

July 11, 2016

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Transmittal and presentation of the East Main Station Area Plan recommended by the East Main Citizen Advisory Committee and seeking City Council direction on next steps for implementation.

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POLICY ISSUES

Several policies in the Transportation Element of Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan cite the importance of planning for the areas around light rail stations and for addressing items related to station area planning such as public involvement, land use, access to stations, and integration with the community. One of the key policies for the South Bellevue and East Main station areas is TR-7, which states:

Ensure that land use changes near high capacity transit stations are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, recognizing that:

1. Transit may support more intense development around some stations
2. Transit supportive design and orientation may be implemented without changes to land use intensity; and
3. Land use plan map changes would be precluded in existing single family designations and environmentally sensitive areas.

Additional relevant policies include:

TR-89. Plan and implement high capacity transit service within Bellevue in a manner that advances the adopted land use vision by:

1. Optimizing ridership, system performance, and user convenience
2. Providing exceptional pedestrian and bicycle access to stations
6. Protecting the character and livability of neighborhoods, including adequate ingress and egress to the neighborhood.

TR-92. Work with neighborhood groups, business owners, other stakeholders, and transit providers to identify and fund improvements that can be constructed efficiently in conjunction with transit projects.

TR-93. Protect residential neighborhoods adjacent to high capacity transit facilities from spillover impacts, including parking and cut through traffic, resulting from system construction and/or operation, using techniques such as residential parking zone programs and traffic calming measures. Monitor the outcomes of these efforts and make adjustments as needed to ensure continued effectiveness.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

<u> </u>	Action
<u> X </u>	Discussion
<u> X </u>	Information
<u> X </u>	Direction

Tonight, staff is seeking direction from City Council on any changes or any needed additional information to the CAC recommendations. City Council cannot take final action on the East Main Station Area Plan until the environmental review process is completed. Staff will return upon completion of the environmental process to seek City Council action on implementation of the strategies in the East Main Station Area Plan.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

What is station area planning?

Station area planning is a process to establish a collective vision for a transit station area, ensure a compatible fit with the neighborhood, capture the value of transit, optimize neighborhood and community connectivity to the station, and provide meaningful community involvement. Station area planning generally encompasses an area within about ¼-mile to ½-mile radius of a station. Station area plans typically address issues related to integration of the station with the surrounding community, such as pedestrian and bicycle connections to stations, transit service, land use, traffic and character.

Station area planning does not address design, construction and mitigation of the light rail facilities themselves (e.g. Sound Transit stations and guideways). These are addressed through the City’s design and mitigation permitting process, which is separate from this station area planning program and included review by the City’s Light Rail Permitting Citizen Advisory Committee.

The Council established the primary objectives of the overall station area work program to be:

1. Engage the community in a planning process that establishes a clear vision and community goals for each station area
2. Identify and prioritize City-funded capital investments that enhance the community and help to integrate the station with the surrounding area
3. Optimize access to the station by pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons

4. Support the land use vision in Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan for each neighborhood adjacent to light rail and encourage appropriate redevelopment where consistent with the City's land use vision.

East Main CAC Recommendation

The East Main Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), appointed by Mayor Balducci and confirmed by City Council in August 2014, completed their work and finalized their recommendations on June 15, 2016. The CAC was comprised of 9 members who live or work in the area. The CAC is transmitting their recommendations for acceptance and action by the City Council. Attachment A is an excerpt of the Station Area Plan, including the Transmittal Letter, Vision Statement, and Implementation Strategies. Although there was not unanimity on all of the strategies, the CAC did reach consensus on the overall vision and plan.

The CAC was charged by the City Council with developing a plan that:

- engages the community to establish a vision and goals for the station area
- identifies and prioritizes strategies to enhance the community and help integrate the station with the surrounding area
- optimizes access to the station for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons
- addresses neighborhood vehicular access, traffic and parking concerns
- supports the land use vision, including redevelopment only for properties east of 112th Avenue SE.

The CAC met about 25 times including tours, regular and special meetings and open houses. All of their meetings were open to the public. In keeping with their charge, they explored the issues identified through their local knowledge and the public process. The CAC developed a set of guiding principles to frame the discussion as they reviewed concepts and analyses and provided direction to staff and consultants in formulating the vision and recommendations.

After a visioning kick-off with the public and subsequent discussions of the CAC, the list of issues were organized into the four categories described below. All of the issues, regardless of category, are interrelated in terms of realizing the CAC's recommended vision for preserving the single family character west of 112th Avenue SE and creating a livable, complementary neighborhood to the east.

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Access – reviewing existing systems and future conditions once light rail is operational in order to explore ways to ensure safe, convenient and attractive access to the future light rail station from the study area;
2. Traffic – evaluating ongoing and anticipated future traffic issues in and around the neighborhoods, analyzing how the closure of SE 4th Street and SE 1st Place affect neighborhood vehicular access and evaluating ways to address these issues;
3. Character – reviewing the changing nature of the redevelopment area with a focus on Main Street and 112th Avenue SE and envisioning what the future character of these streets should be in the context of light rail and redevelopment; and
4. Land Use/Redevelopment – envisioning the future of transit-oriented development east of 112th Avenue SE and providing guidance to ensure redevelopment is complementary to existing residential development.

All of the CAC meetings allowed for public comment and all of the materials presented at the meetings, including meeting minutes and slide show presentations, were posted on the [project website](#). The CAC also hosted three open houses over the course of the project, two of which also included online open houses that afforded the public the opportunity to review the materials and register their comments on a range of redevelopment options and potential pedestrian, bicycle and traffic improvements.

There are 33 strategies for East Main ranging from monitoring parking and traffic issues to rezoning properties for transit-oriented development. Some of the strategies can be carried out through existing programs (e.g. residential parking zones). Some require additional evaluation (e.g. reconfiguring traffic control at neighborhood entrances). Other strategies would need to be prioritized along with other capital investment projects in the next budget (e.g. pedestrian and bicycle improvements); and several of the strategies require creation of a new transit-oriented development zone with development standards and design guidelines.

Next steps

At this time, staff is only seeking direction on whether City Council would like to make changes or request additional information prior to final action. City Council may wish to accept all of the strategies as proposed or to eliminate, prioritize, modify or add strategies. City Council may also wish to direct staff to provide additional information on specific strategies. Any strategies with fiscal implications will go through appropriate budget and/or work program approval processes before final implementation. Code and policy amendments will be referred to the Planning Commission and included in their work program.

Staff is not requesting final action on the Plan from City Council at this time in order to allow for completion of the environmental review process. If City Council has no objections, once environmental review is complete, staff will place an action item on the Consent Calendar for the City Council to accept the CAC recommended East Main Station Area Plan, as presented or amended, and direct staff to proceed with the appropriate next steps to begin implementation of the strategies.

ALTERNATIVES

Option 1: Direct staff to place acceptance of the East Main CAC Recommended Station Area Plan on the Consent Calendar once the environmental review process is completed.

Option 2: Provide alternative direction for staff follow-up.

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Excerpts from East Main Station Area Plan, CAC Recommendation, June 15, 2016 (Transmittal Letter, Vision Statement, Implementation Strategies)

AVAILABLE IN DOCUMENT LIBRARY

- A. East Main Station Area Plan, CAC Recommendation, June 15, 2016
- B. East Main Station Area Plan Appendix, June 15, 2016