

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

April 1, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Chelminiak and Councilmembers Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Robinson

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding. He noted that the Executive Session was moved to the end of the Study Session agenda.

Mayor Chelminiak said Deputy Mayor Robinson was ill and requested a motion to excuse her absence.

- Councilmember Stokes moved to excuse Deputy Mayor Robinson's absence, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

2. Study Session Items

- (a) Update on Projects on the West Side of SR 520 Bridge

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced discussion regarding projects on the west side of the SR 520 bridge.

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, introduced Omar Jepperson, SR 520 Deputy Program Administrator, and Dave Becher, SR 520 Program Director of Construction, from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Ms. Nichols said the guests would provide a presentation regarding improvements to the west side of the SR 520 bridge.

Mr. Jepperson recalled that the east end of the SR 520 project was completed in 2014, and the new floating bridge opened in April 2016. The north lanes of the west end of the bridge opened

in August 2017, and construction of the west side projects in Seattle will begin this spring. Mr. Jepperson described plans for the future connection to I-5, Portage Bay Bridge, and Roanoke Lid projects. The SR 520/I-5 express lanes will begin construction in 2020, and construction of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid will begin in 2023. A second bascule bridge will be built east of the existing Montlake Bridge.

Mr. Becher provided additional details regarding the Montlake project. Graham Contracting is the design-build contractor for the project, which will begin construction this spring. Graham will host a pre-construction open house. The project will raise the SR 520 eastbound lane to match the westbound lane, rebuild Montlake Boulevard, and create a pedestrian-bike bridge. Mr. Becher highlighted additional elements of Graham's proposal, which reduces the construction period from five years to four years. Construction is tentatively scheduled for completion in 2023.

Mr. Becher described the public engagement plan which includes an ombudsman/community liaison, 24-hour phone line, online information and Construction Corner web tool, email and social media updates, contractor-hosted meetings for the public, and a drop-in storefront near the project area where people can talk to staff about the project.

Mr. Jepperson said the Montlake transit stops will close in June 2019 to accommodate construction. WSDOT is providing funding to Sound Transit for additional bus service on Route 542 from June 2019 through March 2020. WSDOT is expediting construction of the reversible transit/HOV connection between SR 520 and the I-5 express lanes with modifications to the Mercer Street ramp. Mr. Jepperson said the project provides the opportunity to improve traffic signal interconnectivity along the Montlake Boulevard corridor. The project will be coordinated with the City of Seattle to upgrade infrastructure, including fiber equipment.

Mr. Jepperson provided an overview of SR 520 tolling, which generated \$91.7 million in revenue in 2018. Of that amount, \$21.5 million supports operations and maintenance and the remaining \$70.2 million is available for capital expenditures and debt payments.

There will be additional public outreach opportunities when the Montlake construction begins this spring. The design phase for the Portage Bay Bridge and lid will begin this summer.

Councilmember Robertson expressed concern about the impacts of 10 more years of construction on the public. Mr. Jepperson reiterated that Graham Contracting was able to reduce the construction period for the Montlake portion from five years to four years. He said it is not possible to work on both the Montlake portion and the Portage Bay Bridge at the same time due to the magnitude of the projects and the need for continued right-of-way acquisitions.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Jepperson said toll collections were used for capital expenditures earlier in the project. However, the \$70.2 million in toll revenue noted above is now all being used for debt payments. Mr. Jepperson said the overall west side project is funded by Connecting Washington through the 2015 revenue package. In further response to Ms. Robertson, he said he will provide more information on the bonds and annual debt service.

Councilmember Robertson asked how the toll data is being used (e.g., number of users, types of users, time of day, revenue generated, etc.). Ms. Nichols noted that Kim Henry of WSDOT typically provides information regarding the I-405 toll lanes including the impact on traffic speeds, types of users, number of toll lane users, and other metrics. Ms. Nichols said Mr. Henry uses the data to help inform the state legislature and everyone affected by the project. She said the information has informed the bill currently before the legislature that would expand tolling authorization to the south half of the I-405 Bellevue to Renton project. She said WSDOT indicates that the toll lanes are working based on the data collected to date.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Jepperson said WSDOT staff use time-of-day traffic volume information in their models when analyzing potential modifications to intersections, travel times, and other elements.

Councilmember Lee complimented WSDOT on the project, their work with local governments and residents, and the hiring of Graham Contracting.

Councilmember Stokes noted the completion of the Portage Bay Bridge and lid slated for 2029. Mr. Jepperson said the connection to I-5 and the Montlake phase will be completed by the 2023-2024 timeframe. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Jepperson said the Roanoke lid will be over SR 520 between 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Becher said the contract is approximately \$35 million to \$40 million above the engineer's estimate due to the current bidding climate. Ms. Zahn said she likes the pedestrian-bike bridge as well as the temporary measures to be taken to mitigate traffic during the construction of the entire project.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Becher described the removal of the current transit stops during construction, which will ultimately be restored when the new transit hub is completed. Mr. Jepperson said that, after the overall project is completed, many buses will connect to the University of Washington light rail station.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked what commuters can expect during the Montlake corridor construction. Mr. Jepperson said one of first things people will notice, after traffic is temporarily shifted to the north side of the bridge, is that there will be only two lanes in each direction. He said WSDOT and Graham will work to inform the public about the plans, which will include temporary partial lane closures on certain weekends. The closures will be planned in advance and the public will be notified. Mr. Becher said they are trying to reduce the phases of the work and to avoid frequent changes in traffic patterns and driving routes.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis asked whether WSDOT works with providers of driving apps, such as Waze, to inform them about major shifts in driving routes. A WSDOT staff person in the audience said they coordinate with Google, which also feeds its information to Waze, for large projects.

