

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

July 22, 2019  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
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 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding. There was no Executive Session.

2. Approval of Agenda

- Deputy Mayor Robinson moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

3. Oral Communications

- (a) Alex Zimmerman said he has been trespassed by the City of Seattle for 1,200 days. He expressed his opposition to Democrats and commented on his political preferences and views on immigration.

*[Deputy Mayor Robinson left the room and returned following the public comment.]*

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed his concern regarding the appropriateness of the comments, noting that some of them indicated a racial bias. Mayor Chelminiak said he would explore the Council's options.

4. Study Session Items

(a) Council Business and New Initiatives

There was no discussion.

(b) 2019 State Legislative Session Wrap-up with 41<sup>st</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> District State Legislators

Mayor Chelminiak welcomed state legislators from the 41<sup>st</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Districts to provide updates on the 2019 legislative session. He thanked them for their support of funding for I-405, and noted the improvements in travel times, especially for bus rapid transit (BRT) and the HOV lanes.

Senator Patty Kuderer (48<sup>th</sup> District) noted that she chairs the Senate Housing Stability and Affordability Committee, which was established this year. She sponsored Senate Bill 5600 that modified the Residential Landlord Tenant Act to address evictions, affordability, and equity. Ms. Kuderer is the Vice Chair of the State Government, Tribal Relations and Elections Committee, and serves on the Law and Justice Committee and the Rules Committee.

Representative Tana Senn (41<sup>st</sup> District) said she chairs the Human Services and Early Learning Committee. She highlighted her efforts in the areas of early learning, foster care, and condominium liability reform.

Representative Amy Walen (48<sup>th</sup> District) noted her service on the Kirkland City Council prior to her election to the House of Representatives. She described her involvement in legislation related to debt reform, health care, education, and mental health. She said \$9.2 million is available for investments in the 48<sup>th</sup> District including the KidsQuest Museum, Downtown Park Gateway, Military Minor Works Program, International Community Health Services, and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). She and Senator Kuderer sponsored House Bill 1219 to provide the flexibility for cities and counties to use Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) collections to support affordable housing and programs related to homelessness.

Representative Vandana Slatter (48<sup>th</sup> District) noted that she lives in Bellevue and previously served on the City Council. She highlighted the importance of state and local government partnerships, including related to investments in I-405 and SR 167. As Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee, she was involved in developing a green transportation bill to encourage the use of electric vehicles and cleaner fuels. Ms. Slatter referred the Council to HB 2158, which provides free and reduced college tuition and addresses career-connected learning, apprenticeships, child care, and student loan repayments.

Representative My-Linh Thai (41<sup>st</sup> District) noted her prior service on the Bellevue School District Board and her legislative efforts related to education. She serves on the Education Committee and the Health Care and Wellness Committee, and is Vice Chair of the Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee. She highlighted her work related to long term care coverage, the creation of a public health care option, and educational opportunities for women and minorities.

Deputy Mayor Robinson thanked the legislators for their work and noted that she has never seen Bellevue so well represented. She thanked Representative Thai for her role in securing funding

for the Downtown Park Gateway project. Ms. Robinson thanked all of the legislators for their work related to affordable housing including increasing the housing stock and providing incentives for builders.

Councilmember Robertson thanked everyone for attending. She expressed appreciation for funding for the Downtown Park Gateway project and for I-405/SR 167 investments. She noted that Bellevue raises \$890 million in state revenue annually. She commented on the importance of transportation investments given the growth in the region. She would like to see the implementation of additional elements of the I-405 Master Plan as well as an overall transportation package during the next legislative session. She expressed support for the condo liability reform legislation.

Representative Senn suggested that the City encourage Amazon to provide child care in their building. She said that, otherwise, Amazon employees will take up every available child care opening in Bellevue. Councilmember Robertson noted that the City has an incentive in its zoning code to encourage child care services.

Councilmember Stokes thanked everyone for their work, especially in the areas of transportation and human services. He said he is proud to be represented in the state legislature by six strong women who work well together for the benefit of Bellevue and the Eastside.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that Senator Lisa Wellman was unable to attend because she is traveling.

Councilmember Lee observed that the state legislators bring a fresh perspective to the legislature and are very effective in working together. He noted the importance of public-private partnerships to address housing affordability. He expressed support for mental health services funding and noted that mental illness is a factor for many individuals experiencing homelessness. He encouraged the consideration of innovative transportation projects and solutions.

Representative Walen said that Washington is one of the leading states for how it treats aging individuals. She said that options for older adults include assisted living, adult family homes, and foster care. She noted the value of helping seniors to remain in their homes and communities if possible. She anticipates that there will be a transition over time to treating mental health with similar long-term, community-based solutions.

