

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

March 18, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Zahn led the flag salute.

(a) Day of Nowruz Proclamation

Mayor Robinson read the proclamation recognizing March 20, 2024 as the Day of Nowruz and encouraged everyone to learn more about the many cultures in Bellevue. Nowruz means “new day” in Persian and is a 3,000-year-old secular holiday marking the first day of Spring, the renewal of nature and coming together as a community.

Afshin Sepehri thanked the Council for the proclamation. He said Nowruz is an ancient festival embodying hope and the joy of nature’s rebirth, and the holiday is celebrated by more than 300 million people worldwide. He said Nowruz transcends borders, languages and cultures, uniting all of us in a spirit of renewal. He noted the Alefba Group will host a community Nowruz celebration on Saturday, March 23 at the Pardis Center.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

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

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days.

- (a) Heidi Dean spoke in opposition to the proposed appointment of Jonny Lu to the Planning Commission. She expressed concern regarding Mr. Lu's past involvement with the Newport Hills Community Club and asked Deputy Mayor Malakoutian to retract his recommendation for Mr. Lu's appointment.
- (b) Pearl Leung, Co-Chair of Friends of the Grand Connection, said the group's role is to serve as advocates for the project and to partner with the City to help identify and secure funding. The group has 39 steering committee members and 20 partner organizations. Mr. Leung said the group has launched a web site and social media presence. The group's core team meets with City staff twice monthly. She complimented the members of the engineering and design team for their hard work and collaborative approach with Friends of the Grand Connection. She noted the upcoming opening of the Sound Transit light rail 2 line on April 27 and said the group will have a table with information about the Grand Connection project at the light rail opening event outside City Hall.
- (c) Hanoch Yeung, a South Bellevue resident and daily cyclist commuter, said he is a board member of the Cascade Bike Club. He praised the bike infrastructure improvements completed in Bellevue over the past four years. He said one of the most effective improvements is the painted bike lanes on 114th/118th Avenue, which is a vital connection between South Bellevue and downtown. He said effective bike infrastructure does not need to be expensive, complicated or disruptive to cars. He expressed support for the Bike Bellevue plan of rapid-built projects to fill in the gaps of the bike network. He encouraged the development of bike lanes that are highly visible and implemented to provide clear passage. He thanked the Council and staff for their work on behalf of Bellevue residents and workers.
- (d) Suzanne Baugh, a resident of the Newport subarea, said she was a commercial real estate broker for 25 years and served on the board of the Lake Heights Community Club, including as president, for many years. She has also served on a number of boards for other local community organizations. She expressed support for the appointment of Jonny Lu to the Planning Commission.
- (e) David Haynes said we need a 21st century redevelopment of homes, buildings, schools and libraries that is more friendly to residents, pedestrians and cyclists. He expressed concern about the emphasis on vehicle infrastructure. On another topic, he asserted that predators and drug dealers from Seattle are committing crimes in Bellevue and Redmond and are not being arrested. He encouraged the Council to reevaluate commercial real estate at Crossroads Mall because the library is ill-suited for its floor plan. He said the

library could be expanded by moving the Police substation to the Mini City Hall inside the mall. He expressed concern about a person who comments regularly during Council meetings about issues not related to City business.