Mayor Chelminiak requested information regarding anticipated traffic diversion impacts, including to I-405 and I-90.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Jepperson said WSDOT is currently initiating a full I-5 study, which will include an analysis regarding express toll lanes.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked staff for the presentation and noted that he looks forward to the completion of the SR 520 project in 2029.

(b) Report on the development of the 2019-2020 Human Services Needs Update

Patrick Foran, Director of Parks and Community Services, opened discussion regarding the kickoff of the 2019-2020 Human Services Needs Update, which is completed every two years. He noted that nonprofit organizations and service providers use the information in their planning and in requesting funding from the City and other entities.

Christy Stangland, Human Services Planner, said the needs update is a compilation of quantitative and qualitative data from a wide range of sources to analyze and identify the health and human services trends and issues that affect Bellevue's quality of life. Information sources include Council input, phone and online survey, consumer survey, providers survey, community conversations, key informant interviews, faith communities discussions, and a review of additional reports, websites, census data, and the American Community Survey.

The collection of information includes a emphasis on immigrants, refugees, mental health issues, substance use disorder, and transportation. Ms. Stangland noted that the human services staff from Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, and Sammamish are collaborating to conduct extensive outreach to immigrant populations to better understand their needs. She said the work group is also exploring ways to provide technical assistance to smaller organizations.

Ms. Stangland noted the addition of questions focused on homelessness, including asking whether an individual or family has been homeless or nearly homeless, what could have prevented them from becoming homeless, and how difficult it would be to pay for basic household expenses if their paycheck was delayed for a week.

Staff will continue to collect data through the summer and will prepare a draft report to present to the Human Services Commission in November. The findings of the Commission's review will be presented to the Council in January 2020.

Mayor Chelminiak confirmed that the Council is interested in learning more about the causes of homelessness and how it can be prevented. Ms. Stangland said they hope to learn more through the community conversations. She said the Human Services Commission recently held a financial assistance panel with all of the agencies that provide financial assistance within Bellevue. That meeting included a conversation about collaboration between agencies and additional opportunities.

Alex O'Reilly, Human Services Manager, said the added questions about homelessness in the community survey are anticipated to provide a better understanding of the issues. The City also conducts a survey of more than 50 providers of human services to gather information.

Mayor Chelminiak said he sees the needs update as one of the tools that can be used for benchmarking in collaboration with other Eastside cities.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Ms. O'Reilly said the phone and online survey includes only Bellevue residents. The consumer survey is provided in five languages other than English and is distributed to the community centers and ESL providers at Bellevue College and Hopelink. She noted that some of those participants might not be Bellevue residents. However, they are asked to indicate whether they are residents.

In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. O'Reilly said there is a large list of providers, which includes organizations that receive funds from the City of Bellevue as well as other organizations on the Eastside that are interested in completing the provider survey, even if they do not receive funding from Bellevue.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Stangland said individuals are not currently asked about addiction and/or mental health issues. However, she is working with the providers to gather feedback about whether they think that would be an appropriate question. In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. O'Reilly said that the individuals who participate in the community conversations are asked about where they lived before becoming homeless. She said the City typically works with the providers to obtain information about the number of individuals they serve who live or lived in Bellevue.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that the question is often worded to ask where an individual last had housing. Mr. Nieuwenhuis asked whether there is a definition of housing and whether it would include vehicle residencies.

Councilmember Stokes said there are misconceptions about individuals experiencing homelessness, and it will be helpful to better understand the causes in order to effectively address those issues. He said the needs update is a strong asset for the City, service providers, schools, and others in the community.

Councilmember Zahn said she is pleased that Bellevue is working with other cities to address the needs of immigrants and refugees. She expressed support for providing technical assistance to smaller organizations in preparing their grant requests. She questioned whether the City's Boards and Commissions are involved in the effort. Ms. Stangland said she is working with the Police Department and their community groups to gather feedback. Noting that transportation was identified as a high priority, Ms. Zahn suggested that the Transportation Commission could be helpful in providing input. She suggested coordinating with Bellevue Youth Link as well. Ms. Stangland said she will attend the Youth Link Board meeting later in the month. She said the City is conducting its first youth survey and will solicit input from Youth Link participants.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Ms. O'Reilly said that she and Ms. Stangland participate in a planning group that will begin meeting this week at Redmond City Hall. She noted that Debbie Lacy from the Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition (ERIC) will be involved in that effort as well. One of the topics to be addressed is assisting individuals in completing the census surveys.

Ms. Zahn suggested coordinating with the Bellevue School District and Overlake Hospital Medical Center for additional input. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. O'Reilly said there is a sub-chapter in the needs report that addresses veterans. Staff also meets with entities that work with veterans, including Bellevue College. Ms. O'Reilly said King County recently hired a staff person to manage activities related to the veterans, seniors, and human services levy. They are in the process of forming advisory groups targeted at specific populations. The City is involved with the King County veterans program as well.

Councilmember Lee said the needs update has been a valuable tool for many years. He concurred with the urgency of issues related to individuals experiencing homelessness. Mr. Lee said that human capital is the most important thing for the City, and he encouraged further data collection to better understand the range of needs of specific populations, including immigrant groups.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Ms. O'Reilly said the City looks at the key needs and problems experienced by immigrants, which could include homelessness. High-priority services include ESL classes, programs to help children succeed in school, legal services related to immigration, and employment services.

Mr. Lee said he realizes that the issues are complex. However, he encouraged an enhanced collection of data in order to develop a better understanding of the specific needs of defined populations. He said immigrants can be reluctant to provide information.

Councilmember Robertson said the City created an affordable housing strategy and she would like to see the creation of an Eastside plan to address homelessness. She said the annual count of homeless individuals and input from providers would be helpful in that effort. She expressed an interest in documenting the community's needs and in identifying the organizations that provide services to meet those needs. She encouraged the collection of data that demonstrates the effectiveness of providers' programs and services as well.

Ms. Robertson concurred with her colleagues' interest in information about the causes and prevention of homelessness. She suggested that the Poppe report prepared in Seattle will provide helpful information. She said that identifying specific needs will help plan the types of facilities that could provide the greatest benefit, including shelters, substance use treatment centers, and other programs. Regarding the issue of a person's last housing before experiencing homelessness, Ms. Robertson suggested asking when they moved to Bellevue and where they lived before that.

Councilmember Robertson expressed an interest in reviewing the previous Council feedback used in developing the needs update. Ms. Stangland said the key issues were related to immigrants and refugees, transportation needs, mental health, and substance use disorder.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, staff confirmed that they coordinate with the Fire Department's CARES (Citizen Advocates for Referral and Education Services) program. Mr. Chelminiak suggested contacting Father Charles Barnes, a former Bellevue resident who is the chaplain at the VA hospital in Seattle.

Mr. Chelminiak said there are nine local agencies providing support for opioid addiction. He said that while many become homeless due to opioid addiction, others begin using opioids as a way of trying to cope with being homeless. He said that men in Bellevue experiencing homelessness are older than those in Seattle. He noted that Bellevue is beginning to see more women experiencing homelessness who have behavioral and substance use issues.

Mayor Chelminiak said he is trying to talk to homeless individuals more when he is out in the community to learn about their experiences and needs. One man he spoke with said he is living at the men's shelter in Bellevue. The man proudly shared how shelter staff is helping him to work on his resume, and he explained that he has three versions of his resume tailored to the different types of jobs he can do.

Mr. Chelminiak said he has spoken with representative of the cities of Kirkland and Redmond, and they are interested in considering the creation of an Eastside strategy or plan. He noted that the Poppe study in Seattle, the Vulcan study, and other sources will be helpful in that effort. He suggested developing a plan, seeking funding, and engaging the community.

Mayor Chelminiak suggested giving direction to the City Manager to organize a team to work on an Eastside plan.

Councilmember Robertson concurred, noting that the needs update will provide valuable information for that effort. She expressed support for working with the cities of Kirkland and Redmond because they are regional partners in providing shelters for different populations in the three communities. She suggested gathering information regarding the number of individuals living outside or in shelters and the resources currently available as the first steps toward developing a plan. Ms. Robertson suggested pursuing a grant from Microsoft to conduct the survey and prepare a plan.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Ms. O'Reilly said that Deputy Mayor Robinson has discussed a number of issues with King County's behavioral health and recovery staff, and has been able to obtain data regarding the impacts of homelessness and addiction. Ms. Zahn noted the importance of addressing mental health issues as well, including in schools.

Mr. Foran confirmed that collecting data and documenting the reasons for homelessness and other challenges is important. However, he said perhaps a larger issue is how the three cities can work collaboratively on a broad range of issues.

Councilmember Lee said he appreciated the discussion regarding homelessness. However, he does not want it to be the sole focus. He said the needs update covers a range of populations and needs, and more data is needed for a broader understanding. Mayor Chelminiak indicated that the Poppe study and other regional studies will add to the City's understanding of regional human services needs as well.

Councilmember Stokes suggested including the City of Issaquah in the work with the cities of Kirkland and Redmond. Mayor Chelminiak said representatives of Issaquah have indicated that they are more focused on their local community at this time.

Mayor Chelminiak said he appreciated Councilmember Lee's comments about the need to focus on homelessness as well as other issues and needs.

3. Executive Session

At 7:45 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 15 minutes to discuss one quasi-judicial matter. He said the meeting would reconvene for the Regular Session.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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