

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

September 19, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Stokes, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Lee, Robinson, Slatter, and Wallace

ABSENT: Councilmember Robertson

1. Executive Session

At 6:02 p.m., Councilmember Robinson opened the meeting and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of potential litigation.

The meeting resumed 6:52 p.m.

2. Study Session

(a) Eastgate Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA)

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's presentation on the Eastgate Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).

Dan Stroh, Planning Director, said this is the Council's first review of the Eastgate Land Use Code Amendment. He recalled that the project goals included enhancing the corridor's economic vitality, retaining and enhancing neighborhood services and businesses, supporting Bellevue College's evolution, better integrating transportation and land use, improving transportation connectivity, and improving the area's urban design quality and community character. Eastgate was formerly one of Bellevue's highest employment centers and continues to be a key gateway into Bellevue.

Mr. Stroh recalled that the Council initiated the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation process in 2010. The Council appointed a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to update the corridor vision, including both land use and transportation elements. The Council adopted Comprehensive Plan map and text amendments in 2015 with the major citywide Comprehensive Plan update. This part of the process is to implement legislative rezone and Land Use Code Amendments consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Stroh said Mayor Stokes was a member of the CAC. Elements of the CAC's vision for the corridor include: 1) added capacity for office growth, principally in the mixed use, transit-oriented development (TOD) center adjacent to the transit center; 2) expansion of support retail and service uses; 3) new opportunities for residential development; 4) support for development of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail; 5) modest but effective motorized and non-motorized transportation improvements; and 6) improved urban design. Mr. Stroh said the vision was informed by an initial market analysis.

The CAC met from 2010 to 2012, and the Comprehensive Plan Update and work on the Transportation Facility Plan was ongoing from 2012 to 2015. Work on the Land Use Code Amendments is underway and is anticipated to be completed this year. Public involvement activities included one and a half years of CAC meetings, four open houses, an economic forum, three public online surveys, stakeholder interviews, presentations to interest groups, and web site updates. Mayor Stokes said there was an opportunity for public comment at every CAC meeting, and the meetings attracted a good amount of attendees.

Mr. Stroh said the current Land Use Code Amendment stage is the result of 11 public Planning Commission study sessions, an open house at City Hall, and a public hearing at Bellevue College. He noted Comprehensive Plan policy S-EG-1: Focus Eastgate growth into a mixed use center adjacent to the Eastgate Transit Center with greater height and intensity than the surrounding area. He described the study area boundary and proposed zoning designations, noting the creation of certain new districts.

Transportation Director Dave Berg said this is a 20-year plan, and the implementation of transportation projects and other development will occur over time. He acknowledged that growth and activity on I-90 affect Eastgate traffic. However, over the years, employers and residents have expressed an interest in more travel and transit options. Mr. Berg said transportation investments are focused on adding capacity, managing demand, and operating the system as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Berg said there are three crossings of I-90: Richards Road, 150th Avenue SE, and Lakemont Boulevard. He noted a number of completed projects within and adjacent to the Eastgate study area including the implementation of SCATS (Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System), the West Lake Sammamish Parkway SE roundabout, intersection improvements at 150th Avenue SE and Newport Way, sidewalks on West Lake Sammamish Parkway near Sunset Elementary School, SE Newport Way sidewalk and bike lanes, and a crosswalk on 161st Avenue SE at SE 33rd Place.

Near-term projects include the I-90 peak-use shoulder lanes project, which will improve eastbound traffic capacity between Eastgate and Lakemont Boulevard, and westbound travel from Issaquah. The project should help relieve traffic congestion within the local Eastgate area as well. Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Berg said the westbound shoulder will provide a lane for cars exiting at the Eastgate area, allowing greater capacity for the lane continuing west. Mr. Berg said the project was funded through the Connecting Washington package. Construction is scheduled for 2018-2019.

Continuing, Mr. Berg said near-term projects include the Eastgate Way bicycle lanes, the SE Newport Way project, and speed and reliability improvements to Metro Route 245. Route 245 serves Factoria Boulevard, Eastgate, Bellevue College, and Kirkland. Some of the improvements are recommendations that were identified in Bellevue's Transit Master Plan (TMP). Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Berg said the bus improvements could include queue jumps, transit signal priority, or other measures.

Mr. Berg said long-term projects include the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail, Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) capacity projects, and the Bellevue College connector.

Trish Byers, Code Development Manager, introduced John deVadoss, new Chair of the Planning Commission. Mr. deVadoss said the Commission recommended adoption of the Land Use Code Amendments by a vote of 5-1, with one Commissioner absent. The Commission found that the amendments are consistent with the 2015 Comprehensive Plan amendments and the Citizen Advisory Committee's recommendations. Mr. deVadoss said the Commission recommends the legislative rezone of the area necessary to apply the new code to the properties in the study area. He said there was extensive discussion by the Planning Commission over a series of 11 study sessions, as well as the City Hall open house and the public hearing at Bellevue College.

Mayor Stokes thanked Mr. deVadoss and the Planning Commission for their hard work. Mr. Stokes said there will be additional opportunities for the Council to discuss the Eastgate LUCA in greater detail. He suggested that the Council ask questions or provide feedback to Mr. deVadoss, if any, at this time.

Ms. Byers said the Planning Commission recommended creating three new districts: EG-TOD, OLB2, and NMU. These are modeled after the BelRed Plan and could be used in other parts of the city. The new zones include development requirements, dimensional standards, and design guidelines. She said the existing concomitant agreements will be repealed where new code amendment language adequately addresses the concomitant provisions.

Ms. Byers described the Eastgate-TOD zone which provides an area for a mix of housing, retail, office and service uses, with an emphasis on housing, near the transit facility. The TOD is intended to serve college students and employees in the area, includes a new east-west retail street, and allows a floor-area ratio (FAR) of 2.0 (+1.0 FAR for affordable housing, open space, public restrooms, special dedications and transfers, etc.). Building heights range from 55 feet to 160 feet.

Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Ms. Byers said the LUCA uses the definition for affordable housing from the Land Use Code, which might differ from the definition reflected in the affordable housing strategy work by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). She will provide the definition language.

Continuing, Ms. Byers said the hill climb feature functions as an open space and provides access to the college. The retail street will have wide sidewalks, benches, street trees, and other

pedestrian amenities. Ms. Byers said the Eastgate LUCA provides for a master development plan, which would allow changes to the street as part of a large development project. Additional streets would be needed for access to the TOD as well. She said parking structures visible from I-90 or adjacent residential districts must be screened.

Councilmember Lee referred back to Mr. Wallace's question about the affordable housing definition. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Byers said she will provide the Land Use Code definition. She said staff and the Council will discuss in the future how the definition might be modified based on the affordable housing TAG's work.

Moving on, Ms. Byers said the Office Limited Business 2 (OLB 2) district would be implemented in three areas of the Eastgate LUCA. The purpose of the OLB 2 (Office Limited Business 2) district is to provide an area of integrated complexes with offices, hotels/motels, eating and drinking establishments, and retail sales within walking distance to support businesses and employees. The OLB 2 district has greater intensity and a broader mix of uses than the OLB district. Building heights up to 75 feet are anticipated with a 1.0 FAR.

The Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) district is a combination of retail, service, office and residential uses with an emphasis on neighborhood retail and service uses. It is designed to be compatible with nearby neighborhoods. Ms. Byers said the NMU district includes Eastgate Plaza, serves and supports single-family neighborhoods, and allows building heights up to 75 feet with 1.0 FAR (+ 1.0 FAR for affordable housing). The Community Retail Design District guidelines apply to the NMU district. Additional guidelines focus on integrating the natural environment, community gathering spaces, compatible parking structures, and an enhanced pedestrian environment. The Transition Area Design District applies to areas adjacent to less intense districts (e.g., Single Family-Residential). Building heights will not exceed those of adjacent development.

Ms. Byers said the two areas proposed for legislative rezones are: 1) the gateway to Bellevue College, to be rezoned to Community Business (CB), and 2) five parcels currently split zoned as Office and R-5 (5 housing units per acre), to be rezoned to Office (O). The former will make the coffee shop at the Champions Centre conforming. Ms. Byers said concomitant zoning agreements will be repealed where the new code addresses requirements contained in those agreements. Otherwise, the concomitant agreements will remain in effect.

Mr. Stroh described the potential for a permanent homeless shelter on the King County Public Health site. On August 1, the Council expressed support for a letter of intent to work with King County on the potential shared use of the site. The facility is consistent with the TOD vision of good access to transit and services, and the shelter is allowed under the current zoning. The shelter is anticipated to include permanent supportive housing as well. The proposed LUCA adds the administrative conditional use process (ACUP) to the shelter use to ensure the project is a good fit for the TOD location. Mr. Stroh described two options for the layout of the shelter and permanent supportive housing facilities. Both options are being looked at carefully for how they are compatible with the Eastgate TOD vision.

Mayor Stokes noted that this is the first overview of the Eastgate LUCA, and there will be future Council opportunities for more detailed discussions.

Councilmember Robinson questioned whether a walkshed had been designated around the Park and Ride/TOD and how the Planning Commission identified the multifamily areas. Mr. deVadoss said the area is constrained by the geography, which restricts the placement of housing. Ms. Byers said the Park and Ride is west of the TOD, Bellevue College is to the north, and Eastgate and I-90 are to the south. She said the TOD/housing was also dictated by policies in the Comprehensive Plan, and the CB zoning for the auto dealership had already been established. She said the TOD fits well between Bellevue College and the broader Eastgate area.

Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. deVadoss said the homeless shelter was not within the scope of the Planning Commission's discussions. If it had been discussed, Mr. deVadoss observed that perhaps the Commission would have considered increased density in the NMU district. Mr. Wallace stated his understanding that the Commission is now passing the LUCA to the Council, which could modify the plan, including with regard to the homeless shelter. Mr. deVadoss confirmed that understanding.

Mr. Wallace said there are a number of competing issues to be addressed. He observed that the FAR densities are lower than the Downtown. He said he sees aspects of the plan that will increase the cost of developing affordable housing. He said traffic congestion and the homeless shelter need to be addressed as well. Mayor Stokes concurred, noting that the Council will need to study the changes that have occurred since the Eastgate/I-90 planning process was initiated.

Councilmember Wallace asked staff and/or property owners to explore how a project is viable under the constraints that are put in place by the LUCA. He said this is different from the BelRed Plan's zoning and densities. He said it is difficult to see how development will be economically viable.

Mayor Stokes said there was some early involvement of developers and property owners in the CAC meetings. However, this is the first step in the Land Use Code Amendment process and those are important questions that need to be resolved.

Councilmember Lee thanked the Planning Commission and staff for their work. He said this is an exciting planning effort. However, he shares Councilmember Wallace's questions about whether the anticipated development is economically feasible. He questioned whether the Planning Commission should study the new elements of the plan. He supports the TOD close to Bellevue College to serve students. He said the overall area presents both challenges and opportunities.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak said the homeless shelter is allowed outright under today's zoning. He said the project will be subjected to a more rigorous review as an administrative conditional use permit (ACUP) under the new LUCA. He said the Planning Commission did a good job of considering what might go under an ACUP. He said the definition of affordable housing from the Land Use Code refers to 80 percent of median income, with the exception of the BelRed corridor

where it is 100 percent of median income. Low-income affordable housing is below 50 percent of median income. Mr. Chelminiak said there have been requests for higher zoning. As these requests are submitted to the City, he suggested that staff study the transportation implications for intensities above those recommended by the Planning Commission

Councilmember Slatter said the LUCA provides good opportunities as well as challenges. She said she appreciated the history of the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation CAC and Planning Commission process. The shelter is a new issue that will need to be analyzed and discussed. She said she has received requests from citizens about the project, and the history in the presentation is helpful. She said questions have been raised about updating the 2010 concurrency and mobility management area (MMA) data. As traffic has increased and the region continues to grow, Ms. Slatter said perhaps there is a new set point of movement and congestion. She is interested in how the City sets the thresholds. She said it is important for the public to understand how the Transportation Facilities Plan and the Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan are used in planning.

Ms. Slatter said she has received feedback that public notification up to this point has been quite thorough. However, she questioned how notifications will be handled as the process moves forward and how public outreach will be conducted. She would like to meet with staff, perhaps with a number of citizens who have questions.

Mayor Stokes said a tremendous amount of foundational work has been completed. He concurred with Councilmember Wallace's suggestion that certain issues need further study as the Council considers the LUCA. He thanked the Planning Commission and staff for their hard work.

Councilmember Robinson said she wants to keep the planning open for the recommendations of the affordable housing TAG. Mayor Stokes concurred. Ms. Robinson said she does not want the Council to make any decisions that would prevent the implementation of the TAG's recommendations.

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Stokes declared recess to the Regular Session.

Kyle Stannert, CMC
City Clerk

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