

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

April 27, 2015
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Balducci and Councilmembers Chelminiak, Lee, Robertson, Robinson, and Stokes

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Wallace

1. Executive Session

Councilmember Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition.

The meeting resumed at 6:47 p.m., with Mayor Balducci presiding.

2. Oral Communications

Mayor Balducci indicated that 20 minutes would be allowed for oral communications based on the Council's temporary rule. She said she would prioritize the speakers by calling first on those addressing items on the evening's agenda.

- (a) Pete Lymberis, Intracorp, spoke in support of the draft Land Use Code Amendment proposed under Agenda Item 3(c). He highlighted elements of the proposed Crossroads project. He said Intracorp has been working with City staff and with community groups and individuals who have expressed an interest in the project. They have been in close contact with their neighbors SHAG (Senior Housing Assistance Group) and the Crossroads Shopping Center, and will continue to conduct additional community outreach. Intracorp looks forward to continuing to work with the City.
- (b) Mark Weisman, Weisman Design Group, said he is part of the design team for the Crossroads Village project. He said it advances the goals of the Crossroads Subarea Plan and will provide a park street, urban trail, park interface, and mixed-use village concept. The project blends into the existing neighborhood and integrates housing to provide a street presence and park presence (i.e., eyes on the street and park) that is not currently there. He described a path from Crossroads Village to the park with benches, lighting, and landscaping.

- (c) Brian Brand, Baylis Architects, said he is involved with the Crossroads Village project. The developer is interested in bringing a high-quality project with public amenities including the Main Street/urban trail commercial area, brick building facades, weather protection, and three levels of housing units. There will also be townhouses on the east and west sides of the commercial development. The architectural character is a contemporary interpretation of cottage forms.
- (d) Marsha Meyers, Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Crossroads Condominium Association, said their development is on the far east end of 15th Street, north of the proposed Crossroads Village site. She expressed concerns regarding traffic and parking impacts on 15th Street and potentially losing parking on the south end of Crossroads Village.
- (e) Laurie Lyford commented on the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update. She and others have been involved in the update process over the past seven years, and she believes there has been a failure of the City's legislative process. She said some residents will lose the use and benefit of their properties. She will pay \$41,000 in property taxes this year. She expressed concern that residents will need to hire legal assistance to make modifications to their properties. She said there is no scientific evidence to support the City's regulations. Ms. Lyford noted the environmental impacts of the light rail project and said there is a double standard for public and private property.
- (f) Anita Skoog Neil said the City's legal consultant, Professor Richard Settle, indicated that the Council has considerable power to set shoreline management policies for Bellevue. She believes there is not a scientific basis for the recommendations of The Watershed Company. She said residents are being over-regulated while City parks and marinas are allowed 25-foot setbacks and the light rail project gets a free pass.
- (g) Charlie Klinge, representing the Washington Sensible Shorelines Association (WSSA), expressed support for Option 3 before the Council as presented in the staff report. He said WSSA generally supported the Council's last version of the SMP Update. However, it has become more restrictive. He expressed concern that the City's consultant, The Watershed Company, is recommending retroactive vegetation conservation standards. He said residents are concerned about excessive vegetation providing habitat for rats. He asserted that the City's consultant indicated that rats deserve protection. However, he said this is a violation of health department rules about excessive vegetation favorable to rats.
- (h) Sam Ciapanna, representing the 1920 Club, presented a petition signed by property owners in the BR-MO zone. He owns an office building at 11418 NE 19th Street, north of NE 12th Street. In 2008, the area was rezoned to BR-MO, which raised the FAR (floor-area ratio) from .5 to 1.0 and the building height limit was raised to 70 feet. Property owners assumed this was to encourage high-density development. However, that development has not occurred. He recalled that, three years ago, a property owner sought to develop four lots into a multistory office building and requested a change in zoning to BR-CR. That issue came to the Council on July 8, 2013. At that time, the Planning Commission reminded the Council that the current medical office (MO) development

standards do not support redevelopment of the property. As a result, the Commission proposed that the Council initiate a set of Comprehensive Plan amendments that would apply to the entire zone. The Commission said the intent would be to increase the FAR from 1.0 to better match the 70-foot building height allowed. Mr. Ciapanna said the Council has not initiated the recommended Comprehensive Plan amendments and they are not part of the current Comprehensive Plan Update.

- (i) Bill McArdel said he and his wife own property in the BR-MO zone located at 1826 114th Avenue NE. In the 16 years of owning this property, he has never received an offer to purchase and/or develop it. He said this indicates a lack of growth and development in that area. He asked the Council to remove the restrictions that have hindered development and redevelopment in that area. He said a number of people in the audience support his position.
- (j) Osha Morningstar said she is a new resident living in Downtown Bellevue and a student at Bellevue College. She is able to live in Bellevue because she has a Section 8 voucher. She encouraged a housing policy requiring 60 days notice for a rent increase and noted that Seattle has adopted this requirement. She encouraged a policy requiring that a percentage of all new apartments be allotted for low income housing. She suggested a low-income rate for water, sewer and garbage utilities.

Mayor Balducci invited the speaker to provide her comments in writing. They will be forwarded to staff working on the Comprehensive Plan Update and to the Council.

- (k) Chittibabu Pacharu expressed concern that federal green cards are issued on a per-country basis. He said there is a 15-year backlog for applications from his country. He requested support for legislation to address this issue. He noted his efforts with federal legislators to gain support for the bill.

When the Mayor called on Alex Zimmerman to speak, he reacted negatively when she told him he would be limited to two minutes, as were the previous speakers. Mayor Balducci moved on to the next item, with Mr. Zimmerman and Dr. Davidson expressing concern that they would not be able to speak. Ms. Balducci noted that oral communications already extended beyond the 20-minute limit to 30 minutes. The security guard escorted Mr. Zimmerman from the conference room.

3. Study Session

- (a) Council Business

There was no discussion.

- (b) Shoreline Master Program Update Study Session 12 – Consideration of Amendment Options to the Council SMP Update Package

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced continued discussion of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update. He recalled that, on March 16, the Council provided policy direction to staff regarding what it wanted to include in the SMP Update. Code language was drafted in response to that direction, and staff is seeking confirmation of this language [Attachment A in meeting packet].

In addition, staff and the City's consultant evaluated the Council's direction and identified an area for which additional Council feedback is necessary. This relates to the 1,000 square foot vegetation modification requirement. Staff has prepared three options [Attachment B] for consideration this evening and is seeking Council direction. Following this decision, staff will bring back the regulatory package for Council adoption on May 18.

Lacey Hatch, Assistant City Attorney, said staff is following up on the March 16 discussion in which several Code drafting options were considered. At that time, the Council considered 12 regulatory alternatives and nine were moved forward for final drafting. Ms. Hatch said Attachment A includes responses to Council direction with the exception of the 1,000 square foot vegetation modification. Attachment B provides three options to achieve the 1,000 square foot vegetation modification change requested by the Council.

Ms. Hatch said staff is requesting: 1) confirmation that Attachment A is consistent with Council direction on March 16, and 2) selection of one of three alternatives contained in Attachment B. Ms. Hatch highlighted the Code direction summarized in Attachment A.

Councilmember Robertson noted language regarding the planting plans that state the applicant shall record plans with the King County Recorder's Office or its successor. Ms. Robertson suggested changing "shall" to "may," which was the intent of the Council. Ms. Helland recalled discussion that planting plans would be submitted with permits and therefore did not need to be recorded. However, she believed there was direction on March 16 to retain the recording requirement for advanced mitigation.

Ms. Robertson said she did not recall that as the Council's direction. She said she commented on March 16 that property owners might want to record vegetation plans because it adds value to their property. However, she does not want to require recording this information with the County if a property owner does not want to do so.

Responding to the Mayor, Councilmembers indicated their desire that the recording of planting plans with the County should be voluntary. Councilmember Robertson suggested advising property owners that it could be to their benefit to record this information with the County.

Moving on, Ms. Helland said staff created three options related to expanding the allowance for vegetation modifications. Option 1 allows 1,000 square feet of vegetation disturbance with limitations: 1) no increase in the total area of the lawn or bare ground, and 2) no removal of native vegetation areas in excess of 200 square feet. This option suggests that a property owner does not receive the exemption for the purposes of increasing low value vegetation or removing high value vegetation.

Option 2 states that 1,000 square feet of vegetation disturbance is allowed outright and adds an impervious surface mitigation requirement. There is no limitation on vegetation modifications of 200 square feet or less within 25 feet of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) or of 1,000 square feet or less within 50 feet of the OHWM. The additional requirement applies to any new impervious surface added waterward of existing structures in the Vegetation Conservation Area (VCA) and requires 150 square feet of vegetation within 10 feet of the OHWM.

Ms. Helland said Option 2 is a blend of some of the Mercer Island concepts previously discussed.

Ms. Helland said Option 3 is a hybrid of Options 1 and 2. It allows 1,000 square feet of disturbance with some limitation and slightly less mitigation. The limitation is that lawn or bare ground cannot be increased more than 200 square feet. The additional mitigation for any new impervious surface added waterward of existing structures in the VCA requires 75 square feet of vegetation within 10 feet of the OHWM.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Ms. Helland said the OHWM allows the structure setback to be measured from a fixed location. She said the VCA would be measured from the same fixed location, but the property owner has the option of obtaining a site-specific study.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for Option 3, which strikes a reasonable balance. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Ms. Hatch confirmed that the requirements are not retroactive. He said it is important to remember that this has been a very long process with the Planning Commission and Council. He said the City is trying to be as flexible and comprehensive as possible. Combined with an education effort for residents about the regulations, he believes Option 3 will be workable.

Councilmember Robertson expressed support for Option 3, as revised in the Council's desk packet. She prefers Council direction provided on March 16 on this issue but realizes a compromise is being proposed.

→ Councilmember Robertson moved to send Attachment A, as clarified tonight, and Attachment B's Option 3 forward to be incorporated into the final package for Council action. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

Mayor Balducci said she agrees with the changes made to Attachment A. However, with regard to Attachment B, she wants to be consistent and does not believe the regulations should carve out this 1,000 square foot exception. She suspects it will be difficult to follow. While she is not opposed to the regulation, she will vote against the motion because she would have preferred to stick with the path the Council was on in previous discussions.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 5-1, with Mayor Balducci dissenting.

Mayor Balducci said the full SMP Update package will be presented for final Council action on May 18.

- (c) Draft Land Use Code Amendment and Draft Development Agreement – Crossroads Policy S-CR-79 to enable a mixed-use multifamily development, subject to public benefits.

City Manager Miyake recalled that the Council initiated the draft Land Use Code Amendment on February 17, 2015, to enable a mixed use development on the former Top Foods site in the Crossroads Subarea. He said a public hearing on the draft LUCA and draft Development Agreement is anticipated in May.

Planning Director Dan Stroh recalled that the 2007 amendments to the Crossroads Subarea Plan eliminated the prohibition on the construction of additional multifamily housing units in Planning District E when part of a high quality mixed use development. New mixed use multifamily development was required to be assessed following the construction and occupancy of 300 new units.

Mr. Stroh described the Crossroads Center Plan which includes the former Top Foods site on the north end. The site is now zoned as Community Business (CB).

Assistant City Attorney Darcie Durr said the development agreement is authorized by state law and is a contract that must be supported by the consideration of public benefit to the City. The applicable statute authorizes the City to require infrastructure and other benefits. The proposed development agreement links temporary occupancy permits for specific buildings to the completion of park benefits fronting those units. The agreement also requires a Park Restoration Bond for work to be completed by the developer in the park.

Mr. Stroh described the four areas of public benefit outlined in the development agreement: park connection, park interface, urban trail, and the park-like character of NE 15th Street. The development agreement acknowledges that the project will be built in phases and ensures that public benefit will be delivered in a timely way as the project unfolds. All Phase 1 public benefits are to be delivered within two years of starting construction.

Mr. Stroh described conceptual drawings of the proposed development. He said placing the townhomes facing the park is designed to provide eyes and ears on the park consistent with principles of crime prevention through environmental design.

Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Stroh said the park and pedestrian design elements will be provided by Intracorp as a requirement of the development agreement.

Mr. Stroh described additional details of the residential and commercial development including the Main Street urban trail. The project also provides a park-like character along NE 15th Street.

Mr. Stroh said staff is requesting feedback on the draft LUCA and draft development agreement prior to the May public hearing.

Councilmember Lee asked Mr. Stroh to comment on the speaker's concerns expressed during oral communications about traffic and parking impacts. Mr. Stroh said the site is currently zoned as Community Business (CB), and the former Top Foods grocery store was a large and relatively intense use. Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Stroh said the standard review of this project will include a traffic study.

Councilmember Chelminiak noted the speaker's comment about potentially losing parking on the site. Mr. Stroh said the lot is privately owned and he has never seen more than one or two cars parked in the lot. Mr. Chelminiak asked staff to get back to the condominium association to clarify the parking impacts.

Councilmember Robinson said she loves the project and the concept of eyes on the park. She likes the urban trail and the connectivity to the Crossroads Shopping Center and the park. She likes the multi-generational connectivity with the Crossroads retirement center and other nearby uses and housing.

Referring to the park connection via stairs, Ms. Robinson noted that users of the ADA ramp end up in a different spot than those walking up the stairs. She would like to see a way to move the ramp to be closer to the stairs to enable everyone to access the park at the same point. Mr. Stroh said an earlier design was consistent with her suggestion. However, it resulted in a relatively steep and challenging slope.

Councilmember Robertson questioned the currently allowed density and maximum trip generation, without the requested Code changes. Mr. Stroh said staff can provide some scenarios and their expected trip generation, as well as compare to the trip generation under the former Top Foods use. Ms. Robertson said she would think that the traffic patterns would be different with more peak traffic in and out of the proposed development versus relatively steady traffic for a grocery store use.

Ms. Robertson said she is in favor of bringing the proposed Land Use Code Amendment and development agreement forward for a public hearing in May. She recalled that she was on the Planning Commission when the Comprehensive Plan changes were made. She observed that this is something that should have been done several years ago because it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She said there are significant public benefits to the plan including improvements and increased connectivity to the park. She would like information on density and trip generation, however.

Mayor Balducci said the Code amendment is made possible by the Comprehensive Plan changes. As a resident of Lake Hills living near two shopping centers that experienced significant decline before redevelopment, she said it is not good for neighborhoods to have vacant shopping centers. She supports moving the project forward. She asked staff to follow up with the speaker who raised questions during oral communications regarding traffic and parking impacts. She said she has observed parked cars at the former Top Foods site on rare occasions. She encouraged residents to participate in the public hearing or to submit written comments that will help guide the development of the project.

At 8:12 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared a break.

The meeting resumed at 8:25 p.m. Mayor Balducci suggested taking Regional Issues next as a courtesy to the Council's guests.

(e) Regional Issues

(1) Briefing on the Committee to End Homelessness (CEH) Strategic Plan
Final Draft

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, recalled that the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness was created in 2005 and was intended to identify the causes of homelessness and how to address those issues. She said Councilmember Chelminiak serves on the Committee to End Homelessness Governing Board.

Ms. Nichols said tonight is an opportunity for the Council to provide feedback on the proposed four-year strategic plan. The matter will come back for a second time before the Council for additional input.

Mayor Balducci welcomed and congratulated Mark Putnam, who is relatively new in the position of the Director of the Commitment to End Homelessness.

Mr. Putnam said the draft four-year plan provides an approach for reducing the number of homeless individuals and for improving the percentage of people the agency is able to help. The objective is to make homelessness a rare, one-time occurrence for any given individual. Shortening the experience reduces the trauma of being homeless and provides a better chance for avoiding homelessness.

Mr. Putnam said the committee has been working on the strategic plan since last year. Emily Leslie, Bellevue's Human Services Manager; Arthur Sullivan, Manager of ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing); Hopelink; Congregations for the Homeless; Lifewire; Imagine Housing; Sophia Way; and others serve on subcommittees and are part of the process.

Mr. Putnam highlighted the successes and ongoing challenges related to the 10-year plan. He said 5,700 more housing units have been dedicated for the homeless, and 36,000 individuals have exited homelessness. However, a growing number of people are becoming homeless and funding continues to be a challenge.

Mr. Putnam said homelessness disproportionately affects non-white individuals, and homelessness is viewed as a symptom of poverty, disparities in the criminal justice system, and a number of other factors. The most recent annual count in King County found 10,047 homeless individuals, which includes 3,772 living outdoors.

Mr. Putnam presented information on the length of homelessness and the need for permanent housing, including landlords who are willing to accept housing vouchers. After two years of housing stability, 18 percent return to being homeless.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Mr. Putnam said emergency shelter experiences can be short. However, stays at family shelters are typically 90 days to 6 months. With transitional housing, funding is typically limited to two years. The agency is trying to limit the time that individuals are in transitional housing and to realign some of the transitional housing to permanent housing models.

Continuing, Mr. Putnam said homelessness occurs in every zip code in King County. Causes include high housing and rental costs, economic conditions (including unemployment), demographic composition of the community, the lack of a mental health safety net, and the transient nature of specific areas. Washington ranks 47th of states in terms of available psychiatric beds.

Mr. Putnam described the financial resources available to address homelessness, which are largely targeted toward specific populations. He highlighted elements of the 2015-2019 CEH Strategic Plan's goals, strategies and action steps. He noted the need to increase public awareness and to engage the community in addressing homelessness.

Mr. Putnam presented the strategic plan timeline. The draft plan proposes combining the Interagency Council and the Governing Board into a single leadership body. The Committee is seeking Bellevue's endorsement of the plan. The plan will also be presented to the Sound Cities Association's public issues committee and Board, City of Seattle, and King County.

Councilmember Chelminiak said this is a difficult issue from a policy standpoint. He noted his past concerns that the Committee was mandating certain activities for cities that he thought they would not want to do. He said some parties in Seattle have indicated that the problem related to Tent Cities lies with the suburbs. Mr. Chelminiak observed that there is political will on the Eastside to address the issues. He said the Committee's work has been good in challenging the way communities view homelessness and in establishing specific targets for shortening periods of homelessness and other measures.

Councilmember Lee said these are good strategies. However, the issue is addressing the problem in the Bellevue Way. He observed that Bellevue is addressing the challenges in part through ARCH and homeless shelters. Mr. Lee noted the work of faith-based organizations in addressing homelessness. He knows that most instances of homelessness are circumstantial and situational, but there are some who will always be homeless. He observed that mental health services are important, and the State and region are seriously lacking in that regard.

Mr. Putnam said the Committee has set a broad strategic plan and is also developing implementation plans by sub-populations. The first component will be initiated in June for youth and young adults. He observed that mentally ill individuals will not necessarily always be homeless. He said the best strategy for the mentally ill and chronically homeless has proven to be permanent supportive housing.

Councilmember Lee reiterated that it is important to provide mental health services. He observed that some homeless individuals sleep in their cars and prefer Bellevue as being safer than other

areas. However, his understanding is that Park patrols and the Police can be very hard on these individuals. Megan Gibbard said some cities have safe car camping areas with bathrooms. She said the Committee does not see this as a long-term solution but it can be an effective short-term safer alternative. She said some churches on the Eastside are hosting car camping.

Councilmember Lee questioned whether this is something the City could consider. Ms. Leslie said those programs are typically sponsored by the faith-based community. Mr. Lee questioned the potential for programs in City parks.

Councilmember Chelminiak suggested that that is a policy issue the Council can discuss. One advantage of faith-based locations is church volunteers who also help guide people to needed services.

Councilmember Robinson expressed support for the program which she believes effectively tackles the paralysis of despair.

Councilmember Robertson said she supports establishing an Interest Statement and would like to see more aggressive language in that statement. She suggested it is more effective and less expensive to try to prevent homelessness before people lose housing. She observed that it is better to provide rent assistance, for example, than to spend more money to re-house individuals. She expressed support for the Best Starts for Kids initiative. However, she believes more needs to be done.

Councilmember Stokes said part of the solution would be more funding. As the City and Council move forward to develop an affordable housing plan, he believes it is important to include homelessness strategies as part of broader housing policies.

Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Putnam said Salt Lake City has found permanent supportive housing to be more cost-effective than providing many of the services needed to respond to crisis situations of homelessness. He said the Salt Lake City approach has been operating for approximately 10 years and involves the entire state, the community, and the Mormon Church.

Mayor Balducci noted Council support for directing staff to develop an Interest Statement endorsing the Committee's strategic plan. She said the City understands that this is a difficult and complex problem. As the former Director of the King County jail system, she is aware of where many mentally ill individuals are housed. She said this is a terrible way to address mental health issues. It is not cost-effective, does not prevent crime or recidivism, and does not help the people who need help. Ms. Balducci spoke to the importance of prevention and addressing issues before people become homeless. She thanked staff for all of their work in this area.

(2) Legislative Update

Ms. Nichols said the state legislature is back in session beginning April 30 because it has been unable to reach a compromise on the operating budget and how it will fund K-12 education. The other key challenge is passing a transportation package, and staff and the City's lobbyist continue to advocate on the City's behalf.

With regard to federal legislation, Ms. Nichols said staff is revising the Council's Federal Legislative Agenda. The proposed approach involves capitalizing on the good publicity surrounding the East Link Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sound Transit and upcoming projects in the Bel-Red corridor. Staff is working to build a federal legislative agenda that ties each element in the agenda to a specific funding request of Congress. This will target the City's and Council's advocacy efforts in conversations throughout the community and region.

Ms. Nichols suggested enhancing the City's efforts to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with Bellevue's delegation. The success of the East Link project and other projects will rely heavily on federal funding assistance. She said the City needs to build on the efforts of Councilmember Lee with national organizations that work on behalf of cities.

As a second item, Ms. Nichols referred the Council to a draft letter in the meeting packet expressing support for HR 213, which is bipartisan legislation currently in the House. She noted comments during oral communications regarding this proposed bill. She said the bill is supported by Congressman Adam Smith, Congressman Dave Reichert, Congressman Rick Larsen, and Congressman Jim McDermott. The legislation would help ease the processing of the backlog of applications by H-1B visa holders to obtain a green card. These individuals are working and paying taxes legally in the country. The bill changes the per-country maximum to a first come-first served basis. Ms. Nichols requested Council input on the draft letter.

Mayor Balducci said this issue came to her attention at an open house sponsored by Congressman Smith. A large number of individuals spoke during this forum including many who live and/or work in Bellevue. The legislation affects a procedural rule about how green cards are processed. She said it passed the Senate last year and is pending in the House. Mayor Balducci encouraged sending the letter of support.

Councilmember Lee said he is very supportive. This is a significant issue that affects immigrants and the overall community, and reform is needed.

Mayor Balducci noted that Councilmember Lee has been working for several years on issues related to the impacts of immigration on the City. Mr. Lee suggested facilitating broader community engagement in immigration issues.

Councilmember Robertson said she supports sending the letter.

Mayor Balducci noted general agreement by the Council to send the letter of support.

Councilmember Robertson observed that the King County Council travels to Washington, D.C., together to advocate for their interests. She said Bellevue has not done this since she has served on the Council. She suggested that three or four Councilmembers travel to Washington, D.C., together sometime within the next year, whenever the timing would be most effective.

(d) Review of the Recommended Comprehensive Plan Update

Mayor Balducci observed that the Council has had one discussion so far on the recommended Comprehensive Plan Update. Noting the limited time remaining for the meeting, she suggested that one or two additional sessions will be necessary to fully address the policies and issues.

Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Planning Manager, said key questions to consider for each Element include understanding the proposed changes and whether additional information is needed for certain topics. The policy review tables show a comparison to the original language in strikeout format. Staff will provide printed copies that reflect the latest changes.

Mr. Inghram asked whether there were any follow-up questions to the previous discussion of the Neighborhood Element. Mayor Balducci suggested continuing with the staff's presentation of the proposed changes. She does not feel prepared at this point to provide feedback. However, she invited other Councilmembers to provide specific proposals tonight if they are prepared to do so.

Councilmember Robertson expressed support for the Neighborhood Element and recalled that there was considerable Council discussion regarding the proposed changes in Subarea boundaries. Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Planning Commission Vice Chair Michelle Hilhorst said the Commission received a great deal of input that neighborhoods have distinctive characteristics and needs.

Councilmember Robertson questioned whether the Commission's public hearing resulted in substantive recommended changes to the Neighborhood Element and/or negative comments. Ms. Hilhorst said there were not substantive recommendations or proposals. Ms. Robertson questioned the level of input from neighborhood leaders or the general public on the specific proposed Subarea boundary changes. Ms. Hilhorst said there was not much specific feedback on the proposed boundaries. However, the most discussion on that topic related to the triangle neighborhood in the Crossroads area, which could potentially be included in one of two Subareas.

Mr. Inghram said staff will provide more details on the community outreach on the proposed boundaries.

Councilmember Lee questioned the process for obtaining neighborhood input. Mr. Inghram said the Planning Commission and staff are working with the Neighborhood Outreach team to address the proposed changes. Mr. Lee said the Council has gone through an extensive visioning process. However, he is not sure whether the community has been involved in the same type of exercise.

Councilmember Stokes said he is frustrated with the lack of progress in these discussions. He observed that the Council should already have information on public feedback and other topics to facilitate a more focused discussion.

Mr. Inghram said he would forego the recaps on Economic Development and Parks, Recreation and Open Space, but the Council may return to those later. He moved on to present two new policies under the Citizen Engagement Element.

Mr. Inghram described proposed changes to the Land Use Element, which supports focusing the majority of growth in the Downtown and Bel-Red areas. There are minimal changes to zoning and those reflected in the Update apply to the Eastgate/I-90 plan and a small area on the edge of Downtown.

Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Inghram said the State requires an updated population and job growth forecast every five years. Ms. Balducci questioned using the same numbers for targets and projections, which have two different meanings in common usage. Mr. Inghram said the targets and projections use the same model. Ms. Balducci expressed concern that setting targets requires that the City meet those numbers.

Mr. Inghram said the State Growth Management Act requires the City to plan for 20 years of growth. The state's forecast in five-year increments is accepted by the County, and the City works with the County and other cities to identify how much growth is to be allocated to individual cities. These become the targets for each jurisdiction, and state law requires that cities demonstrate that they can meet that growth.

Mayor Balducci said that is different than looking at trends in housing development, immigration, birth rates, and other factors to determine the future population. Mr. Inghram said those factors are reflected in the numbers. Ms. Balducci expressed concern that setting targets might obligate cities to change their zoning to meet those targets. Mr. Inghram said cities should be able to adjust zoning to keep pace with growth projections.

Continuing, Ms. Balducci asked: If this City decided to significantly upzone a portion of Bellevue, does this automatically increase growth targets? She said it does not make sense to her to refer to targets and projections in the same way.

Planning Director Dan Stroh said when current targets were being developed by the countywide process, and all the planning directors were at the table, one major point of input was: What are our plans? What do we want to have? There were control totals on those numbers for Bellevue that said: What are the numbers we have been using for years in terms of what we are actually forecasting to achieve in Downtown Bellevue based on current zoning? What are we forecasting for the Bel-Red corridor? Mr. Stroh said those were the major drivers for Bellevue's growth targets. At the time, there had not been any discussion about a big upzone effort.

Mayor Balducci questioned how the City could ever get ahead of growth targets in that scenario. How could cities ever have more capacity than what the targets require cities to accept? Mr. Stroh said the City actually has a lot more capacity than what is reflected by the targets. Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Stroh said capacity is different and is what zoning will actually allow. The Bel-Red area will reach only a small portion of its overall growth potential by 2035, as will be the case for the Downtown. Mr. Stroh said Downtown is about half built out, so the capacity is very different than the 2035 forecast. That forecast reflects how much the City

expects the market to deliver and what the City is trying to keep up with in terms of infrastructure.

Mr. Stroh said there is the market forecast (with a time constraint) and capacity (what zoning will allow without a time constraint). The issue becomes what the City chooses as a policy matter to put into the targets. For Bellevue, several years ago, staff followed Council direction on growth expectations for the Downtown and Bel-Red corridor, and to a lesser extent other small areas of the city. Those were the drivers that went into adoption of the targets through the Countywide Planning Policies.

What happened in this update is that the City had to interpolate those targets out another four years, which involved moving beyond the 2006-2012 period that had already been achieved and what the market brought during that time. That reduced the target on the front end but the target was extended into future years. Mr. Stroh said staff can provide additional written information on this process. However, he noted this was not a big step to go from where the Council took this with the Countywide Planning Policies growth targets to the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Councilmember Robertson said a white paper on this would be helpful. She reminded the Council that the City gets its targets from King County and the Council adopts them. Those reflect desired growth. She observed that Bellevue is shown to have more capacity in the Buildable Lands Report. Mayor Balducci said that report was what started her down this path, because the information does not match up.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Inghram said the Comprehensive Plan Update proposes incorporating the recommendations of the Eastgate/I-90 planning effort. The Wilburton recommendations from a few years ago are already in the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Robertson questioned whether the City would like to seek regional center designations for Eastgate or the Bel-Red area. Would the Comprehensive Plan accommodate setting designations if the Council chose to do so? Mr. Inghram said there is nothing in the Plan that would prohibit that.

Councilmember Stokes said he was on the Eastgate/I-90 Citizens Advisory Committee. His recollection was that growth targets were given to them. He expressed concern that the Council is expected to accept targets without a clear understanding of the implications for the Council's vision and objectives for the community. He suggested that more work is needed in this area.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Stroh said there is a policy in the Wilburton Subarea Plan that addresses the concept of a special opportunity district created by the Wilburton commercial district on 116th Avenue. More work is needed, following this Comprehensive Plan Update, to define the special opportunity district and the details of how it would work. Mr. Stroh said more research, analysis, and a public process is needed to achieve that objective.

Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Stroh confirmed that the Comprehensive Plan allows the development of the special opportunity district and to later adopt Land Use Code Amendments

that would enable the implementation of the vision related to the district. Ms. Balducci reminded the Council that it can initiate a Comprehensive Plan Amendment at any time.

Continuing with the presentation, Mr. Inghram highlighted other key changes in the Land Use Code Element policies regarding school siting, park character, the light industrial district, master planning, neighborhood character, placemaking, families, and annexation.

With regard to park character, Councilmember Robinson said the tree canopy shrinks every year and it is therefore not being preserved. She suggested language in the goal “to grow the tree canopy.” Mr. Inghram said staff would interpret “the preservation and enhancement” to apply to that part of the policy. Ms. Robinson said the language is not strong enough. Mr. Inghram said there is also an environmental policy that is specific about increasing the tree canopy.

Councilmember Robertson noted her interest in preserving the light industrial district. She observed that the new policy will help to meet this goal.

Mayor Balducci questioned the rationale for a policy specific to “families” versus other types of housekeeping units. Mr. Inghram said the Planning Commission recognizes that “families” is very broad and can include a wide range of housekeeping units. Ms. Balducci expressed concern that the language will be viewed as exclusive. Mr. Inghram said the intent was to be broad, as reflected in the language “all types of families.” He said housing opportunities supportive of a wide range of families is a challenge for cities.

Mayor Balducci observed that she is not sure whether the Council supports the annexation of remaining areas, which would be very expensive and probably not improve the lives of those residents. However, she is not opposed to leaving related policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Moving to the Housing Element, Mr. Inghram invited Arthur Sullivan from ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) to the table. Mr. Inghram said the City has had a strong Housing Element and been an active partner with ARCH for many years. He said housing was a topic receiving a great deal of public comment and attendees at Planning Commission meetings. Residents are concerned about affordable housing and presented a range of ideas. A number of public comments indicated a desire that the City implement actions to achieve affordability.

Mr. Inghram described the Council’s interest in articulating a broad housing strategy. He highlighted specific proposed housing policy changes and additions. Key issues include student housing, single-family room rentals, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs, or mother-in-law apartments). The policies acknowledge that ADU types can be tailored to each Subarea or neighborhood.

Mayor Balducci said the Council periodically hears public comments presenting proposals for different types of housing (e.g., cottage housing). She said the Bridle Trails neighborhood has established its opposition to ADUs in their area because adding structures to properties results essentially in an upzone allowing more units per acre. Ms. Balducci wants to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan policy language is protective of residents’ choice in determining whether ADUs are to be considered for specific neighborhoods.

Mayor Balducci said it is possible, however, that no Subarea Plan will approve ADUs, which is counter to the City's goal. Responding to Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Balducci clarified that her comments refer specifically to detached ADUs.

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

Myrna L. Basich, MMC
City Clerk

/kaw