Mayor Chelminiak observed that mental health and behavioral health are significant issues, and the provision of culturally relevant services is important due to the diversity in Bellevue. He suggested that state funding will be needed if mental health services increasingly become an expectation of local government.

Councilmember Zahn thanked the legislators for meeting with her in February and praised the diversity of talent in the delegation. She concurred with Mayor Chelminiak's comments regarding community based and culturally relevant approaches. She highlighted the importance of balancing state funding with local control. Ms. Zahn said it is important to maximize the I-405 corridor to keep pace with growth. She supports efforts to keep aging adults in their homes.

Representative Thai commented on the value of understanding the underlying cultural relevance, especially in dealing with mental health issues and barriers to receiving services.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked the legislators, staff, and Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, for their effectiveness in working with the legislature. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis regarding the future possibility of a road usage tax, Representative Slatter said the gas tax will not necessarily be eliminated. She said that drivers of electric vehicles currently pay a fee of \$150, and an advisory group is studying the concept of a road usage charge.

Responding to Councilmembers' comments regarding the link between mental illness and housing, Senator Kuderer said the Senate created a new behavioral health subcommittee of the Health Care and Wellness Committee to address the range of factors. She noted the importance of collaboration between all levels of government and urged the City to provide input on proposed legislation on an ongoing basis.

Mayor Chelminiak said he is proud to have been involved in the recent openings of the 30 Bellevue housing development and the Meydenbauer Bay Park. He said it is essential for cities and the state legislature to work together to complete those types of projects. He noted the significance of state funding for Bellevue's Spring Boulevard project.

Mr. Chelminiak asked the legislators to comment on projects or initiatives that have made a difference due in part to their advocacy and involvement.

Representative Walen said she is especially proud of her work related to toll lanes and mobility. Senator Kuderer highlighted the allocation of \$175 million to the Housing Trust Fund and full funding for the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA). Representative Senn commented regarding significant investments in Bellevue College as well as funding to develop a mental health teaching hospital at the University of Washington. Representative Thai noted new legislation regarding pharmacy regulations and education funding, especially for students with special needs. Representative Slatter highlighted her involvement related to clean energy, foster care, and education. As the co-chair of the Science, Technology and Innovation Caucus, Ms. Slatter sponsored the first-ever legislative invitational robotics tournament.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked everyone for the update. He expressed special appreciation for mental health and affordable housing funding. He noted the importance of investments in I-405 to continue to ensure access to and mobility within Bellevue.

(c) Update on Eastrail (formerly Eastside Rail Corridor) NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street Overcrossing

City Manager Brad Miyake opened discussion regarding Eastrail, a multi-use path along the rail corridor that connects Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, and Snohomish County. He introduced Christie True, Director of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and Curt Warber, DNRP Special Projects Manager.

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, introduced and thanked Betsy Anderson, Senior Planner with the City's Parks and Community Services Department, for her hard work in this effort as well.

Ms. True thanked Councilmember Zahn for attending the project kickoff over the weekend.

Mr. Warber said that, if the parks levy measure is approved on the August ballot, King County is prepared to move a number of projects along the Eastrail corridor forward very quickly. He expressed appreciation for the planning, staffing, and funding partnerships for a number of the projects, including the Wilburton Trestle. He noted that the public has already been using the three and one half miles of the interim trail through Bellevue.

Key projects along the trail include the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing, Wilburton Trestle, Wilburton Gap Bridge, Coal Creek Trestle, and the Lake Lanes Trail. In partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), King County will construct the Lake Lanes Trail over southbound I-405 and pave 2.5 miles of trail between Ripley Lane and Coal Creek parkway. The Wilburton Trestle project is in the 60-percent design phase. It will renovate the rail trestle for trail use through funding included in the upcoming parks levy.

The NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing project has completed 60-percent design, and construction is anticipated to begin in late 2020. Mr. Warber noted that Sound Transit has made substantial progress on the Wilburton light rail station. The NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street bridge is anticipated to be completed and open to the public by mid-2022 before light rail service begins in 2023. He noted that the bridge was redesigned following input from a number of stakeholders, including the City's Wilburton Commercial Area Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Mr. Warber described the key features of the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing, noting that the design honors the area's Japanese-American agricultural heritage. He said a building adjacent to the rail corridor, now demolished, was originally used by Japanese-American farmers to store and ship produce.

Mr. Warber said upcoming steps include a Japanese-American charrette this summer, a public open house regarding the Wilburton Trestle and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing this fall, and finalizing the bid drawings and specifications by early 2020.

Councilmember Stokes, Bellevue's representative on the Eastrail Advisory Committee, said this has been an exciting collaboration of cities, King County, and others. He thanked everyone for their hard work and noted that he looks forward to the construction of the Wilburton Trestle.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed support for incorporating references to Bellevue's history and heritage into the design of the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. He suggested exploring the possibility of adding some type of messaging signage on the bridge to publicize community events.

Councilmember Zahn said she likes that the bridge design incorporates elements of Bellevue's agricultural heritage. She observed that the bridge provides the opportunity for interpretive exhibits related to the bridge design and the area's history. Mr. Warber said the project team is partnering with the Wing Luke Museum and the Eastside Heritage Center to create storytelling

elements for the bridge. Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Warber said the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) will contribute federal funding to the project as well. In further response, Ms. Nichols said the City is interested in working with King County to determine how to provide fiber infrastructure along the corridor.

Councilmember Lee thanked everyone for their work and expressed support for incorporating elements of Bellevue's heritage into the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street bridge design. He encouraged additional educational elements along the Eastrail corridor as well.

Councilmember Robertson said that the Eastrail is a significant asset for the Eastside. She noted the City's partnership with King County and Sound Transit to provide the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing. She expressed concern regarding the height of sections of the Eastrail, including the Wilburton Trestle, and encouraged a design that will prevent accidental and intentional falls. Mr. Warber said the project team is considering a number of design alternatives that make it more difficult to jump from a high structure.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Robinson, Mr. Warber said there will not be a separation between pedestrians and cyclists on the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. Ms. Robinson expressed concern that cyclists might instead cross NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street at street level to avoid a slowdown on the bridge. Mr. Warber said there will be a planting strip, median, and vertical barriers to discourage that behavior.

Ms. Robinson expressed an interest in expediting the work on the Wilburton Trestle. Mr. Warber said the project is complicated and becoming more expensive over time. He said the project team is exploring options.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked everyone for their hard work. He expressed support for the Japanese-American design elements of the bridge and suggested incorporating artistic lighting as well. Mr. Warber said the design elements will be explored further through the upcoming charrette.

At approximately 8:00 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:10 p.m.

#### (d) Economic Development Plan Update

City Manager Miyake recalled that the Economic Development Plan was originally adopted in July 2014, and an update to the plan was initiated earlier this year. In April, staff presented an initial set of objectives for the Council's consideration. Since that time, the objectives were revised to reflect the Council's input.

Mac Cummins, Director of the Community Development Department, said staff is requesting Council direction to proceed with the recommended objectives for an update to the Economic Development Plan. He noted that economic development extends beyond business activity to include infrastructure, educational opportunities, and civic and cultural investments.

Jesse Canedo, Chief Economic Development Officer, provided the program update. He said the current Economic Development Plan identifies four target sectors (Technology, Business Services, Retail, and Tourism) and direct and foundational strategies with numerous related tasks. He highlighted the businesses that opened offices in Bellevue since 2014. He said the availability of talent continues to be a primary draw for major employers, while growth is a challenge for some of Bellevue's smaller, longtime businesses. He noted that employees, visitors and residents are looking for more urban amenities in the areas of arts and culture, retail, food, and public events.

Mr. Canedo presented the recommended objectives for the update to the Economic Development Plan: 1) identify ways to support the creative economy, 2) explore opportunities to support small businesses, 3) support more robust retail activity, 4) identify best practices for integrating new businesses into the community, 5) support capacity building for community groups, 6) integrate key recommendations from the tourism plan, and 7) make the plan easier to update. Staff will work with consultants to gather and analyze data from a number of sources including the City's biennial business surveys, focus groups, and meetings with businesses and other stakeholders (e.g., technology firms, small businesses, creative businesses and organizations, real estate developers and brokers, retail, tourism, education, and regional economic development professionals).

Next steps are gathering and analyzing data, providing an update to the Council during the fourth quarter, and engaging stakeholders. Staff will return early next year with draft strategies for the Council's consideration and anticipates adopting the updated plan by the end of the first quarter 2020. Mr. Canedo requested Council direction regarding the recommended objectives.

Deputy Mayor Robinson thanked staff for their hard work and expressed support for ongoing efforts to retain small businesses in Bellevue. She thanked staff for their work with Amazon. She encouraged a focus on efforts to utilize and further develop the skills of local residents for higher paying jobs in Bellevue. She would like to see an actionable item of how to integrate some of the TechHire initiative concepts into the City's Economic Development Plan.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their work and encouraged continuing to focus on action items in updating the plan. Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Canedo said the objective of hosting creative programs and competitions has not yet moved forward due to workload capacity issues. Mr. Canedo said the Startup 425 advisory group is working to help determine whether it might be appropriate to include those efforts in the Startup 425 program. Staff will provide an update in the fall. Mr. Canedo said staff will recommend specific actions early next year following the analysis of the proposed objectives to be included in the plan update.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for the recommended objectives to guide further data collection and analysis, which will lead to the development of action items to implement the goals. He noted his special interest in the creative economy. He would like to see a strategy directly connected to participating in the Greater Seattle Partners' efforts. He believes that Bellevue has a role in that group's success.

Councilmember Robertson said her comments are based on her review of the more detailed language in the meeting packet describing the recommended objectives. She suggested creating a hierarchy for the goals and action items in the updated plan. She encouraged a review of other cities' best practices. She expressed support for Deputy Mayor Robinson's suggestion about focusing on local workforce development.

Ms. Robertson noted that the City has rezoned a lot of light industrial land, which raises the property values and encourages redevelopment. However, she noted the risk of losing smaller businesses that have been serving Bellevue residents for many years. Mr. Canedo said that the second objective supports small businesses. Further analysis will focus on identifying the services and/or policy changes that are necessary to support small businesses.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the overarching goal of the plan update is to support the complementary elements that will help Bellevue to be an exciting and engaging community for large employers, small businesses, and residents. In further response, Mr. Canedo said Microsoft has 7,100 employees and T-Mobile has approximately 5,000 employees in Bellevue. Both companies utilize consultants and outside contractors as well.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed concern about the decrease in business retention. Mr. Canedo noted that a primary focus over the past two years was supporting regional partnerships. Mr. Canedo said staff will renew its focus on business retention after the vacant position is filled. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he wants to ensure that the City's plan remains Bellevue-specific while engaged in regional partnerships.

Mr. Cummins said that increasing regional partnerships is a strategic goal in the current plan, and policies that leverage the City's relationships in the region will be reflected in the plan. Mr. Nieuwenhuis asked whether the objectives anticipate the potential for an economic downturn. Mr. Cummins acknowledged that Bellevue is experiencing significant growth in jobs, which provides the opportunity to study the jobs/housing imbalance. He said staff is monitoring the growth, and the coordination of the efforts of the planning group and the economic development group is extremely important in considering economic cycles. Mr. Nieuwenhuis noted the importance of the creative economy and of integrating the City's work with Visit Bellevue Washington's efforts.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciated the information about the accomplishments and lessons learned over the past five years. She encouraged ways to support small businesses including affordable startup office space. She suggested identifying potential partnerships with small businesses and the diverse community. She expressed support for the Deputy Mayor's suggestion to focus on developing the local workforce, and suggested exploring partnerships between students and businesses.

Mayor Chelminiak suggested adding language regarding workforce development to the first objective.

Referring to redevelopment in the BelRed area, Mr. Chelminiak said that approximately 125 acres of 900 acres were rezoned. He encouraged, as part of the redevelopment, the consideration of alternatives for the creative reuse of buildings and for retaining small businesses.



Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Deputy Mayor Robinson acknowledged that staff is already working on issues related to supporting the creative economy. However, she suggested that the plan include specific actions. She suggested adding “retain” to the objective to support small businesses.

Ms. Robinson suggested adding an eighth objective: “Create a local workforce development strategy to include internship and apprenticeship programs.” Mayor Chelminiak suggested changing “create” to “support.” Councilmember Robertson concurred and said there are organizations that receive funding from the City that are engaged in similar efforts.

Councilmember Lee commented on the importance of small businesses, especially in the case of an economic downturn. He encouraged an enhanced focus on developing tourism and on strengthening the technology industry.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the objectives are not listed in a priority order.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Canedo said that the tourism destination development plan reviewed by the Council in 2017 addressed cultural and international exchanges. Ms. Zahn suggested adding language to capture that concept.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Cummins said he is not hearing any disagreement from the Council regarding the main topical areas to be covered in the update of the Economic Development Plan. He said staff believes they have a good sense of the Council’s goals as reflected in the overall, broader objectives.

- Councilmember Robertson moved to approve the recommended objectives, with objective 2 revised to “support and retain local businesses,” and the addition of objective 8: “Support a local workforce development strategy that includes internship and apprenticeship programs.” Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(e) 2019 Bellevue Family 4<sup>th</sup> Post-Event Update

Patrick Bannon, President of the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), thanked the City for its partnership to produce the Family 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration at the Downtown Park. Mike Ogliore, BDA Vice President of Events and Operations, provided an update on the event, which drew approximately 60,000 attendees.

Cindy Shelton, Program Manager, Parks and Community Services, said the event would not be possible without the business community and other sponsors and partners. More than 95 City staff and numerous community volunteers were involved in producing the event, and the Bellevue Community Band performed. Mr. Bannon thanked the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra and local high school choirs for their participation in the event.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue conducted a fundraiser in conjunction with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.

5. Council Discussion of Upcoming Items: None.

6. Continued Oral Communications: None.

At 9:43 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw