

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

March 6, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Stokes and Councilmembers Lee, Robertson, Robinson and Wallace

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Chelminiak

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m., with Mayor Stokes presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Site Selection and Property Acquisition for Fire Station 10

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's update on the site selection process for Fire Station 10, which will be developed under the Fire Facilities levy approved last fall.

Fire Chief Mark Risen introduced Keith Schreiber, Schreiber Starling Whitehead, and noted that the consultant was the lead on the Fire Facilities Master Plan study presented to the Council in 2014.

Chief Risen recalled that funding for land acquisition related to Fire Station 10 was provided in the 2015-2021 Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan. Staff presented information on the selected site in September 2016 and a community meeting was held in October 2016. The Fire Facilities levy was approved by voters in November 2016 and provides money for the design and construction of Fire Station 10.

Nora Johnson, Director of the Civic Services Department, said the selected site is at the northwest corner of NE 12th Street and 112th Avenue NE.

Mr. Schreiber noted the consultant's work with a fire facilities expert and an architectural firm to conduct the data analysis and geographic analysis to determine the best site for Fire Station 10. The three primary time efforts taken into consideration to identify the ideal geographic area for the downtown station were: 1) call and dispatch time, 2) turnout time for fire and emergency medical personnel, and 3) travel time to the incident location.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Schreiber said the variables related to travel time include physical distance, traffic mobility, and geographic terrain.

Ms. Johnson said 18 potential sites were identified, including City-owned, commercial, office, and residential properties.

Chief Risen said travel time is a critical component of response time. Other variables include access and traffic impacts, ability to turn out of the station, and the ability to back into the station. He noted the Fire Department's interest in moving a Medic 1 unit to this location. Additional criteria include the site configuration, costs to acquire and develop the station, location within the network of existing fire stations, and land use impacts. Response time goals are four minutes to residences and three minutes to a high-rise structure.

Chief Risen noted that the Downtown is currently served by Fire Station 5 (Clyde Hill), Fire Station 6 (BelRed corridor), and Fire Station 1 (SE 8th Street and Bellevue Way). Station 7 personnel at SE 8th Street and I-405 occasionally respond to the Downtown as well. He commented on access and traffic impacts to be considered including the site's proximity to major city intersections, interchanges, or light rail that could limit site access; the ability of fire apparatus to maneuver to and from the site; and Medic 1 access to I-405.

Ms. Johnson said the analysis of criteria narrowed the list to three sites: Puget Sound Blood Center, single-family residential property at 112th Avenue NE and NE 12th Street, and the 112th Avenue Medical Office site. She said the vacant site next to City Hall was studied. However, the analysis found that the distance to the Northtowne and BelRed areas was longer and problematic, there were access and traffic challenges, and light rail construction will impact that site over the next several years.

Ms. Johnson said the Puget Sound Blood Center site was relatively small and hindered by topography and access. For the 112th Avenue Medical Office site, the site configuration is operationally inferior and the site topography is challenging. Site acquisition and operations would be difficult due to shared access and parking, and costs would be significant. Ms. Johnson noted that the topography was an issue for several sites in the BelRed corridor.

The selected site at 112th Avenue NE and NE 12th Street provides excellent geographic coverage and response time as well as good access to and from the site and I-405.

Ms. Johnson recalled that, after meeting with the Council in September, staff conducted additional public outreach in October. Community input included: 1) concerns about the lack of public input before site selection, 2) comments that the site was selected because it is the least expensive option, 3) comments that the potential collapse of freeway bridges should not have been a selection criteria, 4) concerns that a single-family neighborhood will be impacted to meet a downtown need, and 5) comments that better sites exist.

Chief Risen said the potential for a freeway collapse was not a major site selection criteria. However it is something, as Fire Chief, he needs to consider. While cost is a factor in the decision, he said the biggest advantage of the selected site is the response time.

Ms. Johnson said Fire Station 10 is targeted to serve the Downtown, BelRed, and Northtowne areas. She noted that a number of land uses are allowed in single-family residential districts including fire stations, churches, cemeteries, and others through the conditional use permit (CUP) process. That process will include a public engagement component.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Chief Risen said most of the fire stations are in or adjacent to residential areas.

