

CITY OF BELLEVUE
EAST MAIN STATION AREA PLANNING
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Attachment 1

January 27, 2015
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, John D'Agnone, Christie Hammond,
John King, Scott Lampe, Jim Long, Erin Powell,
Danny Rogers, Alexander Strunkin, Bill Thurston

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pamela Unger

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Kattermann, Patti Wilma, Emil King,
Department of Planning and Community
Development; Phil Harris, Kate March, Kevin
McDonald, John Murphy, Department of
Transportation

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chair Lampe who presided. All Committee members were present with the exception of Mr. Thurston and Ms. Unger. Mr. Thurston arrived a few minutes later.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Long. The motion was seconded by Mr. Breiland and it carried unanimously.

Chair Lampe noted the reference in the minutes to "Ms. Breiland" should be changed to "Mr. Breiland."

A motion to approve the November 18, 2014, as amended was made by Ms. Hammond. The motion was seconded by Mr. Breiland and it carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

3. PROJECT UPDATE

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann said the requested tour of existing light rail facilities in Seattle would be scheduled in the next few weeks. He also reported that progress has been made toward making a consultant selection; hopefully the City Council will approve the contract on February 9.

4. BRIEFING ON DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY INITIATIVE

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King informed the Committee that the citizen advisory committee's work on the Downtown Livability Initiative, which began in 2013, wrapped up in the summer of 2014. The focus has since changed to refining the document in preparation for adoption by the Council. The 14-member Downtown CAC worked to update the downtown Land Use Code, develop a vision for the Office/Limited Business (OLB) district, and focus on the light rail interface.

Mr. E. King noted that the downtown is bordered on the east by I-405, on the west by 100th Avenue NE, on the north by NE 12th Street, and on the south by a meandering line that roughly follows Main Street. The Downtown CAC was not tasked with looking at any area outside of the downtown subarea. They learned that in 1980 when the first downtown code was adopted there were some 10,000 people working in the downtown and about 1000 people living there. By 2012 there were 43,000 jobs and 10,000 residents, and by 2030 the forecast is for 70,000 jobs and 19,000 residents. Much of the construction activity currently under way in the downtown involves residential units, though a couple of office towers are just coming out of the ground.

The Downtown CAC understood that the downtown Land Use Code is only a part of the city's broader strategy on livability. While the committee was focused on just the downtown, the issue of livability extends far beyond the downtown's boundaries and includes a safe and clean environment, safe and excellent schools, a safe pedestrian system, good ADA access, and having good traffic capacity.

Specifically, the Downtown CAC focused on the downtown zoning code and the design guidelines, which are what permit reviewers rely on in making development permitting decisions. The importance of setting forth the vision in the codes was not lost on the Downtown CAC, nor was the fact that the codes had not really been updated since 1981. One major element the work was to sync the Downtown Livability Initiative with the Downtown Transportation Plan update and the East Link work.

The Downtown CAC methodically worked its way through every element of the existing downtown Land Use Code to determine what was working, what was not working, and where there was room for improvement. The narrative and policy direction from the 2004 downtown design charrette helped to inform the work of the CAC, as did the input received from the focus group discussions that were conducted. The group progressed to developing strategies and alternatives relative to fixing what was identifying as not working and taking advantage of opportunities. In a series of meetings the Downtown CAC worked through each topical area and formalized recommendations that were then melded into a cohesive package.

Mr. E. King said on January 20, 2015, staff along with Downtown CAC co-chairs Aaron Laing of the Planning Commission and Ernie Simas of the Transportation Commission formally presented the Downtown CAC's work to the Council. The Council requested at least one more meeting to delve into the facets of the package.

Project Development Manager Patti Wilma said the project was kicked off in September

2012 with an open house that was attended by more than a hundred. The public outreach continued throughout the process with additional open house events, focus groups, walking tours, an email list and a website. During the project the Downtown Bellevue Residents Association was established. She said she happily would arrange for a walking tour of the area for the Committee as well.

Mr. E. King said the final document includes specific Land Use Code recommendations and a number of non-code recommendations, which are issues that arose during the process the Downtown CAC felt were important enough to include. The report is broken down into specific categories and topics.

The Downtown CAC concluded that the Great Place strategy, which is basically the vision for the downtown in the Comprehensive Plan, is still working and needed only a few refinements. A great deal of time was spent focused on integrating land use and transportation. Walkability was held up as a clear contributor to livability in the downtown; support for that notion was given by downtown businesses, workers, and residents.

Mr. E. King suggested the recommendations of the Downtown CAC sync up with station area planning in the areas of design guidelines, an updated vision for the Downtown OLB district, the pedestrian corridor, and the idea of creating a non-motorized connection between the downtown and the Wilburton area.

Ms. Wilma said the design guidelines will be reformatted to make sure the content is user friendly, understandable and easily readable. Changes along 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE will be specifically mentioned in light of the East Main station area. Neither of those streets is pedestrian friendly and with the coming of the East Main station and redevelopment of the area there is a need to make sure the design guidelines are future thinking and focused on livability. The Downtown CAC looked at the specific needs of mixed use streets, perimeter streets and commercial streets with an eye on better defining them in line with their intent. The design guidelines also take into account the need to plan the how and where of through-block connections, the pathways that cut through the superblocks.

With regard to the updated vision for the DT- OLB district, Mr. E. King informed the Committee that the Downtown CAC discussed a new vision for heights and densities for the area between NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street just east of City Hall. Their conclusion was that the current suburban zoning pattern with 75- to 90-foot height limits and 3.0 FAR will not fully optimize the area once light rail comes in. Consideration was given to increasing density up to 6.0 FAR and height up to 350 feet on the thinking that there are fewer transition issues facing the area. More analysis is needed on things like tower spacing and the possible impacts on traffic. The Downtown CAC also recommended more analysis of the area between Main Street and NE 4th Street in consideration of allowing building height to exceed 200 feet and density of up to 5.0 FAR, which is essentially what is allowed in the MU zoning on the other side of NE 12th Street.

Mr. E. King explained that to the west of 112th Avenue NE the zoning is primarily DT-MU. The Downtown CAC recommended that residential buildings should be allowed up to 300 feet in that area but did not recommend increasing the FAR. The Downtown CAC also recommended equalizing residential and non-residential development. Currently, the DT-MU zone allows more density for residential projects than is allowed for commercial or office projects, and the Downtown CAC concluded there should be no difference between the two.

Mr. E. King reminded the Committee that the downtown light rail station will be located at the eastern terminus of the pedestrian corridor. The Downtown CAC recommended extending the pedestrian corridor eastward to 112th Avenue NE to take in the full light rail station. The Downtown CAC also wanted to ensure mostly continuous weather protection as new development review takes place. A recommendation was also made to consider code provisions to identify major and minor activation points along the pedestrian corridor. Adding more landscaping and green element to the corridor was also recommended, along with making sure the corridor will accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles. The Downtown CAC also favored having the pedestrian corridor wed to a lid across the freeway connecting the downtown with the Wilburton area.

Ms. Powell said serving on the Downtown CAC was both interesting and fascinating. She noted that the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown pushed back against allowing more building height. The Downtown CAC recognized that the area may not be actually built out for another 30 years. She added that the Downtown CAC fully supported having more places for people to enjoy in the downtown, including pocket parks and cafés. The lid over I-405 could truly be an asset.

Answering a question asked by Chair Lampe, Mr. E. King allowed that the Downtown CAC recommended consideration be given to increasing building height in the O-1 district in the core of the downtown from 450 feet to 600 feet, but without increasing the FAR for office. Residential already has no FAR limit in that district.

5. BRIEFING ON DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION UPDATE AND STATION ACCESS

Senior Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald said the Downtown Transportation Plan defaulted to serving as the station access plan for both the downtown station and the walkshed for the East Main station. The Council appointed the Transportation Commission to serve as the advisory body rather than electing to appoint a separate citizen advisory committee. The policies and projects heralded in the final recommendation are currently being implemented.

In the guiding principles, the Council recognized it will take a strategy involving all modes of travel into and out of the downtown to make the area viable as growth continues to occur through 2030. Many changes have occurred both regionally and locally since 2004 when the Downtown Transportation Plan was last adopted, not the least of which is the coming of East Link light rail.