- (f) Paul Clark expressed concern about the rules for public comment during Council meetings. He said he was shocked by public comment a couple of weeks ago involving antisemitic conspiracy theories and vulgar language. He suggested that the City identify a way to require that people wanting to comment online during Council meetings prove their identity.
- (g) Joe Kunzler suggested that the City require a person's IP address and phone number when they wish to make comments through remote participation during Council meetings. He said if a person violates the rules twice within a month, they should be banned from oral communications for one year. He expressed concern about people who try to campaign during oral communications. He called for leadership from the State Attorney General's Office to clarify the rules about public comment. He said we all have to stand up against hate and stand up for what is right.
- (h) Annemarie Dooley, a physician, expressed support for the Bike Bellevue plan and projects. She noted that her surgical colleague ended up at Harborview Medical Center recently after he was hit by a car while riding his bike. She said there are a number of public benefits in the Bike Bellevue plan, including the health benefits of biking and walking and the positive climate change impacts.
- (i) Roberta Andresen said the Bellevue Arts Museum is facing a funding crisis and urged the Council to help the museum thrive rather than simply survive. She said Bellevue lacks cultural institutions typically found in similar-sized cities. As a teacher, she took students to exhibits and hands-on experiences at the museum. She has continued to work as a docent. She highlighted museum programs and events that serve the community. She said the museum needs the support of the City, businesses and individual donors.
- (j) Arman Bilge, a resident of the Bridle Trails neighborhood, said he recently invited the Council to join him in a group ride. He thanked the Councilmembers who participated in the ride and said it was great to learn about each other and the community. He learned that Mayor Robinson takes her dog on bike rides, Councilmember Hamilton recently bought a new e-bike, and Deputy Mayor Malakoutian can ride five miles uphill in the same time it took the group to go downhill for one mile. Mr. Bilge said there were approximately 20 people on the ride, including two parents with a baby and a student from Sammamish High School. He said he enjoyed the day and noted that people along the way waved enthusiastically to the riders. He recalled Mayor Robinson's comments about the importance of the BelRed corridor to connectivity across Bellevue. He encouraged moving forward as quickly as possible to implement the Bike Bellevue plan and to use the Transportation Benefit District to fund projects.

At 6:44 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 6:48 p.m.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager: None.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives

(a) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointments to Planning Commission

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said he was proud to live in this city and he praised the highly qualified applicants for the openings on the Planning Commission. He said the two individuals he recommends for appointment to the commission bring a diversity of skills, background and perspectives from different geographic areas of the community.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to appoint Andres Villaveces for a partial term expiring May 31, 2025 and Jonny Lu for a partial term expiring May 31, 2024 to the Planning Commission. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

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

(b) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointments to Human Services Commission

Councilmember Zahn recommended two individuals for appointment to the Human Services Commission. She said they live in different areas of the community and bring diverse backgrounds to the commission. She said additional appointments will be necessary due to vacancies related to the change in the meeting day from Tuesday to Monday.

→ Councilmember Zahn moved to appoint Mwanafitri Rashid for a partial term expiring May 31, 2026 and Jeanine Imfura for a partial term expiring May 31, 2027 to the Human Services Commission. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

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

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

(a) Council Minutes

Minutes of January 24-26, 2024 Special Meeting

Minutes of February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting

- (b) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period February 1, 2024 - February 29, 2024.
- (c) Resolution No. 10364 authorizing the execution of an amendment to a professional services contract (No. 2350125) with Tetra Tech, Inc., for the Lakemont Boulevard Culvert at Coal Creek Emergency Repair, to increase contract capacity by \$141,880, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,464,802, plus all applicable taxes.
- (d) Resolution No. 10365 authorizing the execution of Supplemental Agreement No. 4 to the Professional Services Agreement with Parametrix, Inc. (No. 1650266) in the amount of \$434,657.96, plus all applicable taxes, for a total contract amount of \$2,204,786.69 for construction support and public outreach services for 130th Avenue NE - Bel-Red Road to NE 20th (CIP Plan No. PW-R-170).
- (e) Motion to award Bid No. 24000, 2024 Overlay Program (CIP Plan Nos. PW-M-1, W-16, PW-R-46 and PW-R-199) to Lakeside Industries as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, in the amount of \$6,587,071.50, plus all applicable taxes. This project is funded by the Bridge and Pavement Preservation (Overlay) Program, Small Diameter Main Replacement Program, Traffic Safety Improvements, and Neighborhood Safety and Connectivity (Levy).
- (f) Motion to award Bid No. 24009, 130th Avenue NE - Bel-Red Road to NE 20th Street Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-170, W-16, and G-38) to Goodfellow Bros. LLC as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, in the amount of \$11,801,068.57, plus all applicable taxes.
- (g) Motion to increase the construction contract with Active Construction, Inc. (ACI) (Bid No. 19063) by \$786,745.36 for a total contract amount of \$7,316,274.36 plus all applicable taxes, for the SE Newport Way - Somerset Boulevard to 150th Avenue SE Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-185, PW-R-199, PW-M-19, D-64 and S-24).

9. Public Hearing

- (a) Public Hearing and Action on Resolution No. 10366 authorizing the execution of documents necessary to release an existing sewer easement located at 14025 NE 6th Place, which has been declared surplus to the City's needs and is no longer required for providing continued sewer service; the granting and recording of such release being deemed in the best interest of the public.

