of the plan is primarily on the urban core within the city. There is massive foot traffic in the downtown to be sure, but little is said about how those people get to the downtown in the first place. The Puget Sound Regional Council has been requiring employers for years to gather data about how their employees get to and from work, so there is data available. From a concurrency standpoint, level of service was focused on emergency response times and the concern was the amount of delay and the length of queues at intersections. There should be no confusion created by including in the level of service issue things that have nothing to do with first responders getting to places quickly. The provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be completely separate from level of service. The idea that a zero-sum game can be created by looking at bicycles, pedestrians, transit and vehicles equally is worrisome given that the city's predominant land use is single family homes.

Commissioner Tebelius pointed out that the economic engine of the city is largely driven by a number of huge employers in the city. It is clear that those businesses make it possible for all city residents to enjoy much lower taxes. Nothing should be done to kill the golden goose. Clearly the major mode of transportation into and out of the downtown is cars. If pedestrians and bicycles are put on the same level by calling it all multimodal, roadway capacity will be diminished and the result will be negative impacts on the economic engine that drives the city.

Commissioner Carlson allowed that there are a lot of people who walk and bike in certain areas of the city, particularly in the downtown. The plans drawn up by the city have been focused on creating a neighborhood of the downtown and the number of people living there has steadily increased, so it is not surprising that there are more people on foot and riding bicycles there. In making transportation recommendations it is necessary to follow the data. If it is not known how many people travel by foot or bicycle, concrete recommendations cannot be made with any degree of certainty.

Mr. Inghram said the comments are well taken. The whole idea behind comprehensive planning is to make sure land use and transportation are interwoven so that the city's economic engine will not be harmed. What is being proposed is an incremental adjustment forward. Currently in the downtown all sorts of modes are in play, and in ten years there will be another mode in the form of light rail. The policies call for collecting and analyzing the data in order to adapt to different modes of travel. That is not to say that the primary mode of travel, even in the downtown, will no longer be the automobile. What is needed is recognition of the entire picture. The policies are not anti-automobile and in fact the vast majority of capital spending for transportation projects is for street improvements; the pedestrian/bicycle improvements represent only a small percentage.

Mr. McDonald said trips to and from work represent only a small portion of the overall number of trips. Those same commuters take additional trips during the course of the day and more needs to be known about what modes they are using. To some degree their trips during the day depend on how they got to work; those in a carpool or bus are more likely to walk for their errands than those who drive alone. There is data related to certain geographies, trip purposes, and times of day, but there is no comprehensive view of all the trips that are taken in the city.

Commissioner Tebelius called attention to policy TR-42 as an example of how using the word "multimodal" has changed the focus. Where the current policy language is clear about expanding the arterial capacities of intersections, the proposed language directs the expansion of arterial capacity in light of multimodal expectations, equalizing modes in a way that does not reflect the real world. It is not unrealistic to believe that before too long there will be driverless cars and the overall system will change dramatically. The future of mobility is not in bicycles and pedestrians.

Mr. Inghram stressed that the draft policies do not seek to usher in a utopian world in which there are no cars at all in the downtown. He agreed that things are changing. In the mid-90s it was normal for downtown workers to drive their cars to Bellevue Square for lunch or to run errands. That is clearly no longer the case. Trips into and out of the downtown either are not going to change or they will change in a different way, but trips by vehicle within the downtown are trending downward and are likely to continue doing so.

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:45 p.m. was made by Commissioner Hilhorst. The motion

was seconded by Commissioner Tebelius and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Walter called attention to policy TR-11 and commented that she both lives and works in Bellevue but does not have a safe bike route or an available bus route to use. The draft policy is punitive and misses the goal of getting people from far away to come into Bellevue without using a vehicle. She said she drives her car to work, uses it during the lunch hour to do volunteer work, and drives it after work to City Hall for meetings, from which there is no way to return to home by bus. Policy TR-11 is nothing more than a stick rather than a carrot and should be pared way back.

Chair Laing pointed out that housing options are generally less expensive in areas not served by transit. The people who live in those areas must as a matter of course drive to work. To then impose expensive restrictions on those commuters, many of whom are least able to pay for them, is going in the wrong direction.

Chair Laing pointed out policy TR-H and that there is no excess capacity. Throughout the Transportation Element, there are policies that highlight the importance of having safe dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities, which begs the question of why there is no policy requiring Sound Transit to put a dedicated grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle path along the entire East Link alignment through Bellevue.

Commissioner Tebelius voiced concern over use of the term "multimodal level of service metrics" in the policies. The term refers to the fact that planners think the conventional methods for calculating level of service for a road or intersection only address the experience of vehicle drivers. The term as used would calculate a wider range of roadway users, but there is no evidence to say it will do anything to help resolve transportation issues.

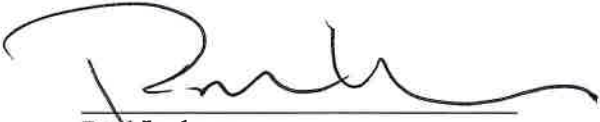
Mr. Inghram said that a pathway along Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue SE will be installed as part of East Link. The proposed pathway may not be as large as desired due to the required right-of-way, which first must be paid for and will remove right-of-way from another use. During the recession there was a shortfall in the projected sales tax revenues and that made it necessary for Sound Transit to cut back on some program elements, including funding for station access improvements. The city has had and is continuing to have discussions with Sound Transit about permitting requirements, all with an eye on getting as much as possible out of the East Link project.

Chair Laing noted that the state Supreme Court ruled in a case involving Sound Transit that the budget would be whatever it costs and the timeframe is as long as it takes. State law says an entity cannot avoid mitigation imposed for an essential public facility just because it would add time to construction or because it would be costly.

Commissioner Walter allowed that the number of people who commute by bicycle is low in the city, but suggested that could be because the bicycle facilities that do exist are not really interconnected, making it very difficult to get from one place to another safely.

10. OTHER BUSINESS - None
11. PUBLIC COMMENT - None
12. ADJOURN

Chair Laing adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.



Paul Inghram
Staff to the Planning Commission

3/4/2015
Date



Aaron Laing
Chair of the Planning Commission

3/4/15
Date

* Approved as corrected, February 11, 2015