

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

February 3, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, and Councilmembers Barksdale, Lee, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. There was no Executive Session.

2. Study Session Items

(a) 2019-2020 Human Services Needs Update

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced discussion regarding the 2019-2020 Human Services Needs Update.

Toni Esparza, Assistant Director of the Parks and Community Services Department, noted that the preparation of the update involved surveys, community conversations, and interviews with providers and clients. The work related to the Human Services Needs Update is guided by Human Services Division staff and the Human Services Commission.

Timothy Ma, Human Services Commission Chair, described the Commission's role in reviewing all human services funding requests and developing recommendations regarding the priorities for the allocation of resources to meet identified needs. The Commission will use the information gathered through the update process to guide that review. Mr. Ma said the City received \$5.6 million in funding requests for the \$3.6 million in available funds during the last funding cycle. The needs update reflects Bellevue's growth and increasingly diverse population.

Mr. Ma said that housing continues to be a major challenge facing residents. He noted that the needs and solutions cover a broad range of topics including employment that pays a living wage, low cost legal support for landlord/tenant issues, food support, transportation, affordable child care, and access to affordable health care. Mr. Ma said that all of those factors can affect the ability of individuals and families to maintain housing. He said the Commission will invite a panel of service providers to present information regarding the needs they see in the community

and the services they provide. Mr. Ma thanked the Council for its ongoing support of human services funding.

Ms. Esparza provided a brief history of human services in Bellevue. Resolution No. 4815 established the City's role in human services as: 1) a planner that assesses and anticipates needs to develop appropriate program responses, 2) a facilitator that engages the community in problem solving, and 3) a funder. The City uses General Fund and federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars to support a network of services that are responsive to the community's needs. Ms. Stangland said the Human Services Commission advises the City Council on all matters related to human services planning and funding.

The City's human services staff collaborates with staff from other Eastside suburban cities and holds periodic joint meetings with their human services boards and commissions. The 2019-2020 Human Services Needs Update will guide the recommendations for the allocation of the 2021-2022 Human Services Fund. The update provides information that is used by service providers and community groups and in regional planning efforts. The preparation of the update involves phone and online surveys, community conversations, provider surveys, and consumer surveys.

Christy Stangland, Human Services Planner, highlighted the results of the phone and online survey of 700 respondents. Affordable housing continues to be a high priority with 75 percent of the respondents citing it as the number one problem in the community. Ms. Stangland noted that 31 percent of older adult renters pay more than 50 percent of their income toward rent.

The City adopted its Affordable Housing Strategy in June 2017 which outlines more than 20 specific actions designed to create affordable housing and to provide new and expanded assistance for residents struggling to remain in Bellevue. Since that time, the Council substantially increased funding for affordable housing initiatives, implemented new affordable housing incentives, adopted the multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program to increase developer participation, and provided funding for new construction and housing preservation. Ms. Stangland said Bellevue has achieved 474 affordable homes since the adoption of the Affordable Housing Strategy. The City also works with A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) to invest in affordable housing, including in transit-oriented development (TOD) areas.

Ms. Stangland said that 50 percent of the survey respondents rated low wages as a major or moderate community problem. She said the Economic Development Plan Update will include workforce strategies designed to help support and grow local businesses. She said the need for low-barrier shelter beds for all populations continues to increase. In 2018, 603 men were served by Congregations for the Homeless, 413 women were served through The Sophia Way, 348 individuals were served by the Catholic Community Services, and 193 young adults (ages 18-24) were assisted through the Friends of Youth shelter. Ms. Stangland said that the number of students experiencing homelessness continues to increase. She noted that a women and family shelter is opening soon in Kirkland.