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson introduced the public hearing regarding the release of an existing sewer easement located at 14025 NE 6th Place.

Loren Matlick, Real Property Division Manager, Finance and Asset Management (FAM) Department, recalled that the Council declared the easement as surplus to the City's needs on February 26. The property is located near the intersection of 140th Avenue NE and NE 6th place adjacent to the Bellevue Aquatic Center. The property owner is subdividing the parcel into nine lots and will develop market-rate, single-family housing. The easement will be replaced with a new easement to be granted to the City for a realigned sewer line, at no cost to the City. The current utility facilities within the easement will be removed and relocated by the developer.

Mr. Matlick said staff requests action on the proposed resolution following the public hearing.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to open the public hearing, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Alex Tsimerman said the Council's decisions always benefit corporations. He asked the Council to respect citizens and to stop acting only on behalf of corporations.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to close the public hearing, and Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.
- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve Resolution No. 10366, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

10. Study Session

(a) Grand Connection Program Update

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the Grand Connection program.

Jesse Canedo, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, noted that Maher Welaye, Assistant Director, Transportation Department, was present for the meeting to answer questions if needed following the presentation.

Mr. Canedo presented a map of the full Grand Connection route extending from Meydenbauer Bay to the Eastrail and noted that the segment to City Hall Plaza is currently open and in use by the public as Phase 1. Phase 2 is the crossing to the Eastrail and Phase 3 is the future lid and public space over I-405. The project is a series of interconnected pedestrian and people-oriented experiences connecting the Downtown to the Wilburton area. Mr. Canedo said the project is important to the implementation of the Wilburton Vision.

Anthony Gill, Grand Connection Manager, highlighted public spaces along the route including Meydenbauer Bay Park, Downtown Park, street activations, light rail station near City Hall, I-405 lid and regional Eastrail. Phase 1 of Meydenbauer Bay Park has been completed and planning for Phase 2 is underway. Light rail will begin operating on the Eastside on April 27. Completion of the initial I-405 crossing is targeted for 2028 with the construction of the lid to follow.

Mr. Gill said the Grand Connection includes a number of projects led by multiple City departments, private property owners, and King County (Eastrail).

The Grand Connection is currently in the 30-percent design phase to be completed by the end of this year. The design contract is partially funded by a \$2.5 million contribution from Amazon. The group Friends of the Grand Connection is building a network of stakeholders and project supporters.

Mr. Gill highlighted the project schedule including the current online open house, an in-person open house scheduled for May at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, and an online open house scheduled for August/September. The cost of the final design is expected to range from \$25 million to \$35 million.

Mr. Gill said the development of public spaces benefits economic development, social equity and belonging, physical and emotional health, and a clean and safe corridor. He said there is an increasing demand for public programming and noted an increase from 30 special events permits issued in 2019 to 42 applications to date in 2024. He said the downtown residential and employment populations continue to increase as well.

Mr. Gill said public space management includes programming, partnerships, procedures and the built environment. Actions to date include the partnership with the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), the promotion of outdoor dining, pilot street closures for special events (Old Bellevue Wine Walk), the development of application guides for public space permits (e.g., outdoor dining and holiday lights) and an analysis of the process for special events and other programs. Mr. Gill said the project team will continue to review best practices from other cities and the user experience, deploy a new activation partnership with the BDA and to explore additional resources to support the work.

Councilmember Zahn expressed enthusiasm for the program and work to date. She noted similar projects in other cities with public activations and pedestrian spaces. She observed that there are City-owned sites on both sides of I-405 and asked how that aligns with the 30-percent design. She asked about the overall cost of implementing the program and suggested that if the City is pursuing alternative delivery for the program, it will be important to know the financing plan before completing 30-percent design. She suggested bringing the contractor on board early to involve them in estimating costs, value engineering and other activities.

Mr. Canedo said the two City-owned sites can play a strong role in the how the crossing connects on both sides of I-405. He said the City is in the final stage of contracting with a consultant to analyze those sites using community engagement regarding how to deliver public benefit through

the future redevelopment of those properties. He said that work is underway in close coordination with the 30-percent design work. The intent is that the consultant for the two City-owned sites will be able to work with the designers as the program moves toward 100-percent design.