Chief Risen said the analysis studied two City-owned sites. However, the selected site provides the best geographic coverage and response times and fits well within the overall fire station network.

Chief Risen said the community expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion on 112th Avenue NE, noise from sirens, appearance of the fire station, potential impact on home values, loss of trees to develop the site, and the presence of a wetland on the site. He said the City will work with the community to design the site and the building. Ms. Johnson noted that the analysis did not support the perception of a potential negative impact on property values. She said there will be a study to determine whether the site has wetlands. Tree coverage is anticipated to be expanded with the project and will provide an enhanced buffer for the neighborhood.

Ms. Johnson provided an update on property acquisition. The City has completed appraisals of four of the nine parcels and anticipates making offers within the next 4-6 weeks. The City is waiting for the completion of wetland assessments on some of the parcels. Ideally, the wetland assessments will be completed in April and purchase offers will be made by June.

Ms. Johnson said construction is targeted to begin in 2019 for the station to be operational in 2021. The station design and permitting phases will address building footprint and layout, building character, access to and from the site, environmental assessment, and the buffers to the neighborhood and park. A public process is planned for developing the building design and character. City Code requires at least 50 feet between the building and residential property.

Chief Risen said Station 8 at Lakemont and Station 5 at Clyde Hill fit well into those residential neighborhoods. He said the City will work directly with owners and residents of properties in seeking community input on station design.

Responding to Councilmember Robinson, Ms. Johnson said the City is still considering how much of the north two parcels will be acquired. Ms. Johnson confirmed that purchasing the parcels would enhance the ability for greater tree coverage. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Chief Risen said the station will significantly increase response times to the Northtowne neighbors. Ms. Robinson said there are ways to design the station well and to make it an asset to the neighborhood.

In further response to Councilmember Robinson, Ms. Johnson said the two north parcels are under consideration for a short plat by another party, which is conducting a wetland assessment. The plat could result in four or five lots.

Councilmember Wallace thanked staff for the update. He said the Lakemont and Clyde Hill fire stations are good examples of stations close to residential lots and expensive homes, without an apparent negative impact on property values. However, he understands the community's concerns, including about the City's communications with the neighborhood. He looks forward to the development of the project design and mitigation that will protect the neighborhood while providing a needed project.

Councilmember Lee said the Fire Department has always been good neighbors. He thanked Chief Risen and his staff for their diligence in assessing the criteria, conducting further public outreach, and acknowledging the importance of the design of the facility and the site. Mr. Lee said residents value Bellevue's emergency response. He said it is important to continue working with the community throughout the project.

Councilmember Robertson commended staff's presentation, noting that she appreciates the transparency in describing the sites considered and the selection criteria. She acknowledged the need for emergency service to high-rise development and to adjacent neighborhoods. She said fire stations are in single-family neighborhoods, multifamily neighborhoods, and mixed use areas throughout the city. She said she was glad to learn that the analysis indicates no loss in property values. She expects the City to be good neighbors and to be thoughtful in the project design and mitigation.

Ms. Robertson said it is difficult for her that homes will be removed. However, sometimes that is necessary for the public good. She said she appreciated staff's efforts to work with residents in the homes to be removed. She said the development of Fire Station 10 is part of the long-term plan to make sure Bellevue continues to be a safe place to live and work. She looks forward to the next steps.

Mayor Stokes concurred with his colleagues. He said site selection is a challenge, and he acknowledged the importance of involving the community regarding potential property acquisitions. He said he hears sirens in his neighborhood but everyone realizes they are necessary. He said the City does a good job of working with the community and mitigating impacts, and the community works well with the City.

(b) Transportation Commission Recommendation for Complete Streets Policy
Amendments to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan

City Manager Miyake said staff is seeking Council direction to initiate a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Transportation Element related to the Complete Streets ordinance. He recalled that the Council asked the Transportation Commission to review Comprehensive Plan

policies to determine whether amendments are needed to fully integrate the Complete Streets concept.

Transportation Commission Chair Janice Zahn referred the Council to the commission's recommendation for Complete Streets policies in the meeting packet [Attachment B]. The Complete Streets concept is to provide safe and reliable mobility options for people, wherever they need to go throughout the city, whether walking, biking, using transit, or driving a car.

Ms. Zahn said the Council adopted the Complete Streets ordinance and amended the Transportation Standards Code in late 2016. The ordinance created eligibility for the City to be considered in the Complete Streets award program. The ordinance directed the Transportation Commission to review existing policies in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency with the Complete Streets model. Ms. Zahn said the Transportation Commission reviewed existing policies in January and February and determined that they largely reflect the intent of many of the Complete Streets ethics.

Vic Bishop, Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission, said the commission heard from the public and worked with staff in its review, and determined that relatively minor language revisions would fully incorporate the Complete Streets model. He observed that the main concepts were already reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element. Mr. Bishop said the commission's recommended amendments to seven policies are included in the meeting packet. He said the revised language is important in expressing to the community that Bellevue will consider all mobility options in all phases of projects and will work to ensure facilities are in place to connect between travel modes.

Mr. Bishop said Bellevue received an award of \$500,000 in January from the State Transportation Improvement Board to implement a Complete Streets project. The chosen project will build a raised intersection at 106th Avenue NE and the Pedestrian Corridor, as part of the larger Grand Connection project. The intersection project will implement the Downtown Transportation Plan goal to create an exceptional intersection at that location. The project is currently under design, and construction is anticipated to begin later this summer.

Kevin McDonald, Sr. Transportation Planner, thanked the commission for its work. He said staff is seeking Council direction to initiate a Complete Streets policy recommendation as part of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) package. The item will be placed on the March 20 Consent Calendar. If the Council initiates the process, the Transportation Commission and staff will work with the Planning Commission to develop a final recommendation for the Council.

Councilmember Wallace recognized Commissioner Woosley in the audience and thanked the other commissioners who could not attend. Mr. Wallace recalled that this program was reviewed several years ago by the Council and it continues to be a good plan. He expressed support to initiate the Complete Streets CPA.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for the Complete Streets model. He said it is exciting to look at this again after a few years, and he looks forward to incorporating innovative elements.

Mr. Lee suggested adding language about creating opportunities for new technology, if the policies would be the appropriate place for that language. He observed that the policies describe physical elements, and he suggested reflecting the human component.

Ms. Zahn commented that the use of the words “scope, plan, design” refer to the human element of public involvement through the scoping, planning and design activities.

Mayor Stokes said the Comprehensive Plan contains policy statements, while more details on specific projects will be contained in other documents.

Councilmember Robinson thanked the Transportation Commission for their work and informative presentation. She questioned how the Complete Streets model meshes with the Vision Zero program. She questioned whether bicycle facilities include bike racks or other parking areas. Ms. Zahn said facilities could mean a range of elements, including those that cannot be envisioned today. Mr. McDonald said the intent is that Complete Streets projects will incorporate the same safety features as the Vision Zero approach.

Councilmember Robertson stated her understanding that the Council will be asked to initiate the CPA into the 2017 CPA Work Program. The Planning Commission will then hold a public hearing and conduct its review before providing a recommendation to the City Council. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. McDonald said the Complete Streets amendments were compared to Vision Zero policies to ensure that all of the Comprehensive Plan policies in those areas are consistent and that there are no gaps in the policies.

Mayor Stokes said he likes the action-oriented words in the policies: scope, plan, design, implement, operate, and maintain. He complimented everyone on their work and noted a Council consensus in support of moving forward with the CPA.

(c) Proposed Projects for Near- to Mid-Term Low Cost Improvements for Traffic Congestion Relief along 148th-150th Avenue SE

Mayor Stokes said this agenda item addresses proposed projects for near- to mid-term, low-cost improvements for traffic congestion relief along the 148th/150th Avenue SE corridor.

City Manager Miyake said this work stems from the Eastgate Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) discussions. He said the Mayor suggested that staff and the Transportation Commission conduct a study to identify near-term traffic improvements on the 148th/150th Avenue SE corridor in the Eastgate area.

Chris Long, Traffic Engineering Manager, recalled that the Eastgate LUCA was developed through an integrated land use and transportation study completed in 2013. The study identified long-term traffic mitigation in the Eastgate area. However, there was a recognition of the need for near-term improvements as well, which could potentially be completed using funds from the recently approved neighborhood congestion, safety, and connectivity levy.

Mr. Long said the study area for the project was the 148th/150th Avenue SE corridor between SE 28th Street to Newport Way. The study focused on the evening peak period using the City's existing micro-simulation tools and 2016 traffic volumes. Staff completed concept-level plans and estimates, and made sure that none of the proposed improvements would impact priorities for transit, pedestrian, and bike facilities that had already been identified for the area.

Mr. Long said the Council directed staff in November to complete the current study of potential near-term improvements by early March.

Transportation Commission Chair Janice Zahn said the scope of the study was defined in the Mayor's memo to the commission, which was initially discussed on January 12, 2017, when staff brought the results of their analysis to the commission for review. That meeting was held at the South Bellevue Community Center, and approximately 20 members of the Eastgate community attended. The commission held the public comment period after staff's presentation. Everyone who spoke supported the study. Public feedback included asking that the effort be publicized over a broader area because the corridor handles regional traffic. The public expressed support for including modeling of the morning traffic patterns in a future, broader study. Ms. Zahn said staff presented the final results of their analysis in February, incorporating comments from the public and the Transportation Commission. At that time, the commission finalized and unanimously approved its recommendations.

Transportation Commission Vice Chair Vic Bishop highlighted the commission's comments following the study session. The improvements should not preclude a longer sidewalk on the west side of 150th Avenue SE, north of Newport Way, and the impacts of near-term projects on non-motorized travel and transit should be considered. The staging and construction of near-term improvements should be evaluated to minimize the impacts on the community. Mr. Bishop said improvements proposed on the east leg of 37th Street at 150th Avenue SE should allow for additional widening to the north in the future to accommodate eastbound and westbound dual left turns in the block between 150th Avenue SE and the eastbound I-90 on-ramp. The Transportation Commission recognized that the projects will provide congestion relief. However, they do not eliminate all congestion and delays.

Mr. Long described the two project recommendations. One involves improvements at 150th Avenue SE and Newport Way that will reduce intersection delay from 59.4 seconds to 32.2 seconds per vehicle. The project creates a new southbound, right-turn pocket from 150th Avenue SE to Newport Way. The lane reaches all six homes along the west side of the road and creates the opportunity to develop a walking path as well. Driveways will need to be regraded to match the roadway. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.6 million.

Councilmember Robertson said she has lived in the area for 15 years and has often thought of the need for a dedicated right-turn lane. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Long said the timing of the project depends on how the funding is phased. Staff proposes taking this and the second recommended project to 60 percent design with a portion of the levy money, and the other portion of levy money for congestion relief will go toward the broader Eastgate study. In further response, Mr. Long said staff will analyze the potential for completing the project in

coordination with the Newport Way sidewalk, bike lane, and storm drain project. However, he said the two near-term projects proposed here will have a separate request for proposals (RFP).

Councilmember Lee expressed support for the recommended project, and concurred with Councilmember Robertson's suggestion to coordinate it with the Newport Way project.

Mr. Long described the second recommended project at 150th Avenue SE and SE 37th Street. On the west leg is the freeway off-ramp from eastbound I-90. That approach will be modified to create a second right-turn pocket that will reduce the queue length of cars coming off of the freeway in the evening peak period. On the east leg, there is currently a three-lane cross-section with a middle left-turn lane. Congestion at that point currently blocks eastbound through traffic. Mr. Long said the improvements at this location will need to be reviewed through the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) during the design phase.

Mr. Long said the combined result of the two projects reduces southbound travel time for the SE 28th Street to Newport Way segment from 12 minutes to 7.2 minutes. The levy includes a line item for the Newport Way and 150th Avenue SE intersection. Staff proposes including the SE 37th Street improvements as well and taking both to 60 percent design.

Mr. Long said an additional \$1 million is available for the broader Eastgate study. The study area will be expanded to Factoria Boulevard on both SE 36th Street and Eastgate Way, and east to the end of Eastgate Way. The broader study will model both morning and evening peak commute periods.

Councilmember Wallace commended the work of the Transportation Commission and staff to be able to move forward relatively quickly following the approval of levy. He said the projects will provide good near-term public benefits at a relatively low cost.

Councilmember Robertson commented to the City Manager that, when the Bellevue College street vacation money is received by the City, she would like staff to discuss its use with the Council.

Mayor Stokes recalled that he served on the Eastgate/I-90 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). He believes the initial improvements will have a strong positive impact, and he wants to move forward as soon as possible with the use of levy funds. He thanked the Transportation Commission and staff for their work.

City Manager Miyake noted that Councilmember Wallace serves as Council liaison to the Transportation Commission.

Ms. Zahn said staff did a great deal of work to develop the two recommended projects.

3. City Manager's Report [Moved from Regular Session]

(a) Meydenbauer Bay Park Update

Mr. Miyake asked staff to provide an update on the development of Meydenbauer Bay Park. He noted that Regular Session Agenda Item 8(j) awards the contract to construct Phase 1 of the project. He said the project fulfills a goal of the Council since the 1980s to create a waterfront park along Meydenbauer Bay. He said the City acquired the property over a 15-year period, and the Master Plan was developed over a three-year period.

Patrick Foran, Parks and Community Services Director, recalled that the Meydenbauer Bay Park Master Plan was approved in 2010 after two years of work with the Citizens Advisory Committee. This is Phase 1 of several phases to be completed over a number of years. The construction of Phase 1 will begin in May and the park is anticipated to open to the public during the fourth quarter of 2018.

Mr. Foran said the overriding goal of the Master Plan is to open the waterfront to public access. An underlying goal of the whole project is to support the economic goals of Bellevue as well. The park creates a destination for visitors and residents, provides a gateway to the waterfront, and will link to the future Grand Connection project. Development of the park will enhance the Main Street experience and improve the ecological function of the shoreline.

Mr. Foran said the shoreline restoration and daylighting of the stream will significantly improve water quality and ecological function. The park will be created by moving the public beach to the center of the park and enlarging it significantly. There will also be a play area, outdoor classroom area, and kayak and canoe launch. A series of terraces and walkways will enhance the 100-foot elevation drop from the street to the shoreline.

Mr. Foran described additional features of the park including a large curved pier that will provide access to views and protection for the swimming beach, as well as public art celebrating the Native American heritage of the area. A later phase of the park development will create the Whaling Building in recognition of the bay's history related to whaling activities.

Mr. Foran said staff is asking the Council to approve \$14.5 million for Phase 1, with \$9 million from the City and the remainder from state grants (i.e., economic development grants and grants from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office).

Mr. Foran presented a slide depicting the future Gateway Zone and Marina Zone project phases.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Foran confirmed that the Beach House will have restrooms and changing rooms. The outdoor classroom is an open space for education programs but not an actual structure. In further response, Mr. Foran said the parking garage is not included in Phase 1.

With regard to the Gateway Zone, Councilmember Robertson said she wanted to state for the record that it will be implemented only with the conditions previously established by the Council

in working with adjacent property owners. Mr. Foran said all of the zones are contingent upon the Council's development principles, and Phase 1 follows those principles.

Councilmember Robinson expressed strong support for the project. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Mr. Foran said there will be underground parking at later phases related to the development of the community building and the gateway elements.

Ms. Robinson expressed concern about the potential for stagnant water due to the long curved pier. Mr. Foran said it will be designed to facilitate water movement.

Councilmember Wallace noted that the property acquisitions over time involve the removal of some homes, including the Lagen home. He questioned whether there would be a park element to recognize the family's efforts to make the park possible. Mr. Foran said there are no current plans. However, he said the Lagen family has been discussing potential elements with the Eastside Heritage Center and will continue that work. Mr. Wallace said Bill Lagen was a Councilmember and great community leader. In further response, Mr. Foran confirmed that a later phase of the project includes the Whaling Building to recognize that history of the bay.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Foran said the timing of all three phases will depend on funding. Mr. Foran noted Councilmember Robertson's earlier comment that a number of principles need to be in place before all elements of the Gateway Zone can be implemented. Mr. Foran said it might be possible to combine construction of the Gateway and Marina Zones if funding is available. Otherwise, the logical progression would be to complete the Marina Zone before the Gateway Zone.

Mayor Stokes recalled the planning process for Meydenbauer Bay Park when he and Councilmember Robinson served on the Parks and Community Services Board. He said the project is the result of long work and planning. He commended Parks staff for having the vision and patience and for acquiring the needed properties over time.

At 7:53 p.m., Mayor Stokes declared recess to the Regular Session.

Kyle Stannert, CMC
City Clerk

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