

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

January 25, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Stokes, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Lee, Robertson, Robinson, Slatter, and Wallace¹

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m., with Mayor Stokes presiding. There was no Executive Session.

2. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Chelminiak moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Wallace seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

3. Oral Communications

(a) Alex Zimmerman, President of StandUP-America, said he would like the City Manager to hold monthly meetings with the public. He expressed concern that residents and Councilmembers do not support his request.

(b) Katherine Hughes, representing the Northtowne Neighborhoods Association, reiterated residents' previous request for a Subarea Plan. She said the Association supports the future low-income housing project at St. Luke's Lutheran Church. She said it is important to protect Bellevue Way ingress and egress and to address building heights on that site, however. She believes the Subarea Plan was last updated in the 1980s. She asked the

¹ Councilmember Wallace left the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Council to help keep Northtowne neighborhoods intact. Ms. Hughes submitted a letter from the Association signed by Paul Brallier.

4. Study Session

(a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Lee announced that Lucy Ma, an Interlake High School senior and Co-Chair of the Bellevue Youth Link Board, was selected to participate in the U.S. Senate Youth Program. She will spend a week in Washington, D.C., learning about the federal government, democracy, and our political system. Mr. Lee congratulated Lucy on her accomplishment.

(b) East Link Project Update

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced Sound Transit's update on the East Link project, which will be followed by a presentation by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) regarding the I-405 express toll lanes. He said staff is seeking input on the transit oriented development (TOD) principles presented to the Council last fall and outlined in tonight's meeting packet.

Transportation Director Dave Berg introduced Ron Lewis, Deputy Executive Director, and John Sleavin, Civil Design Manager, from Sound Transit and Bill Vlcek, Deputy Regional Administrator for the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Mr. Lewis said the East Link light rail project is working on final design for the I-90 corridor from the International District in Seattle to South Bellevue, with the 90-percent design milestone set for June 2016. He recalled that Sound Transit hired its GC/CM (General Contractor - Construction Management) contractor in the fall. Most of the design packages for the alignment through Bellevue from South Bellevue to the Redmond Technology Center are at 100-percent design. The tunnel contract has already been awarded. The Spring District Station in the BelRed corridor is approaching 90-percent design. Mr. Lewis complimented Bellevue staff for their work with Sound Transit as it relocated the Olympic Pipeline in the BelRed corridor.

Mr. Lewis highlighted the construction packages on the East Link project and Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) project schedule. He said the remaining design and construction effort for the I-90 corridor represents the critical path in the project schedule. The first construction activity will be in Downtown Bellevue, and the contractor is preparing its work plans, schedules, and early submittals.

Mr. Lewis provided additional details regarding the I-90 corridor. He recalled that an independent review team (IRT) was established during the preliminary engineering phase of the East Link project. The team's purpose was to review the project and to make a determination about the feasibility of operating light rail through the I-90 corridor. The IRT concluded that it was feasible and identified 23 issues to be addressed as part of the subsequent design and construction work. Mr. Lewis said 20 issues have been addressed and closed with WSDOT, and three remain.

Mr. Sleavin said that, after WSDOT is satisfied with the resolution of a technical issue, it is processed by Sound Transit and returned to WSDOT, which forwards the item to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The IRT's Issue Q relates to the modification of the bridge inspection procedures for the electrified train to address the potential for stray current. He said extensive testing has resulted in a solution for avoiding stray current. Issue K recommended establishing criteria to evaluate the five critical items of the original 23 issues. Mr. Sleavin said WSDOT is finalizing the resolution of that item.

Mr. Sleavin said Issue A relates to the track bridge which crosses the expansion joint. He recalled that Sound Transit conducted extensive testing of a prototype in Pueblo, Colorado, where there is a 50-square-mile facility to test trains. Issue A is focused on ensuring that the track bridge does not cause damage to the I-90 bridge structure. Mr. Sleavin said Issues K and Q are expected to close this week, and Issue A is anticipated to close in February.

