

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

May 29, 2018  
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding. There was no Executive Session.

Mr. Chelminiak noted that he and Councilmember Zahn represented the City at the Memorial Day service at Sunset Hill Cemetery. He said Deputy Mayor Robinson and Councilmember Robertson would be joining the meeting shortly.

2. Approval of Agenda

→ Councilmember Lee moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

3. Oral Communications

(a) Alex Zimmerman, StandUP-America, commented on how he does not like or trust people who work in government.

(b) Ginger Chien, representing PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), commended the City for its decision to participate in Seattle's Pride parade. She endorsed the proclamation that PFLAG submitted to the City and the City's consideration to display the Pride flag, which represents a unity of spirit and inclusivity.

- (c) Heather McMillan said she became involved with PFLAG more than a year ago to fight for those who feel marginalized. She thanked the City for its consideration to display the Pride flag. She commended the City's commitment to a diverse community and noted that the LGBTQ community spans all cultures. She said it is important for everyone to have a voice and to be welcome in Bellevue. She thanked the Council for its leadership.
- (d) Fiona Cofield said the Transportation Commission recently removed the SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street project from the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP). She said a majority of the public voted against the project as part of the Commission's outreach efforts. She asked why the project was not removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She said that Mayor Chelminiak commented during the May 21 Regular Session meeting that the project must be built in order for Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to complete its Lake Hills transmission line project. Ms. Cofield expressed concern that Bellevue residents will pay millions for the SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street project as well as pay higher utility bills to PSE for decades. She said the City's project is costly, provides no measurable benefits, and is not supported by the public. She said perhaps it is time to reconsider the renewal of the City's franchise agreement with PSE.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that he asked staff to move forward in response to PFLAG's request for a proclamation.

#### 4. Study Session

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that Councilmember Lee requested an excused absence from the June 4 meeting.

- Deputy Mayor Robinson moved to excuse Councilmember Lee's absence from the June 4, 2018 City Council meeting, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Chelminiak said the second draft of the homeless shelter permitting Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) has been released in anticipation of the public hearing on June 11. He said Council adoption of the final LUCA is slated for June 25.

- (b) Initial Discussion of Initiation of the Neighborhood Area Planning Program

City Manager Brad Miyake recalled that the Council identified neighborhood area planning as a priority during its most recent retreat earlier this year.

Mac Cummins, Community Development Director, opened staff's presentation regarding the Neighborhood Area Planning Program. He said staff would present a draft work program for Council feedback, and will then reach out to the community to hear residents' thoughts regarding the process. Staff anticipates providing an update to the Council in late June or early July to further refine the plan for moving forward.

Mr. Cummins said staff suggests a future discussion, separate from the discussion about the process, to prioritize the order in which neighborhoods will be addressed. The Neighborhood Area Planning program will be a strategic, action-oriented, community-driven process.

Community building has three primary components: business and industry, people, and place. Neighborhood plans will be based on and part of the Comprehensive Plan. Volume 1 articulates the citywide policies for vision, land use, growth; and volume 2 includes the neighborhood subarea plans. The Neighborhoods Element of the Comprehensive Plan identifies 16 neighborhood areas, articulates the vision, and provides strategies for adapting to change while preserving valued characteristics and amenities.

Deborah Munkberg, Senior Planner, said the four components of a neighborhood plan are a community profile, visions and strategies, opportunities map, and the plan's relationship to the Comprehensive Plan. A neighborhood area plan focuses on neighborhood priorities and maintains consistency with the Council vision, Comprehensive Plan, and Land Use Code. Neighborhood area plans do not conflict with citywide policy guidance or regulatory direction, or result in actions that impact the entire city or region. The plans will be completed within a one-year timeframe. Each neighborhood area planning process will involve the following phases: 1) share information and identify priorities; 2) develop strategic solutions and actions; 3) share strategies and resolve issues; and 4) City review and action, including hearings, legislative process, and action.

Mike McCormick Huentelman, Assistant Director for Neighborhood Services, said neighborhood plans depend on a collaborative relationship between the City and residents. Neighborhood engagement anticipates a grassroots approach involving neighborhood associations, community groups, faith networks, businesses, and schools. Neighborhood meetings and workshops will emphasize participatory activities and residents will be able to access online surveys, forums, and maps. The process is intended to be fun and informative for residents. A successful neighborhood plan will be relevant to the neighborhoods with regard to neighborhood character, adaptability, social connectivity, core needs, and a high level of community ownership of the plan.

Next steps are the Neighborhood Leadership meeting on June 12 at City Hall, Conference Room 1E-108, 6:00-8:00 p.m., to initiate the process and engage the community. He noted that anyone who cares about their neighborhood is invited to the meeting.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis encouraged using the MyBellevue app to engage residents. He suggested developing a positioning statement for each neighborhood that addresses its unique character.

Councilmember Robertson said she is pleased to be moving forward with neighborhood planning. She concurred with Mr. Nieuwenhuis' suggestion to develop a vision or positioning statement for each neighborhood. She suggested inviting Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners to the outreach events. She said that, while the public is invited to the meetings, input into neighborhood plans should be restricted to residents of the specific subareas.

Councilmember Robertson suggested that topics to be addressed include accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tree issues, density, infrastructure, and the type of development and public spaces desired by residents. If the subarea planning process triggers the need to change the Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Code, she would like to consider ways that adding flexibility to policies and regulations might help to achieve the desired objectives. Ms. Robertson would like to capture contact information for everyone who submits a survey, attends meetings, participates in discussions, or otherwise participates in the process, in order to keep residents informed about the ongoing process through the Planning Commission and City Council.

Councilmember Zahn expressed support for staff's proposed approach and concurred with the importance of articulating a vision for each neighborhood subarea. She observed that there are different characteristics within individual subareas, which might result in different views regarding the subarea vision. In some cases, the boundary might align with a street, with neighbors across the street from each other in different subareas. She wants to ensure that all voices are heard and that the public is aware of the initiative. She believes the process will help to build and strengthen a sense of community within neighborhoods.

Mr. Cummins said the outreach process will be designed to extend into adjacent subareas as appropriate, for example, when subarea boundaries do not align with how the residents view their neighborhood boundaries.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff for their work. He observed that enhanced neighborhood outreach efforts over the past few years have increased residents' awareness about the City's planning efforts and opportunities for public involvement. Addressing two neighborhoods per year will extend the work program over eight years to complete the subarea plan updates for all 16 subareas. He expressed concern that residents of specific neighborhoods might have initiatives they would like to move forward before the planning process reaches them.

Mr. Stokes noted that, while neighborhood character varies to some extent, the majority of issues are likely to be universal across Bellevue. For those issues, he suggested exploring whether particular policies can be implemented in the subareas that share an interest at the same time, rather than residents having to wait until the full process comes to their neighborhood. He suggested exploring where there might be opportunities to implement certain high-impact actions that can be accomplished in the shortest amount of time.

Mr. Stokes questioned how the relationship between the new and old subarea boundaries will affect the planning process. Mr. Cummins said staff will address that issue moving forward.

Councilmember Lee concurred with Ms. Robertson's comment about the importance of being able to amend the Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Use Code based on the planning process. He wants this to be a meaningful effort that responds to the community's priorities. He said it is important for the neighborhood area plan to reflect the values of the residents.

Responding to Mr. Lee regarding timing, Mr. Cummins said the plan to take up two neighborhoods annually is based on staff resources and the goal of engaging the community in a meaningful way. Mr. Cummins said staff will explore options in preparation for the Council

discussion to prioritize neighborhoods in the work program. Mr. McCormick Huentelman noted that the City engages the overall community through a number of initiatives, and there will continue to be opportunities for working with individual neighborhoods on specific priorities separately from the Neighborhood Area Planning Program.

Deputy Mayor Robinson recalled the number of issues related to dogs that were raised when she served on the Parks and Community Services Board. She encouraged including that in the neighborhood discussions. She suggested outreach to educate the public about how to become involved in neighborhood leadership.

Mayor Chelminiak acknowledged the issue raised by his colleagues about the relationship between the neighborhood subarea plans and the Comprehensive Plan. He said he did not want to give the impression that residents do not need to be bound by the Comprehensive Plan, a citywide adopted plan for the future that typically goes through a major review approximately every 10 years.

With regard to Council involvement, Mayor Chelminiak opined it would not be appropriate for him to take a prominent role in the planning process for his neighborhood because he would not want to discourage others from participating, nor would he want others to interpret his participation as promising specific items to his neighbors. He said there has been discussion about whether Commission members should meet with proponents and/or opponents of a project. He suggested that other Boards and Commissions, beyond the Planning Commission, should be involved in the process.

Mr. Chelminiak suggested that the underlying question of subarea planning should be to explore what residents want to make their neighborhood better versus focusing on what they would like to keep out of their neighborhood. He said an important question to ask is: What is the residents' role in implementing the Comprehensive Plan and making their neighborhoods better?

Mr. Chelminiak said he shares concerns regarding the time that will be needed to work through every neighborhood. He suggested there are subareas that could be combined.

Councilmember Robertson clarified that her comment about involving the Planning Commission was not to suggest that members should participate. She said the Commission's role should be to listen but not to drive the process.

Councilmember Zahn acknowledged the concerns about taking eight years to process through all 16 neighborhoods. However, public engagement involving a broad spectrum of residents will require significant time.

(c) Update on I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes

City Manager Miyake introduced discussion regarding the I-405 Renton to Bellevue corridor project.

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, said the purpose of the project is to enhance mobility, expand travel options for the public, and improve the reliability of travel times.

Kim Henry, Program Administrator with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), said there are high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes on SR 167 as well as express toll lanes between Bellevue and Lynnwood. The project to implement express toll lanes between Renton and Bellevue has been funded and is now moving forward. The projects are part of a 40-mile corridor that will ultimately extend south to the Pierce County line.

Mr. Henry described a comparison of northbound, evening peak hour travel on I-5, with one HOV lane and four general purpose lanes, and on I-405, which has three general purpose lanes and two express toll lanes. The section of I-405 with dual express toll lanes moves more vehicles than the five-lane sections on I-405 based on both vehicle and person throughput.

The I-405 Renton to Bellevue widening and express toll lanes project is fully funded and in the preliminary engineering and environmental review phase. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2019, and the project will be open to traffic by 2024. The major multimodal project elements include new capacity and interchange improvements, dual express toll lane system, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) by Sound Transit, Eastside Rail Corridor regional trail segments, and coordination with the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail. He said the project involves two environmental reviews: 1) section between I-90 and Bellevue, and 2) section between I-5 (Tukwila) and I-90.

Major project elements in Bellevue include: 1) two express toll lanes in each direction between I-90 and NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 2) widening of the northbound off-ramp to SR 520 from two lanes to three lanes, 3) overpass and bridge improvements at Main Street and SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 4) a new bridge adjacent to the existing northbound I-405 bridge over the Eastside Rail Corridor regional trail, and 5) a new bridge for bikes and pedestrians over southbound I-405 to connect with the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Henry presented 2025 traffic projections with and without the I-405 Renton to Bellevue project.

Mr. Henry described environmental enhancements in Downtown Bellevue related to the project, including upgrades to stormwater facilities as well as on- and off-site mitigation for the permanent loss of wetlands and vegetation adjacent to the existing roadway. He said WSDOT expects improvements in overall air quality and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions due to better vehicle technology and to a reduction in idling in stop-and-go traffic.

Three new noise walls will be built in Bellevue in the Greenwich Crest, Kimberlee Park, and Lake Lanes areas. An analysis of the existing Woodridge noise walls indicated that noise levels will be maintained below 66 dBA in the future. An evaluation of a potential higher 30-foot noise wall did not meet the federal criteria for a significant noise reduction. Mr. Henry said that pavement options were studied but they did not meet performance standards. WSDOT proposes testing a section of the roadway next to the Woodridge area with a grooved pavement that is intended to reduce noise.

Mr. Henry said neighborhood briefings were held throughout Bellevue since 2016. The environmental assessment for the section between Tukwila and I-90 will be released in June, and

the Executive Advisory Group's next meeting is June 25. Mr. Henry said there is widespread support for I-405 improvements from local jurisdictions, businesses, and transit operators. He noted long-term plans for the Coal Creek Parkway roundabout interchange project.

Councilmember Stokes questioned the impact of the project on the I-90 and I-405 interchange. Mr. Henry said that improved mobility on I-405 is anticipated to reduce the current congestion at that location to some extent. The long-term solution in the I-405 Master Plan is the addition of direct-connector ramps in that area.

Councilmember Robertson said she appreciates WSDOT's partnership with the City of Bellevue and she looks forward to the completion of the I-405 project. She questioned whether the roundabout at Coal Creek Parkway will remove any lanes. Mr. Henry said that will be based on the final traffic volumes through the area. Roundabouts reduce the need for turn lanes, which typically allows a smaller project footprint.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Henry said the I-405 project will not remove any general purpose lanes. Councilmember Robertson said the data indicates that the connections to I-5 on the south end and to I-405 on the north end will continue to experience congestion. She said the City is interested in having HOV interchanges at those locations. Mr. Henry acknowledged that there are concerns about the interchange on the south end as it relates to plans for BRT to Burien. As a final comment, Ms. Robertson suggested that there is room for improvement in WSDOT's Good to Go customer service.

Councilmember Lee concurred with Councilmember Stokes' concern about traffic congestion at the I-90 and I-405 interchange. Mr. Lee said he looks forward to the roundabout project at Coal Creek Parkway. He suggested that perhaps other projects in the vicinity could help enhance mobility in the Factoria area, potentially in partnership with the City. Mr. Lee said he would like the City and WSDOT to explore a partnership to complete projects adjacent to the Wilburton area as well. Mr. Henry said WSDOT staff work with the City's Transportation Department on an ongoing basis to identify opportunities for coordinating projects and funding.

Deputy Mayor Robinson questioned whether the completed improvements to I-405 have reduced cut-through traffic in adjacent neighborhoods. Mr. Henry said it is difficult to assess the direct impact because there has been so much growth in the area. While cut-through traffic decreased somewhat initially, traffic volumes on surface streets have increased with the continued growth. Mr. Henry said WSDOT has not identified the new vehicle trips and where they are going in terms of evaluating travel patterns.

Councilmember Zahn noted the significant traffic congestion at I-405 and at I-5 in Tukwila and said that buses are stuck in that traffic. She suggested looking at ways to allow shoulder driving in that area to enhance transit mobility.

Ms. Zahn said she has heard concerns about the locations chosen to measure noise levels along the Woodridge sound walls. Mr. Henry said the topography affects the noise. He said the locations chosen for measuring noise are selected to calibrate the model, which typically results in accurate measurements. He said WSDOT has worked with individuals and neighborhoods in

the past to conduct additional modeling when points with higher noise levels are reported. Councilmember Zahn said it would be helpful for the public to understand how the modeling works.

Ms. Zahn suggested that, as WSDOT moves forward with the design-build selection, if any alternative technical concepts or factors come into play, it might be necessary to engage the community again if changes are made that were not in the original project design that was shared with the public.

Acknowledging that the Coal Creek Parkway roundabout is in the third contract, Councilmember Zahn suggested that, if alternative technical concepts that reduce the cost are identified, it would be worth pursuing the potential for completing elements of that project earlier than scheduled. Referring to project phasing, Ms. Zahn said it would be beneficial for Bellevue if the contractor worked from the north to the south if that would allow the completion of the Eastside Rail Corridor bridge and other elements. Mr. Henry said the contract envisions the completion of that bridge by 2020. He said WSDOT typically achieves a more favorable cost estimate if the agency is not overly restrictive in dictating the project phasing and allows flexibility for the contractor.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Henry said the noise wall could reduce noise levels by 7-8 decibels, depending on the location and topography. In further response, Mr. Henry said a taller wall is not warranted under the federal guidelines for decibel levels.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Henry acknowledged that traffic bottlenecks will continue to occur at the I-5/I-405 interchange in Tukwila and on SR 167 in the Kent area. He said those issues will be addressed with future projects.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked Mr. Henry for the update and for WSDOT's partnership with the City.

#### (d) Regional Issues

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, introduced Lacey Jane Wolfe, who was recently hired by the Transportation Department to fill the position previously occupied by Kate March. Ms. Wolfe's experience includes employment with the City of Kent and King County Metro. Mayor Chelminiak welcomed Ms. Wolfe.

Ms. Nichols said the state legislature created a number of work groups and interim task forces in preparation for the 2019 legislative session. Staff and the City's lobbyist are participating in those activities. Ms. Nichols said an update will be provided to the Council this summer.

Mayor Chelminiak congratulated Councilmember Zahn for receiving a seat on the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Legislative Steering Committee. He noted that Ms. Zahn and Councilmember Robertson will attend the AWC meeting in Yakima in late June.

Mr. Chelminiak said he will attend the U.S. Conference of Mayors' meeting in Boston in June. He will visit Washington, D.C., as well to discuss transportation and grant issues.



5. Continued Oral Communications

- (a) Steve Kasner spoke in support of neighborhood subarea planning and suggested that the policies applying to the old neighborhood boundaries be transferred over to the newly defined neighborhoods. He expressed support for working with two neighborhoods per year. He asked the Council to consider whether working with adjacent neighborhoods together would enhance the ability to address issues of mutual interest along the border between the neighborhoods.
- (b) Pamela Johnston thanked the Council for moving forward with neighborhood planning but expressed concern regarding the timeline for the process. She asked the Council to consider developing a citywide tree master plan.

At 8:45 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared the meeting adjourned.

Karin Roberts, CMC  
Deputy City Clerk

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