Mr. Gill said the 30-percent design contract includes developing a cost estimate for the full design and construction of the crossing. He said the project is not yet at the stage to provide a full construction cost estimate. He said the City is also in the process of contracting with a funding consultant to help determine the various funding sources and potential sources.

Mr. Welaye said staff continues to solicit input from the community to better define the project and the next step is the alternative analysis before the open house in early May. Even beyond that point, the cost estimates will be in ranges. He said the City's consultant will analyze alternative delivery methods including design-build, progressive design-build and GC/CM (General Contractor/Construction Manager) approaches. He said more information will be available by July.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that the Council will need to discuss whether we are designing to project scope or to a budget.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and Pearl Leung from Amazon for giving an update tonight. He thanked KG Investment Properties and the BDA for their involvement as well. He concurred with Councilmember Zahn's interest in project cost estimates and the contracting approach. He said it is important to understand the costs as soon as possible.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said residents are largely unaware of the Grand Connection program. He asked about the strategy for signage and wayfinding. He said perhaps signage with QR codes could direct people to social media and online information about the vision for the program. He encouraged brand-building for the Grand Connection.

Mr. Canedo said there will be an increase in activity and conversation about the Grand Connection in the coming months, including information to be provided by the Friends of the Grand Connection on April 27 at the light rail opening.

Mr. Gill confirmed that staff is focused on exploring how to make the projects more visible to the public, including through the public space activations to date. He concurred with the need for wayfinding and other methods for raising public awareness.

Councilmember Lee said this is an exciting and important initiative for the community, especially to connect Downtown and Wilburton over I-405. He suggested that the vision is not quite clear and that is why the Wilburton planning effort is so important. He suggested elevating the focus on economic development as it relates to the Grand Connection program.

Mr. Canedo said the Grand Connection team includes staff from multiple areas, including those working on Wilburton planning, overall long-range planning and transportation planning. He

said they are working together to implement the vision addressed by the Council through its policy choices.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for the comprehensive update. He complimented former and current Councilmembers, public and private partners, staff, consultants and other stakeholders who have worked on the Grand Connection to date. Referring to the estimated design and project costs, Mr. Malakoutian asked whether design costs for a large project such as this are typically 10 percent of the construction costs.

Mr. Canedo noted that building over I-405, the elevation of the crossing and the challenge of integrating with adjacent development add to the complexity and cost of designing the project. Mr. Welaye said it will be important to ensure that the crossing will be compatible with the later development of the lid over the freeway. He confirmed there is a rule of thumb that design costs are approximately 10-12 percent of construction costs. However, this is a unique project of a larger scope than many public projects. He said design and construction costs have increased significantly over the past two years and staff continues to monitor that trend. He said staff will share more details with the Council as they become available.

Councilmember Stokes recalled that the planning of the Grand Connection began in 2012 and has been steadily moving forward. He congratulated staff for taking the Council's vision for this program to this point and encouraged them to continue their amazing work.

Councilmember Hamilton said he likes that the Grand Connection starts at Meydenbauer Bay, where so many people began their journey in Bellevue, and winds through the city to connect people and places. As a new Councilmember, he said it is exciting to see a project to be completed not too far into the future if everything goes as planned. He expressed support for ongoing investments and partnerships to move the project forward. He looks forward to determining how he can help to secure additional funding and to support the project.

Mayor Robinson said this is a transformative project for the community and it is unusual for a city to be able to complete this type of project. She asked about the feasibility of attaching the lid park after the pedestrian/bike crossing is completed. She reiterated her ongoing interest in a scramble intersection at NE 4th Street and Bellevue Way, next to Downtown Park.

Mr. Canedo said that, regarding the feasibility of the lid, the current work is to forward-engineer so that what is constructed for the crossing will be able to accommodate and blend with the future lid. Mr. Welaye confirmed that they are planning to design a structure that will be compatible with the future vision for the lid.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Gill said the consultant is studying a number of concepts for the crossing with varying levels of plantings and other amenities. He said a portion of the Eastrail in the Wilburton area will be functional later this year. Mr. Canedo said the Eastrail crossing over NE 8th Street will open this summer and pedestrian and bike users will be able to go from NE 4th Street to Totem Lake in Kirkland. The new Wilburton trestle is anticipated to open in 2028.