Ms. Stangland said that 25 percent of the survey respondents rated racial or ethnic discrimination as a major or moderate community problem. More than half of the respondents in the survey of

service providers reported that an increased fear related to immigration status was a barrier to clients accessing services. In the area of behavioral health and substance use, 67 percent of the providers surveyed reported that clients cannot access needed mental health care. Ms. Stangland noted that approximately 20 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in the Bellevue School District have indicated that they have contemplated suicide. There is also an increase in adults and youth with substance use issues (e.g., methamphetamines and opioids).

While transportation is not a traditional human service, 62 percent of the providers reported that transportation is a barrier to accessing services for their clients, and 40 percent of the respondents to the phone and online survey rated inadequate public transportation as a community problem. Bellevue's Aging Adult Recreation Plan Survey reported that 56 percent of older adults indicated that transportation was a challenge to participating in social and/or recreation activities.

Ms. Stangland said the application for human services funding will be available in mid-March and completed applications will be due in mid-April. The Human Services Commission will review the applications and present its recommendations to the Council this fall.

Mayor Robinson said that Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis will take over for her as the new liaison to the Human Services Commission. Ms. Robinson thanked the commissioners for all of their hard work.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciates that the City periodically conducts the community assessment to address current needs and to create a historical record of the key trends. She commented that challenges for the aging population will continue to grow. She said she recently attended a presentation regarding the Bellevue School Foundation's signs of suicide program. However, she noted that many school districts do not have a similar program.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Esparza acknowledged that the needs in the community exceed the available resources. Ms. Esparza said one of the considerations in evaluating the funding applications is whether or not the nonprofit service providers have engaged in work in the community to develop partnerships and to leverage the dollars that they receive from the City.

Councilmember Stokes commended the work of the Human Services Commission in reviewing funding applications and making recommendations. He said he is interested in a more holistic approach to problems and services to enhance the ability to respond to the more complex issues and situations.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked staff and the commissioners for their work. Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Human Services Manager Alex O'Reilly said there is always room for improvement in the community outreach efforts as well as a need to anticipate emerging issues. Ms. O'Reilly said the quality of the data collected is critical in telling the story of the community.

Councilmember Robertson thanked Chair Ma and the Human Services Commission for their work. She said it would be interesting to know the percentage of individuals earning minimum wage who are heads of household as well as the actual average starting wage in Bellevue.

Ms. Robertson commented on the benefits of creating a sense of community for individuals who receive assistance. She encouraged programs focused on prevention, including measures to prevent homelessness. She said it would be great to see how the City could leverage human services funding with the Affordable Housing Strategy to create more housing units. She hopes that the providers of human services have the capability to communicate with individuals who speak a language other than English as their first language.

Councilmember Lee thanked Chair Ma and the commissioners for their work. Mr. Lee acknowledged that the needs are larger than the available resources and the Human Services Commission must make difficult choices. He suggested that the City consider increasing its human services funding in the future. Mr. Lee said that human infrastructure is as important as physical infrastructure. He expressed support for efforts to address the need for mental health services, especially for youth.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said he looks forward to working with the commission. He expressed support for increasing the Human Services Fund during the next budget cycle. He requested more information regarding the factors related to Bellevue School District students in need of assistance. He concurred with the importance of addressing youth mental health issues.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis regarding affordable housing for veterans and victims of domestic violence, Ms. Stangland said more detailed information is available in the full Human Services Needs Update report. Mr. Nieuwenhuis requested information regarding the number and dollar amounts of funding requests related to affordable housing services.

Mayor Robinson thanked Chair Ma and staff for their hard work. She concurred with Councilmember Robertson about the importance of focusing on prevention, especially in the area of housing and homelessness. Ms. Robinson said it is much more cost-efficient to keep people housed than to wait until a person loses their housing. She expressed support for considering an increase in human services funding.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. O'Reilly said that some Eastside cities recently began conducting their own needs assessments. Ms. O'Reilly said that Bellevue's Human Services Needs Update includes Eastside data in certain chapters. She said there are ongoing discussions with other cities about better coordinating their efforts to compile information reflecting the needs of the overall East King County region.

(b) Grand Connection Public Art Installation at the Downtown Park NE Gateway

City Manager Miyake introduced discussion regarding the Grand Connection public art installation at the Downtown Park NE Gateway.

Jesse Canedo, Chief Economic Development Officer, noted that the art installation planned as part of the Downtown Park NE Gateway is an early implementation item from the Grand Connection Framework Plan, which was approved by the Council in 2015.

Paul Manfredi, Chair of the Arts Commission, said the Council's support of the Destination Development Plan and the Downtown Livability Initiative policy and code amendments increased policy support for the expansion of Bellevue's public art collection, as addressed in the 2017 Grand Connection Arts and Culture Plan. The Downtown Park NE Gateway project is located at Bellevue Way NE and NE 4th Street. Approximately 35,000 vehicles pass that location on an average weekday.

Mr. Manfredi described the artist selection process. A committee of representatives from the Community Development Department, Parks and Community Services Department, Arts Commission, and the artist community was formed in 2017. The request for qualifications (RFQ) was issued on October 11, 2017 and the City received 98 artist applications. In January 2018, the Arts Commission approved the selection of Marc Fornes/THEVERYMANY for the art installation at the park gateway. Mr. Manfredi presented examples of the artist's projects and noted the distinctive style and the use of light and color.

The design work for the art installation was a key part of the broader planning for the Downtown Park NE Gateway. The design will be unique to Bellevue and the site. In June 2019, concept designs were presented to the Arts Commission and the Parks and Community Services Board. The Arts Commission approved the design in September 2019. The art installation will be integrated with a public plaza and event/performance space.

Mr. Canedo said the contract with the artist will be presented for Council approval in February. The construction of the plaza and installation of the artwork will begin this year with the completion of the project by the spring of 2021. The grand opening celebration, including a presentation by the artist, is anticipated for early in the second quarter of 2021.

Councilmember Stokes, liaison to the Arts Commission, said this is a great step forward for the development of the Grand Connection. He expressed support for the robust artist selection process and the project's design.

Councilmember Barksdale said he is pleased to see the Grand Connection moving forward. He noted discussions about the project when he served as Co-Chair of the Wilburton Commercial Area Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Mr. Manfredi said the project team has discussed the potential for interactive features along the corridor. Mr. Canedo said the gateway plaza will provide the opportunity for small-scale performances and entertainment.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the art installation will be the primary artwork at the park gateway. However, there could be smaller art elements. In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the structure is made of a durable hybrid steel with a thick powder coating that is graffiti- and scratch-resistant.

Councilmember Lee asked about the cost of the art piece and whether there was a cost-benefit analysis. Mr. Manfredi said this has been one of the most strongly supported art projects in the City's budget. Mr. Canedo said the project cost includes the design work and the fabrication

contract, for a total of approximately \$950,000. For comparison purposes, Mr. Canedo said the City invested approximately \$500,000 in art for Meydenbauer Bay Park. The City of Redmond recently built a similar pavilion in its downtown park for approximately \$1.5 million. The bean sculpture in Chicago was built for a cost of \$23 million. Mr. Manfredi said the proposed art installation is intended to be an iconic feature that makes the statement that Bellevue is a world-class, destination city.

Mr. Lee said the sculpture park in Seattle has many pieces, including by famous artists. He said he is unsure whether the proposed Grand Connection art installation and recognition of the artist will be sufficient to bring an economic impact for Bellevue. Mr. Manfredi said the artist was selected due largely to his reputation and understanding of the City's interest in creating an iconic public art feature.

Councilmember Robertson observed that the City has not provided a significant public art piece in a long time. She would have liked the Council to have had the opportunity to see the earlier design options and to provide feedback. However, she likes and supports the selection of the proposed project design. Mr. Robertson said she does not want the art installation to be replicated elsewhere. Mr. Canedo said the City is negotiating to obtain the intellectual property rights to the design so it cannot be duplicated. Ms. Robertson said she wants to ensure that the City makes the final decision regarding the colors used in the art installation.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Canedo said the City is coordinating with Sound Transit to select designs and artwork for the Grand Connection that are harmonious with the East Link light rail project. Ms. Robertson expressed an interest in a staff presentation regarding the light rail design elements. For the Grand Connection, she suggested large letters spelling Bellevue that would function as play equipment and provide good photo opportunities.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Canedo confirmed that a water feature is planned adjacent to the plaza at the Downtown Park NE Gateway. She suggested integrating a sound system and any other infrastructure needed to support entertainment and performances on the plaza.

In further response to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Canedo said that public art has been funded to date by the City. Ms. Zahn encouraged exploring the potential for funding partners for public art projects. She expressed support for the proposed design.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for the artwork installation, which she noted will complement the Inspiration Playground on the other corner of the park. She thanked staff for involving the Parks and Community Services Board in the planning process.

Councilmember Stokes concurred with the suggestion to explore private-public partnerships to fund artwork along the Grand Connection. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Canedo said that funds for the art installation were allocated in the 2017-2018 and the 2019-2020 budgets.

3. Report of the City Manager [Regular Session Agenda Item 6(b)]

(a) 911/Smart Mobility Integration Award

City Manager Miyake introduced discussion regarding the 911/Smart Mobility Integration project and award.

Mark Poch, Assistant Director of the Transportation Department, said the National Operations Center of Excellence (a partnership of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America and the Institute of Transportation Engineers) recently recognized Bellevue with a runner-up award for the Best Use of Management Data to Improve Transportation Systems Management and Operations. The award demonstrates Bellevue's commitment and progress in the implementation of the Smart Cities Plan, as well as staff's commitment to the City's core values, particularly innovation and exceptional public service.

Mr. Poch said that NORCOM and Transportation Department staff collaborated to develop a tool that integrates real-time 911 dispatch data from NORCOM with traffic operations, video monitoring, and incident archiving. This allows the traffic engineering staff to more quickly identify and respond to roadway emergencies and to other events or incidents that are causing traffic congestion.

Fred Liang, Information Technology Manager for the Transportation Department, described the screens viewed by traffic engineers to observe and analyze the data collected from the traffic cameras related to car accidents, traffic mobility, and traffic signal timing. He invited Councilmembers to visit the 7th floor to observe the use of the technology. He noted that 60 percent of Bellevue intersections currently have cameras, and all of the intersections will have cameras in two years.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for their work. She noted that a neighbor was able to prove that they were not at fault in a traffic accident after being able to obtain the video clip of the accident. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Liang said the video recordings are typically retained for 30 days. However, they can be stored for a longer time if needed. Mr. Liang noted that the integration project is helpful to law enforcement.

Councilmember Lee congratulated staff for receiving the award and encouraged continued efforts toward innovation and the use of technology.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Liang said that Bellevue is the first city to collaborate with NORCOM for this type of project. He said the City was able to customize the program for its needs.

Councilmember Barksdale said he would like to visit the 7th floor 911 and traffic management operations. Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Mr. Liang noted the potential for adding elements to build on the progress to date.

Councilmember Stokes said this is an exciting project. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Liang said that individuals are able to request videos and other information by submitting a public disclosure request. Mr. Stokes complimented Bellevue's leadership in transportation planning and projects. He encouraged all Councilmembers to visit the 7th floor if they have not already done so.

Councilmember Zahn noted her involvement with the Transportation Research Board and confirmed Bellevue's strong reputation in the area of transportation. She is pleased to see the leveraging of technology and looks forward to future innovations. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Liang said that police officers are now able to download images of an accident in real time before they arrive at the scene. Mr. Poch noted staff's plans to work with public safety personnel to determine whether additional enhancements would benefit them. Ms. Zahn said that people use the traffic cameras during winter weather events to see the road conditions. She encouraged efforts to work with third party apps to expand real-time information for the public.

At 7:48 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared recess to the Regular Session.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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