

City of Bellevue

2017 Council Planning Retreat

January 2017



The City of Bellevue held its annual Planning Retreat at Semiahmoo on January 19, 20, and 21. The purpose of the retreat was to ensure agreement on what community issues need to move forward. The meeting was facilitated by Julia Novak of The Novak Consulting Group.

Setting the Stage

The facilitator welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda and meeting norms, then asked each person to share their expectations for the session.

- Transportation Levy discussion
- How can we work better together, take on new things, handle them effectively, and up our game?
- Enthusiastic sense of purpose! Council rowing in same direction – provide good guidance to staff.
- Come to process decision on vacancy, transportation levy, neighborhood issues, work plans discussion
- Opportunity for discussion, questions, and get info to the people in the room – direction for the next 12 months
- Watching, seeing, and understand how Council wants to align things; knit together a way of working

Governing Together

The Council was asked to reflect on a series of questions focusing on how they will work together in the coming year and come prepared to share their thoughts on:

- *What does good governance look like to you?*
- *What values are important to you in governing?*
- *What is important to remember when your position is the prevailing decision and what is important to remember when your position is not the prevailing decision?*
- *What type of relationship do you hope to have with your colleagues on the governing body?*
- *What type of relationship do you hope to have with the Administration?*
- *How do you distinguish between Policy (the role of the governing body) and Administration (the role of the Manager and their team)?*
- *What do you hope this governing body will be known for?*

Council Operational Planning items

Assistant City Manager Kyle Stannert provided an overview to the Council on what the guidelines are for filling a vacant council position. State law provides a lot of latitude. The Council has 90 days to fill the seat with a qualified individual. There are three options based on historical practice:

1. Appoint a former Councilmember – can decide on one person or you could make that the qualification and deliberate.
2. Appoint a citizen without process.
3. Seek applications from the community, conduct interviews, and make an appointment. Council could impose additional qualifications besides being a resident for at least 12 months and being a registered voter.

You cannot rank or select someone in executive session. The Council has 90 days which takes the group to April 14 or it will go to King County Council to fill the vacancy.

In 2008, the process lasted from Feb. 4 to March 24 and there were 24 applicants who submitted materials for review. Of the 24 applicants, 9 were interviewed. Council used an application process and reviewed submitted materials individually prior to discussing qualifications of candidates in executive session. Then, in Open Session, the Council discussed qualifications and narrowed down the list to shoes who would be invited for interviews.

The group agreed to the following process:

- Advertise the vacancy for 10 days from January 24 to February 2
 - Needs to be well publicized
 - Board and Commission Members need to be notified
- Request a resume and letter of interest with three to five references from finalists
- Letter of interest should answer the following questions in no more than 1,000 words
 - Why do you want to serve on the Bellevue City Council?
 - What is your vision for the City?
 - What is your passion for the community?
- On February 6, the Council will decide who to interview
 - If there is no immediate consensus on 3 to 4 people, each member of the Council will be permitted to name one person to interview
- Interviews will be in open session on February 13, 2017
- The appointment will happen on February 21 or February 27

Day Two

Morning Check-In

The group debriefed Thursday evening's activities by reflecting on the things they liked and what they didn't like or could have been different to make the evening better.

The group then discussed the concept of ***being nimble in*** the context of City government. Council was asked to share their perspective on what nimble means to them. ***Nimble is:***

- Being responsive to emerging issues
- How can Council be better at coming to a decision?
- Staff helping Council come together faster to get things done
- Being able to timely take advantage of opportunities or respond to community events that come our way
- Moving FASTER through the planning process
- Cannot be "like the private sector;" must balance process and transparency – including communication and messaging
- Vision and priorities tell us what to say yes to and empower the staff
- City is nimble when the Council is out of the way – Council micromanagement impacts nimble
- Processes and values sometimes collide, and in those situations communication needs to be strengthened

Review of Neighborhood Themes

The City Manager set the stage for noting some context for the discussion of activity happening in Bellevue neighborhood, with evidence including:

- Excellent community satisfaction in surveys.
- Passing two levies.
- New businesses moving to Bellevue.

Mike McCormick-Huentelman shared what is happening in each of the 15 unique Bellevue neighborhoods and how neighborhood leaders are reflecting on issues that are impacting them.

Community Livability is high as evidenced by outside rankings:

- Number one Quality of Life
- 2nd Best City to Live In
- 5th Happiest City

Use of Social Media Currently over 21,500 residents are using Nextdoor to communicate with their neighbors. Additionally, use of Twitter, Facebook, WeChat, WhatsApp (and

others) are creating new pathways for public conversations and civic engagement.

The City needs a comprehensive social media strategy on how to interact with social media platforms.

<i>Communication</i>	A lot of activity is occurring across the City and neighborhood leaders stressed the need for improved “two-way” communication. They stressed the importance of having integrity to being transparent to the public process.
<i>Cut-Through Traffic</i>	Some pointed to the Waze app phenomenon, where commuters are directed through local neighborhoods to avoid congestion on the major freeways or arterials.
<i>Expect Pedestrians</i>	Neighborhood leaders identified that the future of Bellevue will be multi-modal transportation and that the infrastructure for pedestrians and bikes in neighborhoods is not adequate to safely accommodate these growing demands.
<i>Increase of LLCs</i>	Neighborhood leaders are identifying a growing trend of LLCs that purchase single-family houses as investment properties. These homes typically remain either vacant, or might be filled with part-time renters. The growth of LLCs is beginning to impact local neighborhood character, including increases in redevelopment activity (mega homes), driving up the cost of housing, as well as impacting the social connections that are lost as neighborhoods are slowly transformed into investment communities.
<i>Loss of Tree Canopy</i>	Whether it is from large scale projects (like Sound Transit or potentially Energize Eastside), or the redevelopment of residential properties, neighborhood leaders are witnessing the accumulative loss of mature and significant trees. They feel that the City is in danger of losing the neighborhood character of being a “City in a Park”, replaced by mega-houses built out to the largest possible parameters.
<i>Small Cell Antennas</i>	Current examples are the Verizon Wireless projects in North Bellevue and Somerset/Lakemont/Eastgate. 41 proposed installations. Anticipate more to come as other carriers look to install small cell technology. Seek balance between neighborhood character and Smart City initiative. Also Federal and State laws compel City to approve small cell applications.
<i>Parking Restrictions</i>	Continued requests for parking restrictions to address spillover parking from adjacent businesses, schools, parks, transit stops, etc.
<i>Vehicle Residency</i>	Increase in concerns with vehicle residency, especially in areas within the vicinity of organizations or buildings providing free public services such as grocery stores or community services. Each location of concern has been situational – addressed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the concern.

Add art, culture into public and private realms. At local schools, on the roadways, or in businesses – Bellevue can be a canvas for showcasing art and culture throughout the community

The growing shape of diversity is also impacting Bellevue – people need more skills to thrive in diverse communities and that is part of the DNA of our neighborhoods. Being one neighborhood, together, amidst diversity is important to the community. One third of Bellevue residents are from this area, one third are from another part of the United States, and the other third are from somewhere else in the world.

Specific areas of concern raised during the neighborhood forum were categorized around the following:

- Environmental Issues
- Development and Major projects
- Energize the Eastside
- Investments including LLCs, Mega Homes, and Cell Towers
- Transportation Related projects
- Different housing uses

Council Priorities Update

Prior planning sessions identified 24 Council priorities. In addition, a number of other efforts are underway that are generally aligned with the Council priorities but were not part of the formal priority setting. Each of the items were then arrayed on a graph depicting the increasing neighborhood participation and increasing Board and Council Time Commitment. This way, the Council could understand how the work plan is impacting the community and assess the Council, Organizational, and Community Capacity for proceeding with these issues now.

	Less Board and Council Time	High Board and Council Time	Intense Board and Council Time
Level of Neighborhood Participation		• BelRed Look Back – make a decision after Council receives the review • Energize the East Side • Working with regional partners, establish an eastside permanent winter homeless shelter	• Assess the unique housing needs of our City and region and create an Affordable Housing Strategic Action Plan • Complete the Downtown Livability Project • Continue to implement projects in the neighborhoods with a focus on safety and connectivity • Subarea/ Neighborhood Area Planning

	Less Board and Council Time	High Board and Council Time	Intense Board and Council Time
			• Develop and implement proactive communication strategies for Council engagement with the community • Establish a Vision for the Grand Connection as the signature piece of the growth for the corridor between downtown Bellevue through Wilburton to the Eastside Rail Corridor and into BelRed. Establish the Land Use Plan for Wilburton
High Neighborhood Participation	• Fire Station #10 • Continue the permitting on light rail and implement plans to mitigate congestion	• EG Neighborhood Congestion Relief • Work with the County to complete the Eastside Rail Corridor • Smart City/ Transportation Technology Plan (position has been funded) • East Main CAC LUCA work • Downtown Parking Study (Needs Definition)	
Less Neighborhood Participation	• Identify and implement technologies that improve customer service • Long-Range Facilities Property Plan • Advanced Metering Infrastructure	• King County EMS Levy • PCD/DSD Code Packages • Contract Cities Fire Contract • Mid-Bi Budget Update • Advocate with State DOT and Regional	• Establish a long range financial strategy that includes options that respond to the future operating and capital needs • Advocate for improved transit service in Bellevue and Eastside in the

	Less Board and Council Time	High Board and Council Time	Intense Board and Council Time
	• Implement the Bellevue Economic Development Plan • E-911 • Explore the opportunity for partnership for Eastside Regional pool including a 50 Meter component • Construct Phase 1 of Meydenbauer Bay Park and complete the downtown park circle and gateway • Continue to execute on our transportation capital plans for future growth and mobility • Tree Canopy Study (update the 2007 Study) • Utilities Rate Relief (Senior Discount) • SMP Comments from DOE • Create and implement a plan for securing greater levels of grant funding, including regional projects	Agencies for acceleration of the I-405 completion of SR 520	Metro Long Range Transit Plan • Use the principles of regional leadership and influence in our stated partnership with initiatives

Bike Rack

Council identified some potential new items that will not proceed at this time:

- Civic Center Plan (will not move forward until 2018)
- Establish and discuss funding for Culture and Arts beyond the current Arts Community Fund
- Fund the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Plan

Deputy City Manager Kate Berens then reviewed a timeline of key projects identified in the quadrants that are in progress and identified when the matters would be before Council for consideration.

Council then discussed their own capacity and the capacity of the community to absorb and focus on this large list of projects in the next 12 to 18 months. The sense of the group was that they could not adequately respond to the capacity question without knowing what the staff can get done.

Staff was asked to come back with a Gantt Chart that incorporates all the projects and the timeline for accomplishing them. In addition, Council wants to know:

1. Are there alternatives to the CAC that would improve the timeframe for completing projects (Wilburton as an example)?
2. Could we improve the CAC process to make it more efficient?
3. What can council do to make these processes nimbler, more efficient, etc. and what are the trade-offs?

Neighborhood Congestion Levy

Staff provided a proposal to the Council and recommendation on projects that would be funded with the Neighborhood Congestion Levy. A spreadsheet was distributed that included all the projects recommended for 2017 to 2018 and is included on the next page for information purposes.