At 7:48 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:00 p.m.

(b) Informational briefing to review progress on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation Planning Initiatives

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's presentation regarding the Comprehensive Plan periodic update and the Wilburton Vision planning.

Mayor Robinson noted that staff is available for monthly individual meetings with Councilmembers regarding the Comprehensive Plan and Wilburton planning.

Emil King, Planning Director, Community Development Department, said the City's comprehensive planning dates back to the 1970s, before the state Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed in 1991. The Comprehensive Plan is updated approximately every 10 years, and the most recent major updates were in 2015 and 2004. The current update covers the 2024-2044 horizon.

Mr. King said staff will establish new policies and code provisions for implementing the Wilburton transit-oriented development (TOD) vision. He said the Comprehensive Plan update involves all City departments and the Boards and Commissions are reviewing the plan and proposed revisions. He said a number of consultants with special expertise are involved and the community has been engaged in the planning process.

Mr. King noted upcoming Council briefings in April and May and encouraged the Council to let staff know about topics they would like to suggest for more follow-up by staff. He presented a timeline of three overlapping processes underway: 1) Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, 2) Wilburton Vision Implementation, and 3) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review (completed in 2023). Adoption of the Wilburton Plan is targeted for this summer and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is targeted for this fall. Mr. King said there is continuous community engagement throughout the project timelines.

Mr. King said staff's work is advancing all elements of the Council Vision. The Comprehensive Plan update is guided by GMA requirements, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) requirements and county requirements. He said the process involves new types of analyses regarding racially disparate impacts, economic, climate vulnerability and air quality. He said staff continues to enhance and extend its community outreach.

Thara Johnson, Comprehensive Planning Manager, provided additional information regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update. She said the Planning Commission review of the draft plan elements incorporates work from the other boards and commissions. She highlighted a list of the dates, from January 24 to July 10, 2024, when the Planning Commission will discuss Comprehensive Plan topics/sections (i.e., land use, economic development, neighborhoods, community engagement, climate and environment, parks, capital facilities, urban design and the arts, housing, human services, utilities and transportation). Public hearings on the draft Comprehensive Plan Update are anticipated in June followed by the Planning Commission submitting its recommendation to the Council in July.

Ms. Johnson described the future land use map that was the basis for the Final EIS report. She recalled that the EIS was discussed with the Council last fall. The map reflects expanded Comprehensive Plan categories and increased flexibility. The Planning Commission continues to study the map and its review will be reflected in the final recommendations to the Council.

Ms. Johnson highlighted the proposed future land use designations and presented artistic renderings reflecting different levels of project scale and development intensity.

Policy issues that have surfaced during the Comprehensive Plan review include the amount and location of growth, affordable housing options, middle housing implementation, transportation mobility, air quality considerations, tree canopy, and climate and environmental policies.

Ms. Johnson said more than 7,000 individuals are expected to engage in the Comprehensive Plan update process over approximately two years. The process includes 65 events over a two-year period, with 45 percent of those community meetings targeted for diverse groups, multiple languages, low-income populations and youth. Ms. Johnson said there were 12 online questionnaires, one in-person open house, a community conversation sponsored by the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN) and youth workshops involving 150-200 high-school students.

Ms. Johnson highlighted input from the community including support for using a variety of tools and approaches for affordable housing, interest in mixed use development, support for increased walkability and access to services in neighborhoods, greater access to transit services, support for reducing carbon emissions, the desire for more entertainment and cultural activities, and support for small businesses.

Janet Shull, Strategic Planning Manager, provided the report on the Wilburton Vision implementation. She said there have been opportunities for Comprehensive Plan staff and Wilburton planning staff to engage in joint activities with the community. The Wilburton effort has included youth engagement, an in-person open house at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, online questionnaire and pop-up events throughout the community.

Ms. Shull said planning staff and environmental stewardship staff worked together since last summer to evaluate the opportunity for a Sustainable District. She thanked Mayor Robinson for attending the December workshop with stakeholders. A February 14 workshop discussed the prioritization of sustainability and urban design opportunities. Ms. Shull thanked Councilmember Zahn for attending that workshop. Next steps for the Sustainable District work include incorporating the sustainability elements into the draft Wilburton Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) and prioritizing overall strategies (e.g., district energy, green infrastructure, stormwater management, increasing tree canopy).