Walking tours were part of the early public outreach for the plan update. A couple of bicycle tours were set up as well with an eye on finding the best and safest routes to get to major destinations in the downtown. Routes and corridors between the downtown and major regional designations were studied as well. A number of open house events were held, and outreach was conducted with groups having a stake in the outcome of mobility for the downtown. Presentations were made to professional organizations as well, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Bellevue Downtown Association, and the Council was kept apprised as the work progressed.

Mr. McDonald shared with the Committee colored maps depicting the density of population and employment for each block from 2010 to 2030. The map showed the central core developing with residential and office buildings but also showed the spread of downtown growth to just about every block. The information will be used to plan for an overall mobility strategy.

The Committee was shown a pie chart representing the growth in the number of person trips regardless of mode. Mr. McDonald pointed out that the total number of trips is expected to almost double by 2030. The all-of-the-above strategy directed by the Council led to dealing with vehicle mobility, transit, pedestrians and bicycles.

Mr. McDonald said vehicle mobility can be broken into different components, including access within the downtown, to and from the regional system, and intersection capacity and operation.

The Committee members were informed that the level of service (LOS) metric measures the average seconds of vehicle delay per intersection. They were shown a color-coded chart indicating the 2010 LOS score for each of the downtown intersections and the same chart showing the projected 2030 scores. Most planned capacity projects are on the east side of and outside of the downtown. Projects outside the downtown can benefit the downtown by adding capacity to the overall system. There is very limited right-of-way in the downtown and it is very unlikely that the curb-to-curb width will change much given the existing development patterns. There will, however, be much more demand for the space. The Downtown Livability Initiative and the Downtown Transportation Plan heard a great deal about the need for curbside loading/unloading space, short-term taxi stands, and electric vehicle charging stations. A bike share feasibility study is in the works for 2015 that may increase the demand for right-of-way space.

Transit is a big part of mobility, and improved coverage, speed and reliability by transit vehicles make transit a more attractive option. To make transit work efficiently, there must be capacity not only on the streets but also at the transit center. Additionally, there is much the city can do to address comfort, access and information about transit for potential riders.

Mr. McDonald shared with the Committee a map showing the density of land uses overlaid with the Frequent Transit Network, which are routes with 15-minute service or

better. The map indicated that about 86 percent of the downtown population and employment is within 600 feet of a transit stop. With some reconfiguring of the transit service routes, and by increasing the density in the core area where the transit service is best, by 2030 coverage could be improved to 97 percent. Over the last 20 years or so the transit network in the downtown has been fairly stable even as the downtown has grown and changed. It will be necessary to work with the transit providers to adjust how growth in the downtown is served.

The outreach efforts turned up the fact that people would like to see bicycle mobility improved. Bicycle commuters would like to be able to travel comfortably and safely between Point A and Point B in the downtown, and are in need of places to park their bicycles once they get to their destination. They also want to be able to access regional bicycle systems. The Transportation Commission has recommended a series of bicycle improvements in the downtown, including new bike lanes, shared-use lanes, and multipurpose paths.

Pedestrian mobility is an important part of getting around the downtown. A large percentage of the daily person trips in the downtown are on foot. The Transportation Commission recognizes the need for pedestrians to have a comfortable and safe environment in which to walk. To achieve that goal will require improvements to crosswalks, midblock crossings, sidewalks and through-block connections. Currently there is essentially only one type of intersection improvement in the downtown involving white lines painted on the pavement. Pedestrians know, however, that that is not adequate for all situations. The Transportation Commission recommended designating different types of intersection treatments depending on the surrounding land use, access to transit, along the pedestrian corridor and through the downtown area.

The Transportation Commission took its final recommendation to the City Council in 2014. The Council provided \$800,000 over a two-year period beginning in 2011 to implement some projects. The current CIP budget includes \$5 million over seven years to implement more of the Downtown Transportation Plan projects. The funds will largely go toward pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure improvements. To date 25 spaces of on-street parking have been provided, primarily to serve Old Bellevue businesses and residents. A northbound bicycle lane will be added soon on 112th Avenue NE at NE 8th Street to help get bicycles through the congested intersection. Improvements on 108th Avenue NE at Main Street and NE 4th Street will be brought online soon. The narrow section of the pedestrian corridor to the west of the transit center will be widened and lengthened to reduce the slope and accommodate more pedestrians and bicycle riders.

Ms. Powell asked if consideration has been given to installing a red light camera at Main Street and 108th Avenue NE to address those who simply cut through going southbound. Mr. Kattermann said he would check to see if there are any plans to do that.

Mr. McDonald said the Transportation Commission's recommendation includes revisions to the downtown subarea plan to reflect the strategies developed in the Downtown Transportation Plan. The revision places an emphasis on pedestrians, bicycles and transit

while recognizing that driving is part of the overall mobility strategy.

With regard to the pedestrian/bicycle access issues connecting with the East Main station, Mr. McDonald pointed out that the Transportation Commission identified the intersection of 112th Avenue NE and Main Street for enhanced treatment. The recommendation is for wider crosswalks, wayfinding, weather protection, and special paving or striping to call the intersection out as an important pedestrian space.

Chair Lampe asked if there will be crossings on 112th Avenue NE at both the north and south ends of the East Main station. Mr. Kattermann said there will be a pedestrian crossing with a signal at the south end of the station aligning roughly with the entrance to the Hilton Hotel, but no crossing at the north end of the station. The nearest crossing for the north end of the station will be the intersection of Main Street and 112th Avenue SE.

Ms. Hammond suggested particular attention should be paid to the time allowed for pedestrians to cross at the intersection. There are frequently large crowds walking from the hotel to Meydenbauer Center. She also commented that with more hotel development along 116th Avenue NE, there is increasingly more pedestrian traffic from 116th Avenue NE across I-405 to Main Street.

Ms. Powell noted that the trail is a popular jogging route. The little hillside on the south side of Main Street will be home to a small park. Mr. McDonald said a multipurpose path will be implemented in conjunction with the park and will connect 112th Avenue NE with 110th Avenue NE on the south side of Main Street.

Mr. Breiland pointed out the need for weather protection on the northwest and southwest corners of Main Street and 112th Avenue SE.

Mr. McDonald said the one midblock crossing recommended by the Transportation Commission that is within the watershed of the East Main station is on 110th Avenue NE between NE 2nd Street and Main Street.

Ms. Hammond observed that there is no sidewalk on the west side of 110th Avenue NE at that location. Mr. McDonald said the city will require the construction of standard sidewalks there as a condition of development approval. Development would also be required to contribute to the development of the midblock crossing.

Answering a question from Ms. Hammond, Mr. McDonald said the intent is to reconstruct NE 2nd Street in stages as development occurs and as a condition of development approval. The long-term strategy is aimed at providing capacity on NE 2nd Street in conjunction with access ramps to and from the south on I-405 at NE 2nd Street. Until the new interchange is constructed, the capacity on NE 2nd Street will be available for on-street parking.

Mr. Breiland called attention to the intersection at 110th Avenue NE and Main Street and pointed out that there is currently no crosswalk on the east side. Once the multiuse path

is in place people are going to want to cross there.

Mr. McDonald said the Land Use Code includes standards for sidewalk widths and landscaping treatments. Along 112th Avenue NE and Main Street the standard sidewalk width is eight feet, but the Transportation Commission has recommended two different kinds of landscape treatments. On the north side of Main Street the recommendation is for a continuous planter with street trees, and on 112th Avenue NE the recommendation is for street trees in tree grates. For the south side of the street, the recommendation is for a 12- to 14-foot multipurpose path and planters. The Transportation Commission has recommended a 12- to 14-foot multipurpose path along both sides of Main Street. The slip ramp on the north side of Main Street can hardly be seen because it has grown over, but it is there and offers a good shortcut to 114th Avenue NE.

Ms. Powell said she would like to see identified a way to encourage cycling and pedestrians on 108th Avenue NE, and to allow buses and service vehicles to the degree needed, while discouraging cut-through traffic both northbound and southbound.

Mr. Strunkin said he worked for four years in the Surrey Building at the corner of 108th Avenue NE and Main Street. He said crossing the intersection at dusk was always dangerous. Something should be done to improve safety there. Mr. Breiland agreed and said the LED lights at 106th Avenue NE and Main Street have improved safety at the intersection dramatically.

Mr. McDonald said the city has plans to engage in a corridor study of Main Street between 108th Avenue NE and NE 12th Street. The focus will be on trying to accommodate all those who use the roadway without widening the road.

6. TRAFFIC DATA

Associate planner John Murphy shared with the Committee a map indicating existing conditions in Surrey Downs and Bellecrest. The map indicated the traffic calming elements constructed in the area over the past 30 years, where speed and volume studies have been conducted over that same period of time, and the location of the speed and volume studies that were started in April 2014. In addition, the map indicated the residential parking zones existing in the area, and the traffic volumes for each of the five entrances into Surrey Downs as of June 2012.

Ms. Hammond commented that the collector/arterial designation given to 108th Avenue SE seems to imply that the cut-through traffic that so often uses the roadway belongs there. Mr. Murphy said the roadway is unique. It is designated as a collector/arterial but also has a 25 mile per hour speed limit. There has for a long time been interest on the part of the neighborhood toward having things like speed humps on 108th Avenue SE. The city, however, must balance the desires of the neighborhood against the need to provide for emergency access. There is no through movement from north of Main Street to 108th Avenue SE southbound, and that restriction will remain even with the addition of a new bicycle facility.

Mr. Murphy said there is a median across the center of the roadway at 110th Avenue NE to restrict movement into the neighborhood for those traveling toward Old Bellevue on Main Street, and to maintain right turns only for those coming out of the neighborhood onto Main Street. The restriction was imposed in part due to concerns about cut-through traffic into Surrey Downs.

A motion to extend the meeting to 6:15 p.m. was made by Ms. Powell. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammond and it carried unanimously.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Powell, Mr. Murphy said the work program includes taking a look at what will happen to 108th Avenue SE once SE 1st Place and SE 4th Street get closed off.

The Committee was reminded that on 108th Avenue SE there are medians and entry treatments located at the entrances to the neighborhood off of Bellevue Way. Those were done in the 1980s. Some of the landscape medians were created through the Neighborhood Enhancement Program in the 2000s. There are five speed humps along 108th Avenue SE and a series of pavement markings that denote the 25 miles per hour speed limit. There are no speed humps within the Surrey Downs neighborhood itself, nor are there any sidewalks.

Speed and volume studies have been done all along 108th Avenue SE. Mr. Murphy indicated his willingness to share the specific numbers with the Committee upon request.

Ms. Powell noted that it has been eight years since the study was done in the northern part of Surrey Downs. The primary speeding problems on 109th Avenue SE are occurring between SE 4th Street and SE 1st Street. Mr. Murphy said the studies that have been done have been focused on areas raised as concerns by the neighborhoods. The presence of the East Main station will attract people, including those from the neighborhoods. While there remain avenues that can be explored to keep speeding and cut-through traffic to a minimum, there is little else that can be done relative to physical measures based on the city's current guidelines. Mr. Kattermann added that the consultant's scope of work includes researching what other jurisdictions have done.

Mr. Murphy said there are currently three points along 108th Avenue SE for which speed and volume data is being collected during the months of April and October. Relative to the streets into and out of the neighborhoods, SE 2nd Street currently has the highest volume, and SE 1st Place has the lowest. Both 110th Avenue SE and SE 11th Street have roughly similar counts.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Hammond, Mr. Murphy said the best way to determine the amount of cut-through traffic is through the use of cameras. Ms. Hammond commented that the count of 632 on SE 2nd Street represents more than two cars per day per household for every home in Surrey Downs, which would seem to indicate some level of cut-through traffic.

Mr. J. King observed that the kiss and ride facility associated with the East Main station could trigger some traffic backups on 112th Avenue SE, and drivers may choose the easy alternative of 111th Avenue SE. If that can be regulated in some way, it would be in the interest of the Surrey Downs neighborhood.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

8. ADJOURN

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.