2017-2018 Proposed Levy Project List									
Proposed Project List	Area	Work (d - design; c - const)	Maintenance	Safety	Congestion	Sidewalks	Bike	ITS	Project Total
NE 24th St - Northup to SR-520 Trail	Bridle Trails	d/c					\$55		\$55
Main St - 100th to 108th	Downtown	d/c					\$22		\$22
NE 1st St - 100th to Bellevue Wy	Downtown	d/c					\$20		\$20
106th Ave NE - Main to NE 12th	Downtown	d/c					\$222		\$222
150th Avenue/I-90 Interchange Study	Eastgate	d			\$1,000				\$1,000
150th Ave SE/SE Newport Wy	Eastgate	d			\$1,000				\$1,000
Eastgate Wy - Richards to I-90 Trail	Eastgate	d/c					\$100		\$100
SE 38th St - I-90 Overpass to 154th Ave	Eastgate	d/c					\$67		\$67
139th Ave SE - Eastgate Wy to Kamber	Eastgate	d/c					\$49		\$49
Tyee Middle School Safety	Eastgate/Factoria	d/c		\$300		\$450			\$750
Newport Wy w/o 150th Ave	Eastgate/Somerset	d/c					\$15		\$15
Newport Wy e/o 150th Ave	Eastgate/Somerset	d/c					\$90		\$90
148th - SE 16th/22nd plus sidewalks	Lake Hills	d/c	\$250	\$250					\$500
SE 16th St - 156th to 164th	Lake Hills	d/c		\$700					\$700
Lake Hills Bd - 148th Ave to 159th Ave	Lake Hills	d/c		\$180					\$180
Main St - 140th to 164th	Lake Hills	d/c		\$280					\$280
158th Pl SE - Lk Hills Bd to SE 5th St	Lake Hills	d/c		\$100		\$1,100			\$1,200
156th Ave NE Corridor X-Walks	Lake Hills	d/c	\$400	\$400					\$800
Village Park Dr - Lakemont to 179th	Lakemont/Cougar Mtn	d/c					\$15		\$15
Lk Wash Bd - So City L to Loop Trail	Newport	d/c					\$27		\$27
NE Bellevue X-Walk Grant Match	Northeast Bellevue	d/c		\$200					\$200
100th Ave NE - NE 14th to NE 24th (ph 1)	Northwest Bellevue	d/c		\$1,000					\$1,000
112th Ave NE - NE 12th to ERC	Northwest Bellevue	d/c	\$300	\$300			\$350		\$950
SE 6th St - 100th to Bell Way	Northwest Bellevue	d		\$75		\$250			\$325
108th Ave NE - NE 12th to NE 24th	Northwest Bellevue	d/c					\$46		\$46
NE 24th St - Bell Wy to 112th Ave	Northwest Bellevue	d/c					\$12		\$12
Forest Drive Ped Crossings	Somerset/Lakemont	d/c		\$430					\$430
ITS - Comms Upgrade and Travel Time	Various	d/c						\$600	\$600
ITS - LED Lighting Upgrades	Various	c						\$100	\$100
114th Ave - SE 8th to NE 6th	West Bellevue	d/c					\$60		\$60
108th Ave SE - SE 30th to Main St	West/Northwest Bellevue	d/c		\$100			\$65		\$165
128th Ave/NE 2nd Sidewalks	Wilburton	d/c				\$600	\$15		\$615
SE 8th St - 114th to Lk Hills Cn	Wilburton/West Bellevue	d/c					\$350		\$350
Richards Rd - Eastgate Wy to Lk Hills Cn	Woodridge/Eastgate	d/c					\$150		\$150
New ITS Partnerships								\$300	
Congestion 2018 Project #1		d			\$1,000				\$1,000
Congestion 2018 Project #2		d			\$1,000				\$1,000
Total Per Levy Category			\$950	\$4,315	\$4,000	\$2,400	\$1,675	\$1,000	\$14,340
Estimated Available 2-yr Funding:	\$14,400								
Projected Expenditure:	\$14,340								

Council discussion:

Council suggested that including some additional Boards and Commissions beyond the Transportation Commission might be constructive for the community. In addition, there was a suggestion to create a brand for projects funded through the levy to help communicate which projects are moving forward as a result of the ballot measure passed by the community.

Council generally thought the project list was on target, and asked that staff continue to bring forward periodic briefings. Additionally, a communication plan should be developed and include regular updates through City resources such as *Its Your City*, and a project site on the internet.

Staff will return to Council with a budget appropriation request reflecting the priorities discussed at the retreat, which will include a request for additional staffing to implement work identified on the project list.

Fire Levy Project Review

Deputy City Manager Nathan McCommon reviewed the materials provided in the briefing book related to the 2014 Fire Facility Study. The 2014 report recommended a realignment of resources North and South and the new Fire Station – Station 10, as well as projects to renovate existing facilities. Projects funded by the 2016 Fire levy will be prioritized according to the needs identified in the Master Plan.