Mr. Vlcek said the issues are challenging and I-90 will be the only floating bridge in the world with light rail. He said WSDOT's bridge engineer determined that he saw no fatal flaws in placing light rail on the bridge. Mr. Vlcek said WSDOT is overseeing the civil portion of the project. There have been 11 single-direction closures on 90, and 16 more are scheduled. The life safety, fire suppression, and emergency egress systems in the tunnels are being improved as part of the project. The contract is approximately 32 percent complete. WSDOT anticipates completing its work by May 2017 before Sound Transit takes over the center roadway to begin light rail construction.

Councilmember Wallace stated his understanding that any stray electrical current could cause the rebar in the bridge to corrode and shorten the lifespan of the bridge. While that is not currently identified as a fatal flaw, he questioned how that issue is resolved. Mr. Vlcek said WSDOT has worked with experts on that specific issue and devised a system to be installed to take care of the stray current.

Mr. Wallace observed that the absence of a fatal flaw does not necessarily mean that a project is prudent. Responding to Mr. Wallace, Mr. Sleavin said both WSDOT and Sound Transit worked with experts who concluded that the technique to handle the stray current will be effective. He said there was extensive testing on the stray current, including in rainy conditions. There is a requirement for the bridge to be 25 times more resistant to stray current than the rest of the system.

Councilmember Wallace questioned the horizontal torque issue and the potential for damage to the bridge and/or train in a storm event. He also noted the expansion joint issue which could cause the train to derail. He questioned whether there are operational constraints that would dictate stopping operations during a storm or high winds.

Mr. Sleavin said the testing in Pueblo, Colorado tested the expansion joint at the maximum lake level and in the case of high winds. He said the train would be closed above 50-55 miles-per-hour winds.

Councilmember Wallace questioned the anticipated timing for approval to cross the bridge by Sound Transit, WSDOT, and the federal government. Mr. Sleavin said that will occur before Sound Transit signs the GC/CM contract.

Mr. Wallace questioned what the Bellevue City Council can tell their constituents in terms of the timing. He said many in the community are concerned about construction beginning in Bellevue before the I-90 issues are resolved.

Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit is confident about the ability to cross the bridge and is passing that message along to the community. Construction on I-90 will begin in May 2017.

Councilmember Robertson expressed concern about continued lane closures on I-90, especially when they occur during special events or at the same time as lane closures on the SR 520 bridge.

Mr. Vlcek said WSDOT is cautious about the impact of closures. He said they look at weekends in great detail to determine which closures are necessary and whether there are special events. He said that, unfortunately, there are times when multiple highway closures are necessary. Responding to Ms. Robertson, he said the 16 remaining closures are related to the R8A project and will be completed by May 2017.

Ms. Robertson referred to the evaluation of the track bridge to determine whether the safety factor is a level 2 versus 4. She questioned the meaning of this term and the best practice for the safety factor.

Mr. Sleavin said the track bridge is designed to meet code requirements. If all of the code requirements are met, the safety factor would be 1. He said Sound Transit's factor will exceed that standard.

Ms. Robertson said her understanding is that the long-range plan for East Link is to expand to four-car trains. She questioned whether the system will be able to run four-car trains at 55 miles per hour. Mr. Sleavin said yes. The track bridge is 40 feet long and a single train is approximately 93 feet long. He said a computer analysis before the testing indicated that a single train would be enough to confirm the track bridge performance. However, Sound Transit decided to take a second train for testing to verify that analysis. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Sleavin said the bridge can accommodate two trains traveling on the bridge, one in each direction.

Councilmember Lee said it is important for the Council to fully understand the project and to have confidence in its feasibility and safety. He said it is important to have transparency for the public, including regarding the upcoming lane closures.

Mr. Lewis said the presentation is a snapshot of the work of an extensive team of Sound Transit, WSDOT, and regional and national consultants.

Mr. Lewis introduced Chad Frederick, Construction Manager for the Downtown Bellevue tunnel project, and Paul Cornish, Program Manager.

Mr. Frederick provided an overview of the Downtown tunnel project including the south portal at Main Street, mid-tunnel access at 2nd Place and 110th Avenue NE, and the north portal in the vicinity of City Hall. The construction open house was held on January 12, 2016, and the groundbreaking is scheduled for February 2016. Construction will begin in February or March. A temporary noise wall will be built around the south portal construction site, and tunnel excavation will begin late summer or early fall.

Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Frederick said there will likely be brief lane closures during construction. Mr. Berg said there will be a full road closure on 110th Avenue south of NE 6th Street at some point. Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Berg said staff is working with the contractor to determine the time period and duration of that closure.

Councilmember Wallace said many businesses are concerned about the potential for extended road closures. Mr. Frederick said the closures are anticipated to be minimal. He said the method of excavating the tunnel is slower than some techniques but it reduces the extent of road closures needed.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Frederick said there will be a lane closure at the mid-tunnel access point. An area along 2nd Place will be closed entirely to be used as a construction service area.

Continuing, Mr. Frederick said site preparation work will begin late winter or spring 2016. The temporary noise wall will be constructed this summer, and tunnel excavation will begin by the fall. Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Frederick confirmed that the noise wall will be similar to the one used at the Northgate/Maple Leaf site in Seattle.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Frederick said there will be some noticeable vibration during the tunnel excavation. Mr. Lee said it will be important to let the public know about the closures and their anticipated duration. Mr. Lewis said the construction outreach meeting earlier in January was well attended. He said community outreach staff is linked with construction management staff to ensure that up-to-date information is shared with the public.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Frederick said dirt hauling will be conducted only during non-peak, daytime hours. The dirt will be hauled from the south portal site to I-405.

Mr. Cornish provided an update on replacement parking and the transit service strategy to accommodate the closure of the South Bellevue Park and Ride. Sound Transit updated its license plate survey to determine where users are accessing the system. Sound Transit is leasing additional parking spaces at local churches and modifying bus routes where needed. Bus service will add 12 new trips per day on the 554 route on I-90 beginning in March. King County Metro will re-route a number of its lines during the closure. The Access Program will be moved to Eastgate.

Mr. Cornish said Sound Transit continues to work with the City and Metro to determine public outreach for this effort. The anticipated increase in average travel time to Seattle is eight minutes. A total of 650-720 parking stalls will be available in existing Park and Ride lots and the

leased sites. Additional buses on I-90 are intended to reduce the increase in rides involving two buses.

Mr. Cornish recalled a previous question from Deputy Mayor Chelminiak about the available capacity of the bus service. Mr. Cornish said the load factor (ratio of passengers to seats on a bus) on route 271 is 1.1:1. The load factor on the Rapid Ride B Line is 0.6:1. Capacity on route 554 along I-90 has a load factor above 1 with current service. However, the addition of service along that route should improve the ratio.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Cornish said the South Bellevue Park and Ride will close this fall for approximately five years. Ms. Robertson asked Sound Transit to keep the Council and public apprised about the closure because this will be a significant issue for residents.

Councilmember Wallace questioned the impact on a current rider of the South Transit 550 route after the Park and Ride closes. Mr. Cornish said the impacts will vary based on the alternative parking locations. Some users will be required to use two buses. However, Sound Transit will try to mitigate those impacts with more bus service on I-90.

Mr. Wallace observed that there will be intense competition for parking at the Mercer Island Park and Ride and the Eastgate Park and Ride. Mr. Cornish said the Eastgate facility is used by a significant number of non-transit users, and Sound Transit is working with Metro to address that situation.

Councilmember Slatter said she is pleased to see that Sound Transit is coordinating with Metro. She noted the 8-minute average travel time increase to Seattle and questioned the range of increased travel times. Mr. Cornish said some trips increased by as much as 20 minutes. The calculations included assumptions about which alternate parking lots transit users would use and the increased bus service capacity along the I-90 corridor.

Ms. Slatter said she would like to know how the alternative system is performing after the closure has been in effect, and what the options will be if adjustments are needed. Mr. Cornish said Sound Transit will monitor the system on an ongoing basis over the five years. Ms. Slatter questioned the need for the five-year closure. Mr. Cornish said the current schedule provides 48 months for construction of the new South Bellevue Station/Park and Ride, and the final year includes the electrical system contract work. Once a contractor has been hired, Sound Transit will work with them to expedite the schedule if possible.

Councilmember Slatter said she would like Sound Transit to work with the contractor to significantly reduce, perhaps by half, the duration of construction and the road closures.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak questioned the additional cost to riders for transferring between the Metro and Sound Transit systems. He does not want costs to increase for riders. Mr. Chelminiak expressed concern that individuals will look for on-street parking as an alternative to full Park and Ride lots. As a separate issue, he observed that there are fewer options for riders west of I-405.

Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit will look into the fare issue between transit systems. Deputy Mayor Chelminiak reiterated that it is unfair to charge riders twice what they are paying now to use transit.

Moving on, Mr. Lewis introduced Miles Haupt, Project Director for the Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF), and Jon Mikhels, Deputy Project Director, Facilities Design, Design Engineering Construction Management.

Mr. Mikhels provided an update on the OMSF project schedule and activities. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was issued on September 25, 2015, and the federal Record of Decision was issued on November 5, 2015. The FEIS addresses items in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City including site design and screening, transit-oriented development (TOD) process and scenarios, trail development (i.e., connections to the Eastside Rail Corridor), and the maximum number of light rail vehicles to be stored at the facility.

Mr. Mikhels said the project has transitioned from the planning stage to design engineering and construction management. Due to the complexity of the project, Sound Transit has chosen the design build procurement approach involving one contractor. The Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) was issued last fall, and approximately 17 responses were received.

Councilmember Wallace questioned whether the same contractor would also build the residential units. Mr. Mikhels said Sound Transit is not defining the TOD at this stage. Staff conducting the market and feasibility analyses are working to develop the vision for those properties. Mr. Mikhels said that, at a minimum, they are looking at how to best set up the parcels for future development and for the mitigation of impacts.

Continuing, Mr. Mikhels said the OMSF and East Link service will begin operations in 2022-2023. Next steps are to initiate property acquisitions and to complete the TOD market and feasibility study with a stakeholder engagement component. The final Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued second quarter 2016. A Notice to Proceed is anticipated during second quarter 2017.

Responding to Councilmember Slatter, Mr. Haupt said the driving factor for trying to integrate development with Sound Transit's construction activities is to avoid impacts to its operations and to timely support the development required under the MOU. Sound Transit is interested in integrating and scoring the design build proposal based on well it addresses the TOD component and how much it potentially could provide. In further response to Ms. Slatter, Mr. Sleavin said the City and Sound Transit are coordinating their efforts toward future TOD elements.

Councilmember Wallace reiterated his ongoing interest in Sound Transit's plans for mitigating the noise caused by trains accessing the OMSF overnight. He wants to be sure the operations comply with the City's noise control code. He said he does not believe it is prudent to construct residential units adjacent to a maintenance facility. He observed that a contract requirement to provide housing with the maintenance facility will likely not produce the desired quality of housing.

Mr. Wallace said it will be important to provide proper noise mitigation for the residential units and to work with a contractor with the appropriate expertise in this type of residential development, as opposed to a contractor with experience in building maintenance facilities.

Councilmember Lee said he appreciates Sound Transit's work with the City. He observed that the City needs to work hard to provide its requirements and concerns in a timely manner to enable incorporating those into Sound Transit's project.

Councilmember Robinson said the Council has repeatedly discussed affordable housing as a priority for TOD adjacent to light rail. She urged Sound Transit to continue to keep this in mind as it plans its project. Mr. Haupt said the Sound Transit Board understands the need and he will share the concern with them again.

Moving on, Chris Salomone, Director of Planning and Community Development, noted the Real Estate Challenge underway for the 130th Station parcels. He said the stakeholders who participated in the past Urban Land Institute (ULI) review will be invited back for an update and asked to provide feedback. The code amendment prescribed by the MOU is moving forward through SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) review, and staff anticipates the adoption of the Land Use Code amendment in March. Mr. Salomone said City staff is meeting regularly with Sound Transit staff. Work is underway on the market study and on the separate development feasibility study.

Referencing Councilmember Wallace's comments about collocating residential units with a maintenance facility, Mr. Salomone said best practices demonstrate that there are opportunities for housing to be successful adjacent to transit stations. He is optimistic that it can be feasible with a maintenance facility as well. He observed that more than one developer could be involved in the TOD development.

Mr. Wallace said a maintenance facility is different from a light rail station because trains will be running all night to access the facility. He said that providing affordable and/or low-income housing does not make the situation any better. Mr. Salomone concurred that those issues will need to be studied very carefully. He said the City is also working with Sound Transit TOD staff who were not present at the Council meeting.

Continuing, Mr. Salomone said the Real Estate Challenge was initiated on January 15 with participants from the University of Washington, University of British Columbia, and Portland State University. The winning team will provide a presentation to the Council in March.

Mr. Salomone highlighted the three categories of TOD principles discussed with the Council in September 2015: BelRed (primarily mixed use), 120th Station/OMSF (Spring District with office focus as well as residential and retail uses), and BelRed/130th Station (mixed use). He noted a proposed principle to add public services and/or public amenities at the 130th Station location (e.g., cultural and arts amenities, plaza, mini City Hall, etc.). The City is obligated to provide 300 parking spaces to Sound Transit at the 130th Station.

Councilmember Robertson commented on the Draft TOD Planning Principles provided in the Council's desk packet. She said she supports the principles as long as the City is not promising to do anything more than what was identified in the BelRed Plan.

Referring to the set of principles for the 120th Station and OMSF location, Councilmember Robertson expressed concern about item 7. She said it sounds like it is referring to a stakeholder group that was not established by the Council but will be involved in the negotiations. She suggested revising the language. Mr. Salomone concurred with the need for clarity. He said there is no intention of involving stakeholders in negotiating agreements between the City and Sound Transit. He suggested: "The City will consider stakeholder input prior to negotiating the agreement." Ms. Robertson expressed support for that revision.

Referring to the principles for the 130th Station area, Ms. Robertson suggested revising the proposed principle regarding public services and amenities. Her understanding is that the City will evaluate the inclusion of public services and/or amenities in the station area but is not committing to a decision at this point.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak observed that the discussion about TOD has focused on residential uses. However, he said TOD involves retail uses as well. He said the original plan for the OMSF displaced up to 1.6 million square feet of potential development. The current plan allows 1 million square feet, or 1.3 million square feet if the road is realigned.

Mr. Salomone confirmed that the TOD is planned as a mixed use project. With the Global Innovation Exchange and the development of the Spring District, there will be opportunities for office, research, and retail uses.

Referring to the set of principles for the 130th Station area, Mr. Chelminiak said he suggested the new principle, which was intended to refer to publicly owned amenities. He suggested the following language: "Explore the opportunities for public amenities, including publicly owned spaces and structures." He said this could include a community center, park, or other elements.

Councilmember Robinson noted that individuals live comfortably along rail lines in a number of cities. She does not believe that the train traffic related to the OMSF necessarily means that the location is not suitable for housing.

Councilmember Lee suggested including the possibility for public amenities at the 120th Station location as well. Mr. Chelminiak said the Spring District development will provide certain public space elements.

Councilmember Wallace expressed support for the first category of general BelRed TOD planning principles. He concurred with Deputy Mayor Chelminiak's suggestion to add references to commercial uses as part of TOD. Mr. Wallace disagreed with principle 4 for the 120th Station area: Phase 1 OMSF parcels should be jointly marketed with the goal of TOD developed on all three parcels with the start of East Link service. Mr. Wallace observed that parcels 1 and 2 provide strong opportunities for housing and other amenities (e.g., bike and pedestrian connections). However, he anticipates that it will be difficult to achieve feasible development,

especially residential, on parcel 3. He suggested there are potential daytime and public space uses for parcel 3.

Mr. Wallace reiterated that he would like to remove principle 4. He does not support principle 5 committing to the future realignment of 120th Avenue NE, which has an estimated cost of \$60 million. Councilmember Wallace said the project is unnecessary. The Phase 2 TOD (parcels 4 and 5) could be placed on the other side of the existing road if Metro is willing to relocate its bus facility at that site.

Mr. Salomone noted that principle 4 regarding the joint marketing of parcels 1-3 is included in the East Link MOU agreement and could remain as a planning principle as an aspirational item.

Referring to principle 5, Mr. Wallace suggested language that the City, Sound Transit, and Metro would “attempt to negotiate” the realignment of 120th Avenue NE at some point in the future.

Mayor Stokes suggested leaving in the possibility without committing to the road realignment.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak observed that an alternative to realigning the road could be to acquire the Metro parcels for completing TOD on parcels 4 and 5. He suggested revising the principle to reflect the goal of achieving optimal TOD square footage, whether or not the road is realigned.

Councilmember Slatter concurred with Councilmember Wallace’s comment that the wording of principle 4 is misleading. She suggested: “The City, with Sound Transit and King County Metro, would consider a future alignment to allow the development of parcels 4 and 5.”

Councilmember Lee concurred with Mr. Wallace that the realignment is not needed. The goal is to develop parcels 4 and 5. Ms. Slatter suggested removing “future alignment” from her language. Ms. Robinson concurred with the revision.

Councilmember Robertson proposed: “The City, with Sound Transit and King County Metro, will consider different mechanisms including, but not limited to, the potential realignment of 120th Avenue NE, to allow Phase 2 (parcels 4 and 5) TOD completion.”

Mr. Chelminiak noted that, since the principle is directly related to the MOU agreement, he would like to see a more solid statement that the parties “shall negotiate” ways to develop parcels 4 and 5 including, but not limited to, the realignment of 120th Avenue NE.

Ms. Robertson observed that “shall” is causing the Council’s concerns. Mr. Wallace suggested language that the three parties “shall continue to negotiate...”

Deputy City Manager Kate Berens said there is a separate agreement that requires the City to engage in certain processes with King County Metro and Sound Transit. Ms. Robertson suggested referencing the three-party agreement. Ms. Berens said the three agencies will work to identify the scope and potential cost of realignment. At that point, under the three-party agreement, the City will determine whether there are any other next steps to explore, including pursuing funding from outside agencies.

Ms. Berens suggested revising principle 5 to refer to the three-party agreement and to ensure that early development does not preclude the development of parcels 4 and 5.

Mayor Stokes noted a consensus in support of the suggested language. Mr. Salomone said staff would email the revised language to the Council for their review.

Mr. Berg provided an update on the Spring Boulevard Zone 1 project, which is funded in the 2015-2021 Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan. The Amended MOU with Sound Transit included a provision for the City to work with Sound Transit's GC/CM contractor to determine the cost of constructing a portion of Zone 1 in conjunction with the East Link alignment work. A cost estimate provided late last year was higher than anticipated. However, the City is continuing to discuss the project with the GC/CM contractor.

Mr. Berg said the City is also investigating with Sound Transit the option for the City to proceed with the Zone 1 project, hiring its own contractor, before light rail construction reaches the BelRed corridor in the second half of 2017. Mr. Berg said staff anticipates returning to the Council in February to seek direction on the preferred approach. If the City is to proceed on its own, staff recommends that construction begin by mid-2016. Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Berg confirmed that the Zone 1 work is funded in the CIP Plan.

Mr. Berg said a new East Link project outreach coordinator will join the City on February 8. She will move forward with the Bellevue's Open for Business public marketing campaign.

At 8:24 p.m., Mayor Stokes declared a brief recess.

The meeting resumed at 8:33 p.m.

(c) Regional Issues Overview

(1) Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Update on I-405 Express Toll Lanes Operation

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, introduced discussion of the I-405 express toll lanes. She introduced the following Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff: Kim Henry, I-405 Project Director, and Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary for the Toll Division. Ms. Nichols recalled that the I-405 express toll lanes became operational on September 27, 2015.

Ms. Rubstello said the purpose of the lanes is to improve mobility in a congested corridor. She highlighted RCW 47.56.880, which established the toll lane project. She reported that express toll lane usage is higher than expected. Carpool use is lower than expected but has been increasing. Southbound traffic performance is better than before, while northbound traffic is better only in certain places. Due to higher overall usage of the toll lanes, the maximum toll rate (\$10) has occurred more frequently than predicted.

Ms. Rubstello said FlexPass carpools are experiencing faster commutes. The express toll lanes are saving drivers an average of 14 minutes through the corridor. She noted that 75 percent of the users pay the minimum rate of 75 cents, and 92 percent pay \$4 or less.

Mr. Henry said traffic volumes have increased regionally since 2009 as the economy has rebounded. The annual vehicle delay increased 46 percent from 2012 to 2014. He highlighted past trends in traffic congestion and the usage of HOV lanes.

Ms. Rubstello presented a number of congestion contour maps to demonstrate the changes in traffic flow since the express toll lanes were implemented.

Councilmember Wallace noted a map indicating that general purpose lanes through Kirkland, at the connection to SR 520, are free flowing most of the morning. He said that is not consistent with his own experience and with what he is hearing from his employees and constituents. Ms. Rubstello acknowledged that traffic volumes vary on different days, and the contour maps reflect average flow/congestion.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Ms. Rubstello said there are three destinations for using the express toll lanes. The dollar amount shown when a person enters a toll lane is the total cost for driving the entire corridor.

Councilmember Slatter said it is confusing to know where to enter and leave the lanes and how to determine the cost. Ms. Rubstello said WSDOT is working to develop better ways to explain how they work. She said the rules for setting the rates are established in state law.

Continuing, Ms. Rubstello said Community Transit has reported a 9.3 percent improvement in travel time during the morning commute and a 6.5 percent improvement in the evening northbound travel time. King County Metro experienced a six percent increase in ridership from October to November.

Mr. Henry said WSDOT continues to monitor the performance of the lanes and to adjust the algorithm as needed. Signage has been added to assist drivers, and certain access points have been lengthened to facilitate movement into and out of the toll lanes.

Ms. Rubstello said next steps are the release of the program's financial statement in February. WSDOT will continue to gather public and customer input and to monitor toll lane performance, including traffic and collision data, over the next two years.

Councilmember Robertson questioned whether WSDOT is collecting data on traffic diversion to local streets. Ms. Rubstello said the agency is monitoring traffic patterns on many of the parallel arterials and local streets and has been collecting data since August. The cities of Bellevue, Kenmore, and Kirkland have reported that they are not noticing much of a change. However, the cities of Bothell and Woodinville have voiced concerns about increased local traffic since the toll lanes were implemented. WSDOT will be conducting enhanced data collection to better understand what is happening in those areas.

Ms. Robertson questioned whether WSDOT has considered opening the toll lanes free of charge if an accident is blocking general purpose lanes. Ms. Rubstello said WSDOT relies on the Washington State Patrol to determine how to use lanes when accidents occur. She acknowledged the benefit of allowing traffic to flow and resuming normal toll lane functioning after the congestion from the accident improves.

Ms. Robertson questioned the anticipated future maximum toll rates. Ms. Rubstello said the State Transportation Commission is responsible for adjusting the toll rates, and staff provides ongoing data to the Commission for its use. Ms. Rubstello said national data indicates that drivers at all income levels use optional toll lanes.

Councilmember Robinson said she has observed drivers entering the toll lanes beyond the camera entrance point and exiting before the next camera. She said this is potentially dangerous and suggested signage encouraging drivers to report this behavior.

Ms. Robinson said she knows that INRIX collects its data differently than WSDOT. She wondered whether WSDOT could request the data from INRIX. Ms. Rubstello said INRIX has indicated that its data supports WSDOT's data in terms of how the express toll lanes are working. However, INRIX's data is not necessarily consistent with regard to how the general purpose lanes are working. Ms. Rubstello said WSDOT asked the University of Washington to conduct an independent analysis of its data. That analysis resulted in minor recommendations but essentially supported WSDOT's conclusions.

Councilmember Wallace said the performance data is not consistent with the level of public complaints about the system. He noted the petition of 20,000+ individuals who are working to repeal the toll lanes, as well as state legislative proposals to discontinue the program.

Ms. Rubstello said the toll lanes are a significant change for drivers. Mr. Wallace reiterated that the data is not congruent with the experience of the general public.

Mr. Henry acknowledged that northbound travel is not performing very well. Some trips on the corridor have improved and some have worsened.

Mayor Stokes thanked staff for the presentation. He expressed support for enhanced public education and communication.

[Councilmember Wallace left the meeting at 9:30 p.m.]

- (2) State Legislative Update
- (3) Federal Legislative Update
- (4) Monthly Council Summary Background Briefings on the King County Regional Committees and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

Ms. Nichols noted materials in the meeting packet providing updates on state and federal legislative activity as well as regional committees.

(d) ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) 2016 Administrative Budget and Work Program

City Manager Miyake said the ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) interlocal agreement requires Council approval of the 2016 Administrative Budget and Work Program. Council action will be requested during a future Regular Session. However, the purpose of tonight's agenda item is to provide information and an opportunity for asking questions and providing feedback.

Mr. Miyake said the final agenda item provides an overview of a request for City of Bellevue funds for two ARCH low-income housing projects.

Arthur Sullivan, ARCH Program Manager, noted Attachment 1 in the meeting packet providing the 2016 Administrative Budget, which increases by three percent over 2015. Attachment 2 provides the 2016 ARCH Work Program. He highlighted a number of work items including the men's shelter, funding the Housing Trust Fund, and reviewing the application process.

Councilmember Robinson expressed general support for the ARCH Budget and thanked Mr. Sullivan for supporting the work plan developed by the City.

(e) Housing Fund Allocation Recommendation by ARCH – Imagine Housing Totem Lake Low-Income Senior Apartments, Kirkland and Imagine Housing Low-Income Apartments at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Bellevue

Mr. Sullivan referred the Council to packet materials providing the Fall 2015 Housing Fund Allocation Recommendations by the ARCH Executive Board. The process includes a review by the Citizens Advisory Board, the ARCH Executive Board, and ARCH cities' staff. The Board recommends funding two projects: 1) Imagine Housing Totem Lake low-income senior apartments in Kirkland, and 2) Imagine Housing low-income apartments at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bellevue.

Mr. Sullivan said the City of Bellevue funded the Totem Lake project approximately four years ago, and the project is now receiving state funding. However, the delay has resulted in increased development costs. The project provides 90 units of affordable senior housing, including a number of units for homeless individuals. Mr. Sullivan said the packet materials list the conditions to be met before additional funding moves forward.

Mr. Sullivan said the ARCH Board recommends partial funding at this time for the low-income apartments project at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bellevue. He said Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are currently available for partial funding. Imagine Housing will be directed to work on a number of issues identified during the Citizen Advisory Board's review. The project is anticipated to provide housing units for low-income, homeless, and disabled individuals. Mr. Sullivan said Imagine Housing will be asked to fully analyze parking issues and other design elements. He noted that the church is the landowner and is willing to be patient as the project moves forward.

Councilmember Lee thanked Mr. Sullivan for his thorough work. He questioned whether there are additional resources for housing projects, including the ability to increase CDBG funding. Mr. Lee asked whether there are other programs that would enable the City to leverage its funding.

Mr. Sullivan said those issues are pertinent to the discussion started last fall regarding the Housing Strategy Plan and funding the Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Sullivan said ARCH is benefitting significantly from tax credits. Separately from ARCH, there is a growing national trend of social investment by housing developers, including one project in Seattle. With regard to CDBG funds, Mr. Sullivan said federal funding continues to be a challenge.

Responding to Councilmember Robinson, Mr. Sullivan said St. Luke's Lutheran Church already provides an emergency shelter. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Councilmember Robertson said that Lifewire provides assistance to victims of domestic violence.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Sullivan clarified that the first phase of the Totem Lake project was completed.

Ms. Robertson expressed support for both projects and is pleased to hear about the potential for units at St. Luke's Church to house developmentally disabled individuals. She would like to consider that priority when the Council discusses the Housing Strategy Plan. Ms. Robertson encouraged a number of three-bedroom units at St. Luke's Church for families.

Councilmember Slatter expressed support for the projects. While she understands the significant benefit of the tax credits, she wants to be sure that projects are focused on the community's needs and not driven primarily by the tax credits. Mr. Sullivan said the Council's input is important in terms of working with the housing providers and establishing conditions for financing.

Mayor Stokes thanked Mr. Sullivan for the update.

→ Deputy Mayor Chelminiak moved to direct staff to prepare legislation approving the ARCH funding request and to place it on the February 1 Regular Session agenda for Council action. Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.

Mr. Chelminiak noted the pending rezone request for the St. Luke's Lutheran Church property and suggested taking action on it before approving the ARCH appropriation for the housing project.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

5. Continued Oral Communications: None.

Mayor Stokes declared the meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Kyle Stannert
Acting City Clerk

/kaw