

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

April 24, 2019  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Barksdale, Commissioners Carlson, deVadoss, Malakoutian, Morisseau, Moolgavkar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Laing

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Cullen, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development

COUNCIL LIAISON: Mayor Chelminiak

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER  
(6:35 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chair Barksdale who presided.

2. ROLL CALL  
(6:35 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Laing.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
(6:35 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None  
(6:35 p.m.)

5. STAFF REPORTS  
(6:36 p.m.)

Comprehensive Planning Manager Terry Cullen informed commissioners that the Commission's next meeting would be May 22 and the agenda for that meeting includes the public hearing for the privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment Vision Zero for Gun Safety.

Mr. Cullen stated that the proposed plan amendment for Northup Way had been withdrawn.

6. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

(6:36 p.m.)

## 7. PUBLIC HEARING

(6:37 p.m.)

### A. Threshold Review Public Hearings: 2019 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Mr. Cullen outlined the rules governing public hearings and the process for moving amendments forward to final review.

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz noted that the full staff recommendations had been published with the notice of the public hearing on April 4. He said the recommendations were summarized in the packet materials and observed that there was a rich body of public comments on record associated with both applications. The recommendations the Commission will make by resolution will be forwarded to the City Council, and the annual work program will be established when the Council acts on those recommendations.

Mr. Matz said the staff recommendations are made based on the eight threshold review criteria that are housed in the Land Use Code. He briefly reviewed the criteria.

#### i. Public Hearing: The Park in Bellevue

(6:45 p.m.)

Mr. Matz said the site-specific amendment seeks to amend the plan for the nine-acre property at 1515 Bellevue Way NE from MF-M and MF-L to MF-UR. He stressed that the MF-UR designation does not currently exist in the Comprehensive Plan, thus the proposal seeks to add a definition to the Comprehensive Plan Glossary, and seeks to delete policy S-NB-39 from the North Bellevue Subarea Plan. Approval of the amendment would trigger follow-up Land Use Code actions and rezones to establish the MF-UR zoning category at 110 units per acre.

Mr. Matz located the site on a map showing the surrounding land use designations. He noted that there is a collection of long-standing multifamily designations in the immediate area of the subject property.

Commissioner Carlson asked if there are schools in the vicinity of the site. Mr. Matz said Sacred Heart School is located to the west and Chinook Middle School is situated to the northwest of the subject property.

Mr. Matz said the recommendation of the staff was that the proposal does not meet all of the decision criteria. Making a proposal for a designation that does not exist in the Comprehensive Plan automatically moves the focus to outside the boundaries of the discussion that normally occurs through the annual amendment process, which focuses on consistency and issues within the existing toolbox of the Comprehensive Plan. The MF-UR does not exist in the Comprehensive Plan and creating it would require more time than the annual process allows. Additionally, the request proposes downtown densities outside of the Downtown boundaries, which calls into question the city's growth strategy of directing growth to where it is most appropriate, which under the adopted Comprehensive Plan is in the Downtown, BelRed and Wilburton. The annual process is not the place to address the issue of whether or not significant growth should be allowed outside of the established growth areas. The recently completed Downtown Livability Initiative looked at how the Downtown manages intense growth adjacent

to existing communities where growth is not allowed. The highest density allowed by the Comprehensive Plan outside of the Downtown is MF-H at R-30. The proposed MF-UR equates roughly to an FAR of 3.0, a density that is only allowed inside the Downtown boundaries and in conjunction with perimeter districts that are designed specifically to manage the impacts. The ten-year update of the Comprehensive Plan is the appropriate venue for discussing where density should be allowed.

Mr. Matz said the proposal does not meet all of the threshold review criteria and therefore should not be included in the annual work program. It does not present a matter appropriately addressed through the Comprehensive Plan. It does not demonstrate that the explosive growth in the downtown is a significantly changed condition. The significantly changed condition standard requires a finding of something having happened that was not anticipated, and the growth that has happened in the downtown is clearly an expectation of the city's growth strategy. The multi-part proposal that involves a new plan designation, a definition, a Land Use Code amendment, zoning and the elimination of an existing subarea policy, is inconsistent with the city's growth strategies.

The Commissioners were informed that a total of 14 public comments had been received to date regarding the application. Two of the comments sought information while the remaining 12 expressed specific objections to the amendment regarding building height and bulk, traffic impacts, and the idea of allowing such density outside of the downtown.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Claudio Guincher, owner of the applicant Continental Properties, said the family owned company has been based in Bellevue for 42 years. He said the company focuses on building apartments and condominiums, most recently completing a project across the street from Vuecrest and currently constructing a development on the south side of Downtown Park. The company purchased The Park in Bellevue apartments in 2018 with the intent of renovating the units, which was developed in 1985. However, with news that 25,000 Amazon employees will be coming to downtown Bellevue, the decision was made to seek making a substantial investment in renovating the property for the long term. Given its proximity to the Downtown, and the somewhat unanticipated growth that will occur over the next few years, the site is a natural location to provide housing.

Mr. Ed Segat, also with Continental Properties, said a recent conference in downtown Seattle had a well-known and accomplished urban planner as its keynote speaker who said the principal goal for growing cities is to be connected and livable. Connectivity is achieved by putting density along main arterials and transit corridors, and walkable areas and neighborhoods are needed in order to make cities livable. The Park site is an opportunity for connectivity and establishing a walkable neighborhood given the existing infrastructure on Bellevue Way NE, and the fact that the site is within walking distance of existing and future transit. It is only a quarter of a mile walk to the heart of Bellevue where culture, commerce and employment opportunities exist. It is recognized that the site abuts single family on the west and multifamily to the north and south, but the nine-acre parcel is large enough to afford the opportunity to incorporate planning concepts such as buffer zones, height limits and building separation. He said the applicant is open to talking collectively with the Planning Commission, the planning department and with the neighborhood to find an appropriate design solution for the site. The site presents a perfect opportunity for a public/private partnership.

Mr. Jack McCullough spoke on behalf of the applicant. He said the applicant is facing both a tipping point and a Catch-22. The tipping point is the 30-plus year old asset that really needs some attention and which is significantly underdeveloped by any measure in the region. The applicant believes the time is right to look at whether additional density is warranted. If the applicant elects to put \$20 million or \$30 million into fixing up the development, the question of additional density on the site will be answered for the next 20 or 30 years. The Catch-22 lies in the fact that there is no process in which the question can be asked and addressed. The applicant thought at first that the Northwest Bellevue (sic) Subarea Plan would be the right vehicle to address land use and appropriate densities, but the city has stated that the subarea review process will not include appropriate land uses and density. That leaves coming before the Commission with what is admittedly a complicated proposal to have a conversation on what is a critical question. The next update of the Comprehensive Plan is not slated for another five years. Even if the Commission does not support the proposal, it should send to the Council a message about finding a path to address the question.

Ms. Katherine Hughes, 10203 NE 31st Place, said the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment does not comply with the current or projected growth or design strategies for the location. The developer wishes to create an R-110 zone and to do away with a key five-point subarea policy that protects the neighborhood from the impacts of just such a development. The current land use landscape includes a mix of single family and multifamily at various densities, buffers, a designated park and park-like land, and a small commercial center. The draft of the amendment gives lip service to increasing housing density and accommodating forecasted population growth with increased housing capacity. The R-110 density, which does not exist in the current residential structure, equate to about 750 units on the nine-acre site. The applicant would also like to see building height allowed up to 75 feet in an area that currently has nothing over three stories. The site is located in a non-designated growth zone on the edge of single family developments to the west. While city policy includes goals for housing, transportation, walkability and employment, the proposal does not constitute a changed condition. The proposal works against the overarching North Bellevue subarea plan, the top goal of which is to protect predominantly single family homes.