Operating Budget Strategy

The City's Finance Director presented the long-term operating budget financial forecast for discussion. Reserves are currently at 21%, in excess of the policy guideline of 15%. The current level has been preserved in anticipation of projected expenditure growth that will diminish reserves over time. Based on current projections, it is unsustainable for the City to continue to provide existing services without addressing service levels.

The information provided by staff set forth a three-step process:

1. Look at existing fiscal objectives to ensure they are still reflective of the overall goals and priorities of the community.
2. Continue to monitor and review expenditures, seeking changes to reduce the cost of providing services.
3. Monitor revenues over the next budget period and prepare for further discussion during the 2019-20 Budget process.

Council is also seeking a recommendation to address staffing for Fire Station #10 that fits within the overall budget plan, and suggested working with outside resources to review revenue assumptions.

Staff committed to continue to communicate with the public about what the City is doing to be efficient while maintaining service levels.

Day Three

Morning Check-In

To start the day, the group shared a few words about how they were feeling as they entered day three of the Planning Retreat and discussed the agenda for the rest of the day.

Board and Commission Roles and Expectations

Council reviewed and discussed the use of Boards and Commissions to assess how their role as adjuncts of the Council is working. Reflecting on the earlier discussion on being nimble, Councilmembers and staff agreed to work together to ensure that work being transmitted to Boards and Commissions for review included specific direction including expectations of scope and schedule. The goal is to maintain an effective relationship of using Boards and Commissions as a sounding board for items coming back to Council for consideration. To do so, information presented by staff needs to be clear and provide enough detail so that members can make realistic recommendations. For example, while most Boards and Commissions have no role in suggesting funding levels, it is important to provide financial information so that recommendations coming back to Council reflect available resources. In addition, staff needs to ensure that information presented to Boards and Commissions has a clear distinction between what was directed by Council, what is in response to questions by board and commission members, and what is being recommended by staff.

Responding to Council direction, Assistant City Manager Kyle Stannert agreed to work with Council liaisons and department staff to provide training on the role of Boards and Commissions. This includes updating or creating bylaws based on the roles defined by Bellevue City Code, state laws, and are consistent with Council Rules.

Recognizing that the largest area of City budget is within public safety, where no Board or Commission exists, Council requested quarterly updates from the City Manager for these departments. Updates should focus on significant items such as new hires in key positions, structural changes within the organization, and community engagement.

Quasi-Judicial Issues

Following up on a request for more information about the quasi-judicial role of Council, Deputy City Manager Kate Berens reviewed the process steps that require Council to serve in a quasi-judicial role. There are two processes identified in City Code where this applies (Process 1 and Process 3).

In this role, Council cannot engage in conversations with people about issues that fall under this process. Even if approached by a member of the public, they cannot enter a conversation and have a duty to disclose that the inquiry was made and no ex-parte conversation occurred.

Council then discussed the pros and cons of relinquishing their role in the Quasi-Judicial process.

1. Council has some influence over the application when they hear an appeal and have some final say about the application the development is supposed to get
2. Influence is very limited, however, as to what the Council has any jurisdiction over.

If Council was to amend the Code to change their role, additional requirements could be suggested to ensure there is still an opportunity to influence the land use applications, including development agreements. In addition, the City would retain an ability to appeal decisions of the land use hearing officer.

Identify Follow-up Actions and Evaluate Session

Staff will develop a Gantt Chart that incorporates all Council priorities and lays out a schedule that staff has the capacity to execute in the next 18 months. Council will use the information presented to assess the capacity of the Council and community to process projects identified for the next year. Prior to returning to Council, staff will consider alternatives to project schedules, impacts of the anticipated timelines and provide feedback on ways to improve processes.

The City Manager will work to get this information back to Council within the first quarter of the year.

Closing

Councilmembers reviewed their stated goals from the first day of the retreat and reflected on outcomes that were reached. Members shared an overall sense of progress towards the established Council priorities and work plan for 2017.