Ms. Shull highlighted the list of dates through June for the Planning Commission to address Wilburton topics (i.e., land use, transportation/streets/blocks, buildings, design, incentives and housing). Public hearings are anticipated in May to be followed by Council study sessions and action this summer.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the comprehensive presentation.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, liaison to the Planning Commission, thanked staff for their great work, which he has been following since early 2022. He said the Comprehensive Plan will shape the future of Bellevue over the next 20 years. He thanked the Planning Commission for their time and review.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. King said the FEIS looked at a fourth action alternative and staff discussed it with the Planning Commission. Mr. King recalled that the Council and the Commission wanted additional analysis, which was completed before the FEIS was finalized. In further response, Mr. King said there is still time for the Planning Commission to suggest refinements to the future land use maps. He said the map is expected to be discussed in more detail in May. He confirmed that staff is coordinating efforts related to community development planning and transportation planning.

Ms. Johnson said there has been a strong response to soliciting public input. She said staff is discussing providing an additional opportunity for community engagement in May when the full draft of the Comprehensive Plan is released to the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff for all of their work to date. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. King said the Comprehensive Plan update process is generally progressing as expected. For the Wilburton work, Mr. King said that based on comments regarding the draft EIS, staff decided to combine the policy and code work. He said staff is sequencing the Comprehensive Plan work, in part, to allow time for the Council to focus on budget discussions later this year too. Mr. Stokes said this planning work is a great opportunity to shape the community for the future.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed a strong interest in the Sustainable District concept. He said he looks forward to some individual briefings for more in-depth discussion.

Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. King said the draft EIS evaluated additional alternatives. Following the public comment period, staff responds to all comments on the draft report for the FEIS. Mr. King said all of the alternatives are still eligible for consideration.

Responding to Mr. Hamilton regarding the term “preferred alternative,” Mr. King said the term is used in the EIS and the preferred alternative was based on the Planning Commission’s early review of the draft EIS. Mr. King said it is a starting point for refinements by staff, the commission and the Council. Mr. Hamilton suggested adding “Alternative 4” wording to the term “Preferred Alternative.”

In further response to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. King said they could have additional individual discussion about multiple growth strategies and growth concepts. He said the FEIS was informed by and incorporates new state mandates.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for the thorough information and complimented staff from all departments who are collaborating in planning processes. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Johnson

said significant public input has been received to date. She said the City issued a number of questionnaires after the release of the public draft of the Comprehensive Plan in January. Ms. Johnson said staff is organizing the feedback, along with input from the youth engagement, into topical areas. She said staff will update the Planning Commission regarding the public input. Ms. Johnson said a public meeting is anticipated for May to discuss the draft Comprehensive Plan Update.

In further response to Councilmember Lee, Mr. King confirmed that staff continuously focuses on cooperating with multiple departments while refining alternatives for consideration by the Planning Commission and Council. Ms. Johnson said staff consults with subject experts to respond to questions from other staff and the public.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and noted that he would save his questions for an individual briefing with staff.

Councilmember Zahn complimented staff for working through this complex planning work. She stated her understanding of the identification of the preferred alternative as a reference point for the EIS evaluation. She expressed support for the key policy issues identified during the presentation (e.g., affordable housing options and tree canopy). She looks forward to the development of the Wilburton area and a Sustainable District.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. King said the BelRed Look Forward policy work is part of the Comprehensive Plan update. He said the technical analysis is included in the draft EIS and FEIS. Mr. King said there is a BelRed property owners group that formed during this process to advocate for mutual interests.

Ms. Zahn expressed support for the youth engagement in Wilburton planning.

Mayor Robinson said she looks forward to meeting individually with staff. She said she appreciated the new Comprehensive Plan section for climate and environment policies. She asked about the ability to require more permeable surfaces in the Wilburton area redevelopment. Mayor Robinson said there has been flooding in the Wilburton area in the past.

Ms. Shull said permeable surfaces have been discussed with the City's consultant and in community workshops. She said the City could implement incentives for green building strategies. She said there is also the opportunity for permeable pavement features in the public right-of-way. In further response to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Shull said there have also been discussions about whether actions should be incentives or requirements.