Ms. Theresa Doyle, 1344 Bellevue Way NE, noted her opposition to the proposed amendment and her agreement with the previous statement.

Ms. Deb Wilson, 1392 Bellevue Way NE #3, said she opposed the amendment for the reasons previously cited.

Mr. Dick Thompson, 3115 103rd Avenue NE, said he opposed the amendment, noting that the applicant made use of the North Bellevue Subarea Plan to attempt to justify its acceptance. The land use goal of the subarea plan is to protect the predominantly single family character of North Bellevue from encroachment by other uses. The applicant says that will be met because there are already existing multifamily residents on the property. The implication that all multifamily residences are equal is not true. The existing multifamily residences were built to a designation of MF-M and a density of R-20. There are 24 individual structures on the site situated in a forested area of tall trees and decorative shrubbery. The predominant view of the property from the adjacent single family neighborhood on 102nd Avenue NE to the west of the subject property is of trees; there is only a limited view of buildings. If the proposed amendment is adopted and the zoning is changed to MF-UR and a density of R-110, there potentially could be a structure 75 feet tall, few if any trees left, and a view from the adjacent neighborhood of a high-rise building. That is encroachment by another use. The applicant also tries to show compliance with the Commission's threshold review decision criteria by suggesting the proposal addresses



significantly changed conditions by stating that the land use context of the Northwest Bellevue subarea has changed dramatically due to the upcoming introduction of the regional light rail service in 2023. The land use context has not, in fact changed, and light rail does not even enter the North Bellevue neighborhood, coming six-tenths of a mile at the closest. The land use plan in the North Bellevue subarea plan when compared to the land use plan contained in the current Comprehensive Plan shows that the land use designations on both documents in the area including and surrounding the subject property are identical, even though the subarea plan was drafted many years ago. He urged the Commission to reject the proposal.

Ms. Diana Thompson, 3115 103rd Avenue NE, said she totally opposed the application of The Park in Bellevue. The application is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan foundational policies which govern where growth is directed. In the 70s, the wedding cake policy was adopted. Growth was accepted in the downtown area in exchange for not allowing tall buildings to the north of NE 12th Street. Candidates for the City Council have repeatedly stated that they will protect the neighborhoods. Seventy-five foot buildings would clearly be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The homes directly behind The Park are single family residences. There are no buildings in the vicinity of the subject property that are 75-feet tall, nor is any development developed with a density of 110 units per acre. If approved, the application would destroy trees and vegetation. Bellevue has been called A City in a Park, however the city is having difficulty maintaining the reputation as the tree canopy decreases. The Park, as previously stated, has many beautiful old but healthy trees which would be destroyed if the property is developed as requested. In addition to being beautiful, trees absorb harmful gases, prevent erosion and supply people with oxygen. If approved, the proposal would add to Bellevue's extreme traffic problem given that there could be as many as 1034 units built on the site. It is often not possible to make a left-turn onto Bellevue Way from 103rd Avenue NE due to all the traffic. Even walking on the sidewalk is becoming dangerous.

Mr. Keith Swensen, 10312 NE 12th Street, Apt B-305, said his home is immediately to the south of the property in question. He spoke in opposition to the application submitted by The Park ownership to amend the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that he had previously testified before the Commission about his confidence that Bellevue staff would find that the proposal would fail to meet the Comprehensive Plan threshold criteria. In 2013, the Council, faced with a growing apprehensive about the threat of climate change, prepared and adopted the 2013-2018 Environmental Strategic Plan as an action plan to create a city in which the residents can enjoy the highest quality of life. Among the many facts set forth in that plan is that 30.4 percent of the solid waste generated annually in the state of Washington is construction waste. It is well understood that the most effective way of reducing that waste is through the restoration or rehabilitation and reuse of existing developments. The city can and must reject the proposal to destroy 184 good-quality moderately priced rental units, 272 parking spaces and a wealth of mature trees and landscaping simply to build a higher end high-density development.

Ms. Britt Wittner, 1330 102th Avenue NE, said her property abuts The Park property. She said she has been a single mom for seven years during which she scrimped and saved to be able to buy her little house. Even though her property is up against an apartment building, the building is set back far enough that it does not really impose on her privacy. However, if 75-foot buildings are allowed along with a huge number of residents, it will be very unsettling. Her neighborhood, as it currently is, is safe for her children. Most who live in the neighborhood do not have a bank account large enough to take the hit of reduced property values that would result. She said she vehemently opposed the proposed amendment.

Ms. Heidi Dean, 11661 SE 56th Street, said that while she does not live in the neighborhood

where The Park is situated, she has been through a similar process multiple times in her neighborhood. She said the applicant rightly has stated that adding density is required under the Growth Management Act. However, adding density is required in a controlled and planned manner that includes concurrency and adequate infrastructure to accommodate it. That is exactly what the city has done. The applicant says the city's economic development department is so skilled that it has managed to bring in tons of business, and they cite that as a significantly changed condition. The fact is the city has been very good about planning for economic development and growth. She said she supported the recommendation of staff. It is correct that the rapid growth inside the downtown should not be allowed outside the Downtown. Downtown creep should continue to be avoided in line with the promises made to the neighborhoods.

Ms. Heidi Ressler, 917 168th Avenue NE, said she wanted more information about the difference between the density that is currently allowed and the proposed R-110.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

ii. Study Session: The Park in Bellevue  
(7:27 p.m.)

Mr. Matz explained that at the Comprehensive Plan level the focus is on ranges of density. In the case of The Park, however, the existing MF-M designation under the Growth Management Act is consistent with 20 units to the acre. The site is fairly built out at its existing unit count. The proposal of the applicant is to change to MF-UR which would allow up to 110 units per acre, a difference of 90 units per acre. Determining the number of people who would occupy a development at 110 units per acre has not been done. Census information is used to determine average household size. Currently the average household size for single family detached is approximately 2.1, while for multifamily attached it is approximately 1.8. At the Comprehensive Plan level, the focus is more on trip generation in talking about how much density is appropriate for a given site.

Commissioner Morisseau said the staff was clear in outlining their conclusion that the proposed amendment does not meet the criteria. Noting that the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process is not the right vehicle for addressing the issues raised by the applicant, and that the upcoming subarea process will not look at zoning, she asked if there were another process that would allow for addressing the issues other than the annual ten-year Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Matz answered that the annual process allows for doing a lot of things along the lines of tweaking the Comprehensive Plan, all within the framework of the existing plan and the existing expectations. That is why the significantly changed conditions threshold criterion is so high. The last ten-year update was accomplished four years ago and there is comfort that the things that are happening were anticipated. Proposing a new plan designation in and of itself is not right, but proposing it outside of an area where growth is marked to occur is well beyond the annual scope. The multipart nature of the proposal excludes it from the annual process. The ten-year update deals with citywide issues and is the correct venue for addressing such issues.

Mr. Cullen pointed out that the applicant purchased the property and then set about to seek a change in the designation of the property. They did not option the property predicated on a change of the designation and is using that as leverage to say the designation should be changed outside of the ten-year update. The ten-year update is specifically timed to allow for a programmed and thoughtful discussion citywide and to avoid the auspices of one plan amendment cases. Otherwise just about every developer would show up with a rationale that in

effect would be an end run around the state Growth Management Act. The threshold review process is the correct forum for determining if a suggestion is appropriate for the annual process or if it should be addressed during the ten-year update process which includes extensive citywide public participation. There are citywide issues that cannot be fully vetted through the lens of one plan amendment on one particular site.

Commissioner Carlson noted that the city has hard targets for the assumed population growth over the next 10 to 15 years, and policies addressing where that growth will take place, namely the downtown, Bel-Red and Eastgate. He said in light of the announcements made by Amazon about locating more of its workforce in downtown Bellevue, he wondered if any of the city's population and employment estimates will change. Mr. Matz said the city does have housing and jobs targets built into the Comprehensive Plan policies. Those targets reach out to 2035 and are specific to the city. How cities will accommodate their housing and jobs targets within their zoning capacity is essentially left up to the individual cities. Bellevue monitors the growth relative to population and jobs but does not assign it to particular areas, rather it acts to create capacity and allows the market to respond accordingly. Employment and mixed use centers have been identified as the places where most of the growth is expected to occur, but it will be the market that determines how growth will be accommodated. It is fair to say that the city believes it can accommodate the expected growth.

Commissioner Carlson asked if the city is running ahead of or in line with the estimates. Mr. Matz said he would have to get back to him on that, adding that the city knows for certain that it is accommodating the targets expected of it.

Mayor Chelminiak asked staff to explain the issue of buildable lands. Mr. Matz said the Buildable Lands Report, now called the urban growth capacity study, is required under the Growth Management Act. It is a tool that allows cities to check in on the progress being made in regard to their targets. The next round of the urban growth capacity study is due in 2020 and it will look at the growth from 2012, how the market has consumed the land capacity, and how effectively it has done that. It will look at what has been added in terms of creating new capacity, will add that to the existing capacity, and will compare the total against the targets. The process will then inform a new round of targets which will reach out to 2050.

Commissioner deVadoss said the presentation of Mr. Matz was very compelling. He said in addressing the threshold review criteria, it is clear the process does not work for the proposal. He asked why it had to be brought all the way through to a public hearing, spending tax dollars along the way in preparing the documentation, and why the process could not have been short-circuited up front. Mr. Matz explained that the city's Comprehensive Plan amendment guide strongly encourages people to come in for a conversation with staff before filing an application. When that is done, staff spends time with them professionally to ensure that an application is one that will be able to be tested with rigor through the threshold review process. He said he spoke with an architect about a year and a half ago about The Park site, but heard nothing subsequently until an application was filed.

Mayor Chelminiak asked what similar structures in the downtown are similar to what the R-110 designation would produce. Mr. Matz identified three recently built structures that equate to the kind of density proposed by the applicant, each having an FAR of roughly 3.0.

Mayor Chelminiak commented that he lives in the area of The Park in Bellevue site and noted that there are a significant number of families with school-aged children living there as well as evidenced by the number of kids getting on and off school buses. Most are living in multifamily

developments.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that within the update of the downtown plan, the perimeter districts were amended to keep residential at the same level while allowing for more commercial. Mr. Matz said the perimeter districts are in place explicitly to mitigate the impacts of the growth and density occurring in the downtown immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Within the perimeter districts everything from height to bulk to step backs are governed to allow the overall impacts, including trips, to be mitigated. Urban design is utilized to address the specific interface between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Mayor Chelminiak commented that during the process of updating the downtown plan proposals were made to increase densities and building heights in the perimeter districts, but with the exception of one site that borders a park, the original heights and densities were retained in order to assure and maintain a smooth transition to the adjacent neighborhoods.

A motion to recommend to the City Council that The Park in Bellevue proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment not be included in the 2019 annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cullen stated that the recommendation of the Commission is slated to be addressed by the City Council on June 17.

iii. Public Hearing: Bellevue Technology Center  
(7:47 p.m.)

Mr. Matz explained that the 47-acre Bellevue Technology Center site in the Crossroads subarea is bounded by Northup Way, 156th Avenue NE, NE 24th Street and 160th Avenue NE. The entire site is current designated Office and the proposal seeks: a change to MF-M for a 4.7 acre parcel in the southeast corner of the site; seven subarea plan policy amendments that are directed at redeveloping the site, addressing transit-oriented development densities, affordable housing, neighborhood edges and conservation easements associated with the meadow, the concept of multimodal mobility tools, and strengthening the economic vitality of Northeast Bellevue through additional density; and three policy amendments that would direct city action to encourage transportation demand management to support the TOD, add improvements to the Transportation Facilities Plan for multimodal level of service, and neighborhood stability by mitigating regional transportation improvements. He explained that by statute the city currently measures traffic intensity using level of service at defined intersections. The concept of multimodal level of service introduces the ability to measure in a quantitative way other transportation modes, thus measuring all modes of travel within a traffic study area.

Mr. Matz located the Bellevue Technology Center site on a map and pointed out that the Bel-Red district lies to the west, there are single family neighborhoods to the east, and multifamily neighborhoods to the south. The Commissioners commercial area lies further to the south. The Redmond Overlake urban center is situated to the north of the site and serves as an area of concentrated growth and density supported by the necessary infrastructure.

The designation of the Bellevue Technology Center as Office was effected as a first line of defense buffering existing single family in Crossroads from the more intense uses to the east and from the commercial areas in Redmond. Different tools have been created since then, but the basic framework remains. The questions posed by the applicant do not suit other office-zoned areas to the north and the west because they lack the size needed to make them continue to work



as areas that separate single family residential from higher intensity uses.

Mr. Matz said the conclusion of the staff was that the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Bellevue Technology Center does not meet all of the threshold review decision criteria and that it should therefore not be included in the annual work program. He allowed that multiple applications have been made for the Bellevue Technology Center site over the past years which highlights the role of the Comprehensive Plan. The history of the entire site going back to 1972, along with the legislative history of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment actions to change the capacity of the site, has consistently rejected the existing plan as the appropriate place for amending the site capacity regulations. Regulation in the form of zoning conveys a property right, but the 40-year record of the site is evidence that the existing Comprehensive Plan is not the appropriate place to address the issues that have consistently been raised.

What the applicant has proposed are BelRed types of densities. Work would need to be done to craft them as transit-oriented development densities. The BelRed area has been established by the city as an area in which growth can occur. The applicant is raising the policy issue of allowing BelRed densities outside of the BelRed boundaries, something that appropriately belong outside of the annual amendment process. The citywide consequences, including amending the Transportation Facilities Plan, could not reasonably be reviewed with the resources available for the annual process. The proposal also fails to demonstrate that the city's growth strategy is a significantly changed condition regarding the proximity of the site to other areas, and it is inconsistent with the city's strategy of locating growth within certain lines.

Also reviewed were the arguments made in the application about the city's employment centers and where the city is concentrating mixed use, primarily in the form of transit-oriented development zoning. Traditionally density has been allowed in the downtown and after 2009 the BelRed area evolved to allow for higher densities. The city has also directly dealt with transit-oriented development as a solution to encourage mixed use in Eastgate. All of those decisions were made, however, apart from the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process and at the express direction of the City Council.

Mr. Matz said to date a total of 93 public comments or inquiries had been received from 77 parties of record to the application. An online petition generated by local residents garnered over 2000 names, and a comment letter analyzing the application at length was signed by representatives of multiple neighborhood associations. Most of the comments express opposition to the proposal and reflect the theme that the proposal risks the unique and sensitive relationship the site holds for the community, specifically the meadow, the trees and the low-impact visual impact. The comments also highlight the fact that the planned unit development establishes an agreement between the community, city and property owners that the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and the Crossroads subarea plan continue to reflect. The comments discount the focus of the proposal on urban growth, density and infrastructure factors and express the idea that 156th Avenue NE is a boundary and that neighborhoods adjacent to Redmond's Overlake urban center and BelRed continue to deserve protection as policy specifics.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ian Morrison with McCullough Hill Leary spoke on behalf of the applicant KBS. He said KBS was struggling with the process and in trying to have a conversation about the future of the site. Clearly the Comprehensive Plan amendment process as a standalone is not working. He said KBS was excited when the Council as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update moved the



Bellevue Technology Center from the Crossroads neighborhood into the Northeast subarea, and was even more excited after hearing from the Planning Commission in 2017 that the neighborhood planning process would offer the opportunity to look at the site more comprehensively. The Council in August of 2018 prioritized the Northeast Bellevue subarea and specifically directed having a conversation about the Bellevue Technology Center, and KBS was fully on board with that direction. It was then surprising to hear that the neighborhood planning process and the subarea plan for Northeast Bellevue is not in fact the place to talk about land use. The question is if it is not in the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, and if it is not in the neighborhood planning process, what is the right process in which to have the conversation. The fact that land use will not be covered by the neighborhood planning process is of itself a significantly changed condition. The 47-acre site, upon being moved from the Crossroads subarea, where it has been since the 1980s, into a new subarea, became subject to new boundaries and the policies that governed in Crossroads no longer exist as KBS understands the Growth Management Act. Accordingly, there are no land use policies governing the site and that is a real challenge.

Continuing, Mr. Morrison said a more positive significant condition lies in the fact that in January, a couple of weeks before the Comprehensive Plan application process began, Microsoft in concert with most of the Eastside jurisdictions announced a half billion dollar transformational gift program aimed at addressing workforce housing and affordable housing in the communities. One thing that came out of the plan announced by Microsoft was a statement by the mayors of the Eastside cities, including Mayor Chelminiak on behalf of Bellevue, that calls for addressing the challenges of workforce housing and the need for affordable housing and to break down barriers and provide incentives to substantially increase the supply of quality housing for all households in the communities. One strategy that was identified was updating zoning and land use regulations to increase densities near current and planned transit. That is what triggered the filing of the Bellevue Technology Center Comprehensive Plan amendment application. KBS has voluntarily agreed to make ten percent of all housing built on the site affordable, both the for rent and for sale units.

Mr. Morrison said there are three things that are relevant as significantly changed conditions. First is the fact that the Bellevue Technology Center site is adjacent to a future light rail station, and there is a bus rapid transit center directly adjacent to the site. The opportunity exists to bring housing and jobs to Northeast Bellevue. KBS disagrees with the staff findings relative to significantly changed conditions but agrees with the statement of staff that the process is complicated. There is a clear need to have a full and clear engagement with the community to talk about the pluses and minuses and tradeoffs. The Comprehensive Plan process may not be the right venue, but the conversation needs to find a path forward sooner rather than the ten-year Comprehensive Plan update in the light of the announcement by Microsoft. If the Commission chooses not to recommend including the proposal in the annual process, the Commission should forward to the Council a message about the need to identify the right process.

Mr. Jason Espiritu with KBS suggested the community is missing out on a big opportunity to contribute their ideas to the development of the Bellevue Technology Center site. KBS wants to partner with the neighbors so that the end result will be one of collaboration rather than resistance. KBS has presented ideas it believes the community wants, including affordable housing options, a conservation easement for the meadow and key areas of the tree line, addressing the traffic congestion issue via the operation of shuttles to the light rail station, and supplementing the city's effort to improve city streets with new sidewalks and bike lanes.

Ms. Els Bloome, 1010 Rosemont Boulevard, requested a waiver to the three-minute rule for the

first two speakers, combining them into one seven-minute slot, to allow for making a cohesive presentation.

A motion to accommodate having two persons speak for a total of seven minutes was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried 5-1, with Commissioner Moolgavkar voting no.

Ms. Bloome thanked KBS for providing the opportunity to have a conversation about the livability of the neighborhoods. She said the times are exciting as the economy is booming and growth is happening all around. The Bellevue Technology Center sits adjacent to Crossroads, Bel-Red and Redmond's Overlake urban center, three neighborhoods that are targeted for growth. The neighborhoods need to be protected from encroachment, and 156th Avenue NE serves as a boundary for higher density development. The Bellevue Technology Center site serves as a buffer to the neighborhoods. The city has plans for growth and the Bellevue Technology Center plays a key role in the plans as a buffer, as a contributor to the tree canopy, and as open space. A group of neighbors have carefully studied the request by KBS, and their detailed analysis was submitted as part of the record. The true goal of the application is not really affordable housing, rather it is about redeveloping the entire site. That would mean KBS would be allowed to almost triple their square footage to nearly one million square feet. The application is based on four key assumptions which are flawed. They do not qualify for transit-oriented development design treatment. Being located in a major employment center by virtue of having a lot of office space is not the same as being in an area targeted for commercial growth. The site cannot be further developed without increasing their concrete footprint. She noted that several neighbors would make presentations during the public hearing and assured the Commissioners that by the end of the presentations the Commission would have an understanding of the challenges being faced by the neighborhoods. The city's planning documents call for zero growth at the Bellevue Technology Center site. Because the site is planned as a buffer, nearby sites are targeted for growth. Infrastructure is not keeping pace with the development already under way in the area, and there is a need to manage growth carefully to protect the livability of the neighborhoods. The Bellevue Technology Center site is important in terms of maintaining the character of the neighborhoods, providing a buffer between the developments in Bel-Red and Redmond's Overlake urban center, preserving open space and contributing to the city's tree canopy goals, and preserving the safety and livability of the residential communities.

Dr. Russ Paraveccio, 2495 158th Place NE, said his home lies directly across the street from the Bellevue Technology Center site. He said his neighborhood is home to 10,500 residents, 80 percent of which are families, and 82 percent of the homes are owner occupied. The neighborhood is landlocked by Lake Sammamish to the east and relies on the east-west roads for traveling into Overlake and Bellevue to do the things families need to do to exist. The Bellevue Technology Center sits at the western edge and serves as a buffer to the residential neighborhood. Of the 330,508 square feet of the Bellevue Technology Center site, 103,249 square feet of office space is currently for lease, which means 30 percent of their developed space is unoccupied. It is true that light rail is coming in 2023, but the walking distance to it will be seven-tenths of a mile. Bellevue's growth is in line with the Comprehensive Plan for Bel-Red. The area is shouldering more than its fair share of affordable housing given that LIV, also just across the street from the Bellevue Technology Center site, was completed in 2015 with 451 apartments. The area is also home to the Hyde, Upton and SHAG developments. Redmond's Overlake urban center lies very close to the Bellevue Technology Center site and the city of Redmond reports that significant development will be coming soon. He listed a number of employment centers and multifamily developments along with the number of parking stalls they contain, and noted that there are 17 new buildings under construction on the Microsoft campus.

Dr. Anne Coughlin, 16856 NE 14th Place, shared with the Commissioners photos of the Bellevue Technology Center site, focusing on the building that is integrated into the natural environment, the forest and the open area of the meadow, all to the song "Let It Be."

Ms. Rudi Kolcje, 15869 Northup Way, noted that she is 12 years old and opposed to the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment. She said she was protesting against the wrong in order to make it right. KBS wants to demolish 47 acres of beautiful trees and wildlife in order to make office spaces and parking lots. Bellevue is becoming crowded, and more and more people are being put together, but removing such a luxuriant area is not the solution. Recently there have been new developments along Bel-Red Road and many of the residents who live close by are already experiencing a lot of traffic. Because of all the cars, there will be pollution in the Crossroads area. All the gas from the cars will make the air quality poor. The neighborhoods do not want to see the air quality around their homes and schools get worse. The students in Bellevue will be impacted as well by being tardy more often, and those who walk will be in even more danger than before. The most important reason the development should be stopped is the trees. Trees such in carbon dioxide and give back oxygen. Without them no one would be alive. Noise pollution is another reason not to allow the site to redevelop. All the new apartments built in the area have had construction noise associated with them, but chain saws are even noisier and will disrupt the nearby neighborhoods. There is already a lot of noise pollution in Bellevue and if the proposal is approved there will be even more. There is a lot of wildlife in the region, including raccoons, coyotes, squirrels and birds. By taking away their habitat, the animals will be harmed. Many of the animals rely on the few woodlands that are left. The Bellevue Technology Center has held memories for many since 1972. Every winter kids sled down the gentle rolling hills that KBS wants to turn into buildings with more negative impacts than positive ones. Washington is the Evergreen State. That cannot continue if trees are taken for granted and are not protected. Bellevue is a city of trees, which will not be the case if there are none left.

Mr. Andy Anderson, 17424 SE Renton-Issaquah Road, said he grew up in a timber family in Montana and has been around trees his whole life. He said he moved to Washington in 1990 and became a certified arborist. He spoke on behalf of the trees because they cannot speak for themselves. According to the city's website, Bellevue remains committed to maintaining the City in a Park character. However, steady development over the last 30 years has resulted in a significant loss of trees. In 1986 the tree canopy was estimated at 45 percent, but by 2007 it had declined to 36 percent. In 2015 the city updated its Comprehensive Plan which calls for a 40 percent tree canopy goal. A 2017 study, however, showed Bellevue's tree canopy at 37 percent. The Bellevue Technology Center site has a significant stand of old growth trees, some of which are as much as 80 years old, especially the conifers. It is basically an urban forest within the city and it should continue to be preserved and protected as part of meeting the city's tree canopy goal. The Environmental Stewardship Initiative report from February 2019 documents that another 700 acres is needed in order to reach the tree canopy goal; that is 15 times the entire Bellevue Technology Center site. The city cannot grow its way into the goal with the existing trees because there just are not enough of them. The trees like the ones at the Bellevue Technology Center need to be protected while investing in incentives for developers and homeowners to plant more trees. Forest management companies plan about four trees for each tree they cut down. Trees, especially the big conifers in an urban forest, work together to help each other stay upright in big winds. When trees are remained after having spent years developing their root and branch structures, they become vulnerable to wind throw.

Mr. Bruce Whittaker, 1924 160th Avenue NE, said he is a retired development review engineer for King County, having spent 46 years in that position. He said as part of his preparation for



giving testimony, he reviewed the city's 12-year Transportation Facilities Plan and found a few interesting points. The most surprising find was that no roadway capacity projects are planned near the Bellevue Technology Center site in the next 12 years. The growth assumptions in the plan assume no growth for Northeast Bellevue and no further development of the Bellevue Technology Center site. The overall growth assumptions show a 12 to 52 percent increase in traffic volume in the Northeast Bellevue area. The city measures traffic in 14 established Mobility Management Areas, each of which has a separate level of service standard. Noise levels are measured at 35 locations and in 2017 two of the five in Northeast Bellevue exceeded the thresholds. The 2030 projections for traffic congestion show three of the 14 Mobility Management Areas are predicted to fail the standard. Where there is heavy traffic congestion, emergency vehicles cannot get through, triggering a significant life-safety issue. The 2030 noise projections show three of the five measurement locations in Northeast Bellevue will fail the standard, and two of those three locations are around the Bellevue Technology Center site. The Growth Management Act has a concurrency requirement that disallows development unless adequate infrastructure either exists or is built concurrent with development. Even if the Bellevue Technology Center site is not redevelopment, traffic congestion will fail the city's standard. Further development is not expected to pass the SEPA/Growth Management Act concurrency requirement anyway. The site should remain as it is, a buffer for residential neighborhoods.

Dr. Michael Itagaki, 1010 135th Avenue NE, said his work as a interventional radiologist has him covering most of the hospitals on the Eastside. He explained that when a person has a stroke or a heart attack, a blood clot lodges in an artery. The tissue downstream from the clot starts to die. Every minute that goes by, more and more tissue dies. Patients once they arrive at the hospital are first assessed before being treated. Emergency doctors are always on duty, but specialists must be called in after hours, making it necessary for them to drive to the hospital in order to provide treatment. All of the minutes of delay add up, and for every minute that ticks by, more and more heart or brain tissue is lost. Allowing developments that will increase congestion can be problematic. Such public policy concerns need to be addressed in considering the proposal for the Bellevue Technology Center site. He recommended against having a heart attack or stroke during the afternoon rush hour because ambulances cannot get through, and even doctors may be delayed in getting to the hospital.

Mr. Emmanuel Solis, 2447 161st Avenue NE, said the proposal on the table was the third time such a proposal for the Bellevue Technology Center site was up for threshold review. Every time the property owner tries a different approach. Previously they tried senior housing, then transit-oriented development, and now the Trojan horse is affordable housing. The application is the same each time, the only change is the type of housing involved. In each instance, the goal is the same, to remove the restrictions and the planned unit development governing the site to allow for more buildings and parking areas. The current proposal includes encouraging ten percent of the units be made available affordable to those making 80 percent to 120 percent of area median income or more. At best, ten percent would be about nine units. Teachers and firefighters on single incomes would not be able to afford the units. The city has a strategy for affordable housing that covers the next ten years, and last month the City Council was informed that 2785 affordable housing units will be built over the next ten years, primarily in transit-oriented developments, of which the Bellevue Technology Center site is not one. The likelihood that Microsoft will choose to invest in a company that manages \$11.5 billion in assets and that is seeking to develop only nine affordable housing units on a highly sensitive property is very low. Things should be put balance in considering the promise of nine affordable housing units and the loss of 41 acres and 40 years of history and community engagement. If allowed, the nine units will be the most expensive affordable housing units in the city.

Ms. Karen Campbell, 2447 160th Avenue NE, spoke in opposition to the application of KBS. She said the city has a very thoughtful and positive vision that looks out to 2035. The city should respect past efforts to plan ahead as was done on the Bellevue Technology Center site. The planned unit development and concomitant agreements came about through the city, the property owner and the neighborhoods working and planning together strategically to negotiate a resolution to preserve the trees, meadow and open space 46 years ago. Simply stated, the documents and plans are still valid as evidenced that the city projects zero development in its vision. No significant changes exist in the current application from KBS. City staff and leaders have spent a lot of time and effort thinking ahead and planning for the future. It is questionable whether more development in the Northeast Bellevue area would keep up with the deteriorating roads and traffic congestion, and whether the residential neighborhoods would be able to draw the next generation if it cannot offer what is valued, such as open green areas and trees. Residents want better traffic management and better maintained streets, allowing emergency vehicles to get through in a timely manner to save lives and properties. The residents want to be able to walk safely, enjoy their neighbors and their neighborhoods. The city's help is needed to protect the natural environment. All the cities that surround Northeast Bellevue need to work together to solve transportation and other problems that arise from the huge amount of what seems to be uncontrolled development. They need to know that they can count on the Commissioners to protect their interests ahead of out-of-state corporations that eat away at the vision of the city and its residents. The quality of the Northeast Bellevue neighborhoods should be supported by maintaining the green open space and trees that serve as buffers. The Commission should consider whether allowing the Bellevue Technology Center site to redevelopment will move the city closer to or further away from the vision.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

Ms. Marilyn McGuire, 16223 NE 25th Street, said the past is prologue to the future, which means that it can be determined how someone might behave in the future by how they have behaved in the past. The saying also is an indicator of whether or not an individual can be trusted. The experience of the neighborhoods since KBS purchased the Bellevue Technology Center site has been filled with concerns regarding their behavior that calls into question their integrity. The result is that the neighborhoods are even more adamant about fighting the attempts of KBS to vacate the PUD and change the neighborhood boundary line of 156th Avenue NE. In addition to all of the arguments against KBS being allowed to build on the site because of the negative impacts on the neighborhoods, KBS simply cannot be trusted. As the Commission is painfully aware, there have been many plans submitted by KBS to vacate those two specific things. Each proposal has had a different buzzword, but the essential thing has always been to get rid of the PUD and the boundary line that separates neighborhoods from more dense activity. Fighting their applications requires a great deal of time and energy on the part of the neighborhoods. KBS seems unable to accept no for an answer. Their current proposal outlines yet another way for KBS to get around the position of the neighborhoods on the PUD and the dividing line. The integrity of KBS is questionable in that they seek to do what they want to do and comply later, but only having getting caught by concerned neighbors who register a complaint with the city. Residents must comply with city requirements, but KBS seems to think it is above that. They removed neighborhood signs during the 2017 process. They had a draft confidential letter which included their proposal that is included in the current application. They have a history of acting first and complying later. They cleared the forest and removed trees and built a fence, all without permission to do so. Code compliance could do little more than write them a ticket, but the trees that were removed will take years to recover. They say Forterra will take care of the trees, but one of their legal counsel serves as a trustee for Forterra which leads one to question how trustworthy that situation is. They erected a six-foot fence and after code



compliance was called they submitted a land use exemption, all without public input; it was finally reduced to four feet but people cannot get in and out of it easily. The company is from outside of the area and does not care about the neighborhoods like the Commission does. The Commission was urged to listen and to again help the neighborhoods by protecting their properties.

Ms. Janet Castañeda, 2447 161st Avenue NE, said a petition was created in 2017 after recognizing the need to communicate to the city how the community feels about the Bellevue Technology Center property. A new petition was started in March and support from the community continues to be strong. There are over 2000 signatures and comments which is evidence that people care about the site. The residents are asking the Commission to honor the Comprehensive Plan to protect the beautiful city in a park through managed growth. The neighborhoods have been participating in several city programs, like Great Neighborhoods. The Commissioners were asked to review the comments made as part of the petition to better understand the concerns and values of the local residents. There is a need to preserve green spaces in the city. The easement that is in place allows residents to walk the trails and enjoy the trees and the views from the meadow. The area also provides habitat for local wildlife. The space needs to be preserved to maintain the quality of life. The neighbors love the trees and the open spaces on the Bellevue Technology Center site. The site serves as a break between high-density uses and residential uses, and it also provides a sound barrier. The dividing line should remain at 156th Avenue NE. The buffer was written into the Comprehensive Plan for a reason, namely to protect the neighborhoods. Those who signed the petition and who have made comments are from all over Bellevue, including some who have been living in the area for many years, business owners, bikers, some who helped to create the PUD, and even members of the family that formerly owned the site.

Ms. Nancy Whittaker, 1924 160th Avenue NE, said she and her husband love the vibrancy and diversity of Bellevue, and supports growth in the urban areas. As growth is allowed to continue, however, some of the existing green space needs to be preserved in order to maintain the livability of the area. She said she has heard it questioned whether or not the Bellevue Technology Center site is really a home to animals, but in fact it serves as valuable habitat for birds, mammal and even amphibians. She said her back yard abuts the Bellevue Technology Center site and as such she personally sees a wide variety of birds and animals on the site all the time. The property has a wetland that includes frogs in abundance. She said she has been accused of nimbyism by opposing redevelopment of the Bellevue Technology Center site, but she said it is in fact her responsibility and that of her neighbors to preserve precious areas of forest and green space for future generations. The owners of the Bellevue Technology Center property knew about the existing PUD when they purchased the site. The city should uphold the existing PUD and preserve the natural habitat for future generations.

Mr. Ed McDonald, 15936 NE 27th Place, voiced his opposition to the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment. He said he has been a resident of Sherwood Forest for 35 years during which time he participated in land use planning for the Unigard Site, now called the Bellevue Technology Center. The current owners, KBS, are again asking to amend the Crossroads subarea plan, but what they really want to do is vacate the PUD and the associated concomitant agreements. The current application is their fourth attempt, the third through the Comprehensive Plan amendment process; one was through a rezoning process. All attempts to date have failed. KBS representatives have spoken about all the changes in the area, and indeed to the west there has been a lot of redevelopment. But if one stands at 156th Avenue NE and looks to the east, they will see exactly what could be seen 35 years ago. The area is a residential community and should be allowed to remain that way. The Unigard PUD was intended to build a buffer to the

east of 156th Avenue NE by protecting the trees and the open space. The residential community needs that protection against new development. The PUD was developed as a three-party agreement between the property owners, the city and the neighborhoods, and it took hundreds of hours of work to develop it. The PUD is a contemporary document; it is not a relic of the past. It represents an agreement that defines the full use of the property. The community made concessions and agreed to the PUD on the understanding that it was a permanent commitment. The agreements are supported by the Crossroads subarea plan and the PUD. The old farm would have been residential homes if it was not for the agreement with Unigard, the Comprehensive Plan and the PUD. In business, a deal is a deal. It would be wrong to vacate the PUD.

Ms. Deb Wexler, 15811 Northup Way, said her property is right across from the Bellevue Technology Center site. She said she has been doing a lot of thinking about why the people from KBS come to the city every year with a new proposal, making it necessary for everyone from the neighborhoods to come and protest it. She said her only conclusion was that when KBS bought the property they thought they could develop it, sell it and make a profit. Whoever told them that was wrong. She said when she purchased her property her intention was to operate an animal rescue service and accordingly she said she specifically told her realtor she needed a place that had not pet restrictions. Having been told the property had no such restrictions, she moved ahead. It was not until just before closing that it was discovered that in fact there are pet restrictions. While disappointed, she did not get angry at the homeowners association for having the rules, nor did she get angry about the rules. She said she was angry with the realtor but it was too late to go back. KBS should go back and talk to whoever told them they could redevelop the site, but they should not argue against the rules that were in place at the time they purchased the Bellevue Technology Center site. The rules cannot be simply ignored. The neighborhoods are not the enemy, rather the homeowners simply want to continue living by the restrictions that were put in place decades ago. The neighborhoods have not changed and the protections in place should also not change.

Ms. Kate Sayers, 8320 170th Place NE, said Northeast Bellevue is a wonderful area but it is being encroached on by development from Bellevue and Redmond. Crossroads is being loved to death. The parks are jammed all the time. She proposed getting together a petition asking the city to buy the Bellevue Technology Center property for park development. Southeast Bellevue has vast amounts of park land. Northeast Bellevue needs to be treated equitably by having the city increase the amount of park acreage. KBS cut down giant maples and replaced them with twigs. All of the Spring District area had its large maple trees cut down and the area is now naked. All the talk about affordable housing is not relevant to those who work serving children in Bellevue schools and the senior citizens in nursing homes. There needs to be a radical rethinking about the Bellevue Technology Center property, about affordable housing, and about the massive deforestation that is going on in Bellevue.

Mr. Grant Gilkinson, 16008 NE 26th Street, said he is a lifelong resident of Sherwood Forest having been born and raised in the home in now lives in. He said he had a horse boarded at Hungerford Farms, which became Unigard and is now the Bellevue Technology Center. He said his mother Betty was a member of the Planning Commission and was part of the team that set in place some of the rules inherent in the PUD. The community was being very forethinking in allowing major development to come into the neighborhood in exchange for what was understood to be a permanent agreement. Under the agreement, development of the site was forever to be limited in terms of square footage and the open area was to be maintained. The line in the sand was 156th Avenue NE and under the agreement that line would not be crossed. The Commission was asked to honor and uphold the agreement that has been in place for more than 40 years.

Ms. Diane Raevsky, 1437 169th Place NE, said she works as an employee at Interlake High School. The school is not quite 15 years old and was built for 1500 students but currently has between 1700 and 1800 students, and has ten portable buildings on site. With all the new development in the area, the full impact on the schools has not yet been felt. With more students there will be more buses on the streets.

Mr. Hadden Hoppert, 1905 160th Avenue NE, said he opposed the proposal. He said KBS has repeatedly shown insincerity. It is clear their goal is to make money and to that end they keep coming up with reasons, excuses and stories, none of which have passed the sniff test. It is hard to have a conversation and make an agreement when it is much like dealing with a slimy lawyer.

Ms. Michelle Niethammer, 15897 Northup Way, thanked the Commissioners for their time and patience. She noted the Commission has heard many of the issues before. The neighbors have read all the plans cover to cover. The Comprehensive Plan is amazing and it is working. The applicant says otherwise, but the plan is driving growth in the right areas and establishes buffers where they are needed. The plan is not perfect and there absolutely are some challenges, but plans simply cannot be changed every day of the week and expect things to get done. That is what the applicant is asking the city to do. They want the plan changed before building out Bel-Red, the downtown and Eastgate, all to build on a site that does not need to be built on. The purpose of the site is to serve as a buffer. It would be a terrible thing at some point in the future to look back and decry the fact that the site should have been left alone and not allowed to redevelop. People with great foresight put the current plan in place and the neighborhoods simply want to see it honored. KBS simply bought the wrong property.

Mr. Dave Weinman, 17421 NE 11th Street, said the overview of planned growth shown to the Commission earlier is significant, but it is not enough. He said while he was not for the developers, he was against the outright rejection of any development just to preserve the status quo, which appears to be what is happening in regard to the Bellevue Technology Center site. Much has been heard from those who have lived in the area for decades. He said he is new to the area and along with his wife loves the city of Bellevue. In order to keep their jobs, he said they pay \$4000 per month for daycare. He added that \$750,000 will buy a three-bedroom, two-bath home with fire damage. Four out of the ten largest companies in the world by market cap have a significant presence in Bellevue, and they are growing fast. More jobs equals more people equals more traffic, all of which puts more pressure on housing and the cost of living. More housing is needed. The city cannot simply say no, nor can it afford to address the issue very ten years. The city certainly cannot rely on decisions made 40 years ago. The predominant industry in Bellevue is tech, yet ten years ago the iPhone was a relatively new product, Facebook was just becoming mainstream, Google was all in Silicon Valley, and cloud computing was not a thing. If the issue is traffic, the focus should be on mass transit, bike lanes and pedestrian walkways. If the issue is the environment, the focus should be on carbon offsets. The Bellevue Technology Center site is largely unused; it is primarily a parking lot and a nice lawn.

Ms. Heidi Ressler, 917 168th Avenue NE, said the Bellevue Technology Center is a very large site with a lot of space. She said she is excited to have such a massive space in the area because at some point the area may need another hospital or another school, and it is good to have such a big area available. A recent letter to the editor of the *Redmond Reporter* regarding the same topic on the Redmond side of the fence suggested that a moratorium should be placed on all future building in the Overlake area pending traffic studies to fully understand the newest projects on the Bellevue and Redmond sides of the Bel-Red corridor. Affordable housing components, including the ten percent at 80 percent of area median income is a term not broadly understood

by the general public and may not make much of a dent in the housing need. Amazon has announced it will be moving thousands of jobs to Bellevue, but they have not said what wages those employees will be paid. She said she is looking to add density to her neighborhood by creating an accessory dwelling unit.

Ms. Julie Dubois, 1819 175th Place NE, added her support to the statements made by her neighbors in regard to the Bellevue Technology Center site. She noted that the owner of The Park in Bellevue site described his nine-acre property as large. The Bellevue Technology Center site is 46 acres. Redeveloping the site will have a commensurate impact on the neighborhoods. She said people many years ago recognized how exceptional the property is and that is why agreements were put in place. There are other ways to address density and to increase housing affordability. Accessory dwelling units are one option, and allowing smaller cottage-style developments is another. In her neighborhood homes with 4500 square feet are being allowed; those homes could be replaced by smaller units that would fit with the style of the neighborhood to accommodate more people at a more affordable rate.

Mr. Hans Lund, 2429 169th Avenue NE, said he moved to the area because he liked it and raised his kids very close to the Bellevue Technology Center site. He said he understands the Growth Management Act and works professionally as an engineer drafting environmental impact statements. He urged the city to take a breather for five to ten years to allow for taking a close look at the traffic issues and to see how light rail will impact the transportation picture. It is already difficult for people to get from A to B in a reasonable fashion. The area is not built on busing kids to and from school; parents choose to drive the students to the schools.

Mr. Lee Sargent, 16246 NE 24th Street, said he worked at Unigard for 35 years and when he left the Bellevue Technology Center came into being. He said he purchased his home for \$60,000 and was blessed by the fact that the city decided to put in curbs and sidewalks. He said he chose to walk to work for 32 years regardless of the weather. The site is big and beautiful and calming. The developments along 156th Avenue NE are not beautiful and do not take away stress by looking at them. He said he would hate to see the city forget the importance of trees and open space.

Ms. Pamela Johnson, 3741 122nd Avenue NE, said the neighborhoods around the Bellevue Technology Center site are the kinds of neighborhoods Bellevue needs. She reminded the Commissioners that the Crossroads subarea plan will remain in force until a new plan is approved. The Bellevue Technology Center site is still in the Crossroads area. The proposal does not meet the current affordable housing strategy, which does not call for building new developments in old areas. It does call for increasing the potential land use on surplus lands and in new housing developments. None of that has anything to do with the Bellevue Technology Center site. At the March 4 Council meeting it was learned that the city has a substantial outlook for affordable housing on transit-oriented development sites. The affordable housing strategy exists in the Comprehensive Plan. The mayor's statement to Microsoft in January 2019 was only a proposal and does not address anything approved by the Council, therefore it is not the plan, only the idea of a plan. The city is meeting its affordable housing goals. Year after year the neighborhoods have to come back to argue against a new proposal for the site. That is because the property owner has never proposed anything that would be profitable for them and for the neighborhoods.

Ms. Heidi Dean, 11661 SE 56th Street, credited the Northeast Bellevue folks for doing an amazing job of presenting their points and noted her agreement with them. She said the level of affordable housing proposed by KBS is miniscule and will not address the needs of the people



who need it the most. It is almost insulting to use that as a carrot for getting a Comprehensive Plan amendment approved. Looking at Vancouver, B.C. will show that adding more housing does not necessarily increase the stock of affordable housing. They simply went down the path of densifying their neighborhoods. She agreed that it would be prudent to step back for five to ten years to see how things shape out once light rail is operational. The Amazon move to Bellevue will simply involve the relocation of people from Seattle. Those people already have homes that they likely will keep. The neighborhoods were promised that the area plans would be resident driven, yet developers and Microsoft are jumping in trying to drive the process.

Mr. Blake Elias, 2038 155th Avenue NE, said he lives in the Hyde Square apartments across the street from the Bellevue Technology Center. He said he is a newcomer to Bellevue who works at Microsoft and who specifically chose the Hyde Square apartments because of the green space across the street. It would be sad to see those trees go and they should be defended, but at the same time effort needs to be put into getting more trees planted in the city. Maybe there is a deal to be made. Maybe KBS could be allowed to add another story to the buildings on their property in exchange for planting more trees.

Ms. Andrea Stevens, 438 164th Avenue NE, said she has been opposed to the redevelopment of the Bellevue Technology Center site since moving to the city four years ago. She said the issues she is concerned with are safety, traffic and noise. She said she had not previously known that the city of Redmond was looking to allow all kinds of building on their side of the line. The cities of Redmond and Bellevue should get together and talk about traffic issues resulting from development on both sides.

Mr. Mark McDonald, 16804 NE 35th Place, said he used to run all over Bellevue and Redmond and now only walks with difficulty due to a nerve degeneration issue, but added that he can still ride a bike. He said he has ridden the sidewalks around the property many times but ironically had never been into the property until the proposed land use action signs were posted. He said he now knows that the property is beautiful with its high tree canopy, filtered light, low vegetation and the quiet. It is obvious the KBS proposal will go nowhere, but in time the site will be looked at again, including in the ten-year Comprehensive Plan update process. The plans regarding the site should cement what was promised so many years ago, that the open space would be preserved.

Mr. Scott Nelson, 640 166th Avenue NE, said traffic is an issue for the neighborhoods around the Bellevue Technology Center site. The arterials of 164th Avenue NE and 156th Avenue NE pass through residential areas. Those roads cannot be made any bigger and as the congestion worsens people begin cutting through neighborhood streets, endangering the kids who play in the streets. The Commission should keep in mind that there is no other way to get to I-90, and that people will not try to get to I-405.

Ms. Liena Ugarova, 1827 160th Avenue NE, said she moved to Bellevue from Seattle just over three years ago. She said her property is on the back of the Bellevue Technology Center site. She said she wants to see the forested environment of the property preserved. She asked the Commission to help the neighborhoods figure out a way to preserve the agreement that has been in place for so long so that the neighborhoods will not have to keep coming back every couple of years.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.



iv. Study Session: Bellevue Technology Center  
(9:48 p.m.)

Commissioner Moolgavkar explained that she had voted against allowing extra time for testimony by the public was that it represented a last-minute unfair change in the process; people were told they could have three minutes, but then one person asked for more and it was allowed without discussion. If there is going to be a process in place, it should be consistent.

Commissioner Moolgavkar said after listening to the testimony on both Comprehensive Plan amendments she came to the conclusion that the process needs to be improved. There is clearly a lot of frustration with the process. There are those who hold the view that the 40-year-old agreement is still valid, while others believe things are in fact changing and changing quickly. There is clearly an affordable housing crisis. The process as it currently exists should be revised to include an intermediary staff process to address the issues in a public manner but without having to wait ten years to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Morisseau asked what has changed between the last time the Bellevue Technology Center proponent was before the Commission and the current round that would warrant their request. Mr. Matz said the conclusion of the staff was that there has not been any significantly changed conditions since the 2017 application.

Commissioner Morisseau said she appreciates the fact that there is a process in place and that it is followed. However, having to wait ten years to effect major changes may be too long a timeline and it should possibly be revisited. Mr. Matz pointed out that the next ten-year update is scheduled to take place in four years.

Commissioner Morisseau reminded the Commissioners that the process involves focusing on whether or not the threshold review decision criteria had been met.

Commissioner Malakoutian thanked the staff for clearly walking the Commission through both of the proposed amendments and how they measure up against the threshold review decision criteria.

Commissioner deVadoss said the staff summary was excellent across multiple dimensions, including the history of the site and the density issues. He said he is a resident of Northeast Bellevue and said he was very proud to see all of the effort put in on the part of the residents. It is easy to develop property, but it is not easy to “undevelop” property. He stressed the need to be very careful in thinking about the proposal.

Commissioner Carlson said he would be leaving the Commission soon and said he would as such never again have to sit through another presentation by KBS trying to get out of the PUD. He said while he understands their perspective, the weight of the evidence is overwhelmingly on the other side. He added his appreciation for the work of staff in summarizing the issues. He also noted that the process has evoked citizen participation at its best. He agreed that during the threshold review process the focus must be on the decision criteria rather than on the overall merits of the proposal.

Mayor Chelminiak stressed that the work to revise neighborhood plan will not include a focus on zoning, rather the work will focus on vision. It will be perfectly reasonable during that process to discuss with the community the vision for all properties, including the vision for the Bellevue Technology Center site. The idea is to conduct the visioning process without having any specific

zoning proposals hanging over the work. It will in fact be the perfect opportunity for the Bellevue Technology Center to engage in the conversation.

Mayor Chelminiak agreed that the Comprehensive Plan amendment process needs to be looked at again. He said privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment get submitted and they are moved forward into the threshold review process where the Commission makes a recommendation to the Council. The community is encouraged to be involved in the process. On the day the Council is set to review and act on the recommendation of the Commission, if proponent makes the determination that a vote in their favor is not in the cards, they simply withdraw the application, which means they can submit the application again the next year. He said there is something wrong with that process that should be addressed at some point in the near future.

Mayor Chelminiak said the Microsoft proposal to put a large amount of money, half a billion dollars, toward affordable housing is remarkable. The funds fall into three buckets: homelessness, subsidized affordable housing in the 60 percent of area median income and below range, and the missing middle that ranges from 60 percent of area median income up to 120 percent of area median income or higher. The latter category will see the largest portion of the Microsoft dollars. That money, however, is not a reason for rezoning properties. Bellevue has already taken several steps in addressing the issue of affordable housing. The city is not likely to consider a waiver of impact fees, though it might consider a waiver of the sewer hookup fee, which is significant. Microsoft representatives have plans to meet directly with the various cities, and Bellevue already has in mind projects that would fit well with what Microsoft is proposing, and in each case the projects are on properties that are already appropriately zoned.

Mayor Chelminiak said affordable housing has gone past transportation in terms of being the most important issue facing the city. Unless the city can figure out ways to get mixed income neighborhoods all across the region, which is the way Bellevue used to be, the city will be priced out of amazing economic development opportunities.

A motion to recommend to the City Council that the Bellevue Technology Center proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment not be included in the 2019 annual Comprehensive Plan amendment work program was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moolgavkar and the motion carried unanimously.

8. STUDY SESSION (heard as part of the public hearings)  
(10:05 p.m.)

9. OTHER BUSINESS  
(10:05 p.m.)

Commissioner deVadoss noted that the Commission had twice asked staff for information and data about the problem to be solved by the proposed Vision Zero for Gun Safety Comprehensive Plan amendment. The public hearing is coming up and to date the Commission has not yet been supplied with the information it has asked for. He commented that the Second Amendment is part of the scope of the Planning Commission, which has as its scope zoning and land use. He asked why the issue was being addressed at all by the Commission, and asked if the upcoming public hearing should be canceled. Mr. Matz said staff agrees that a referendum on the Second Amendment is not the purpose of the threshold review process; as such it will not be addressed. What will be addressed is a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment that focuses on matters of public health and safety. The questions and issues raised to date by the Commission will be fully

addressed in the staff report that will be released on May 2. The Land Use Code allows people to propose amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Proposed amendments are subjected to a two-part test, beginning with threshold review.

Commissioner deVadoss added that lacking information about the problem the proposal addresses, the Commission is flying blind into a public hearing on the Second Amendment, which is not within the scope of the Commission. Mr. Cullen said the staff report will be publicly available a full three weeks ahead of the public hearing.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None  
(10:08 p.m.)

11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None  
(10:08 p.m.)

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None  
(10:08 p.m.)

13. ADJOURN  
(10:08 p.m.)

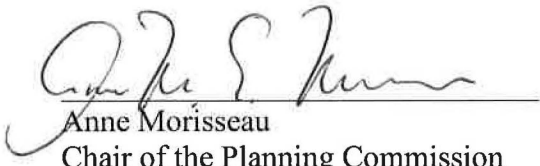
A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner deVadoss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moolgavkar and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Barksdale adjourned the meeting at 10:08 p.m.



Emil King  
Staff to the Planning Commission

10/23/2019  
Date



Anne Morisseau  
Chair of the Planning Commission

10/23/2019  
Date