In further response to Mayor Robinson, Mr. King said he anticipates robust investments in the Wilburton area.

(c) 2024 State Legislative Session Wrap-Up

Ms. Carlson introduced staff's update of the recently concluded state legislative session.

Genesee Adkins, Chief of External Affairs, thanked Councilmembers for their interest and involvement throughout the legislative session.

Katie Kuciemba Halse, Acting Assistant Director, said that two key focus areas of the Council's 2024 State Legislative Agenda were infrastructure for a growing community and affordable housing land use. She said the state legislature approved 379 bills during the recent session. She said City staff reviewed 348 bills, 45 of which were considered high impact with multiple reviews.

Ms. Halse described funding in the 2023-2025 State supplemental budgets for Bellevue: \$800 toward the purchase of an electric fire engine with the City of Redmond, \$6.9 million toward the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail Bellevue Gap, and limited funds (\$2 million) for I-405/SR 167 widening and express toll lanes. She highlighted topics covered by approved legislation including housing, climate change, law enforcement and behavioral health. Ms. Halse said there is a \$275 million funding gap for I-405/SR 167 improvements.

Ms. Adkins highlighted a number of bills related to affordable housing and land use that were passed by the state legislature as well as a list of bills that did not pass. She said HB 1998 passed and requires cities to allow co-living, defined as housing where sleeping units within one home are rented independently. She said the requirements will not be implemented until next year. HB 2321 passed and clarifies HB 1110 to state that middle housing density requirements only apply around bus rapid transit stops after construction of the stops has begun.

The state legislature approved three of six initiatives that were submitted: I-2111 prohibiting income tax, I-2081 regarding parental rights and I-2113 regarding vehicular pursuits. The three remaining initiatives will appear on the November ballot: I-2117 repealing the Climate Commitment Act, I-2109 repealing the capital gains tax and I-2124 allowing individuals to opt out of Washington State's long-term care retirement program.

Ms. Adkins said next steps include working through the impacts of the new laws on the City's work, identifying new funding opportunities, collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders, thanking state legislators and planning ahead for the 2025 session.

Ms. Adkins thanked Ms. Halse and other staff who have put a lot of time into this work. She said the City of Bellevue is able to offer staff with good expertise that a lot of cities do not have. She thanked the Council for articulating clear priorities and for assisting in communicating and testifying before the state legislature.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for their work and Councilmembers for their involvement in lobbying with the state legislature.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their great work during a demanding short session. He asked about input from developers regarding requirements that would affect converting commercial development to a residential development. Ms. Adkins said the development community has indicated that the layering of incentives is important, including the

multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program. She suggested that City staff solicit additional input and suggestions from the local community of developers.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis regarding traffic safety camera revenues, Ms. Adkins confirmed that the City currently keeps half of its revenues. Ms. Halse said that under new state law, 100 percent of the revenues will remain within the jurisdiction.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed appreciation for staff's hard work and accomplishments.

Councilmember Zahn said she was pleased to see the transportation funding to be provided to Bellevue. She said the traffic safety camera legislation is consistent with the City's Vision Zero program goals. She expressed support for staff's early focus on the 2025 legislative session.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Adkins said there were a number of bills related to co-responder support. One bill establishes a task force, which could lead to recommendations and funding in the next legislative session. Regarding co-living, Ms. Adkins said the City's subject matter experts indicated that the new law is not all that different from multifamily housing requirements. However, land use code amendments will likely be needed. Ms. Adkins said the new law does not require the City to allow co-living citywide, but only in multifamily areas.

In further response to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Halse said the City is a member of the I-405/SR 167 Executive Advisory Committee, which provides the opportunity to generate the City's requests for moving forward with the improvements.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their effectiveness with the state legislature. He noted his ongoing interest in protecting cities from unfunded state mandates and encouraged partnerships.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff for their work.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff and complimented Ms. Halse for her work given that she joined the effort just before the beginning of the state legislative session.

11. Land Use: None.
12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.
13. Written Reports
 - (a) Intergovernmental Affairs Monthly Update
14. Unfinished Business: None.
15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 9:30 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw