

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

April 14, 2015
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-108

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Christie Hammond, John King,
Scott Lampe, Jim Long, Erin Powell, Bill Thurston

MEMBERS ABSENT: John D'Agnone, Danny Rogers, Alexander
Strunkin, Pamela Unger

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Kattermann, Department of Planning and
Community Development; Phil Harris, John
Murphy, Stacy Cannon, Kate March, Department of
Transportation; Adam Parast, Transpo

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

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

Chair Lampe called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

A motion to approve the March 24, 2015, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Long. The motion was seconded by Mr. Breiland and it carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

3. PROJECT UPDATE, REVISED LAND USE REDEVELOPMENT
PRINCIPLES, PUBLIC COMMENT

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann called attention to Attachment 2 of the packet and reviewed with the Committee the additions and deletions made to the redevelopment principles for the East Main station area. He noted that Mr. King had suggested deletion of the third bullet item under "Draw people who work and live in the area..." because as drafted it gives the impression that retail will be allowed only in the northwest corner. Mr. Kattermann proposed replacing the bullet with a new one reading "Create an appealing design and mix of retail and pedestrian-oriented uses radiating from the northwest corner of the redevelopment areas along 112th Avenue SE and Main Street." The proposed wording gives an emphasis to retail in the northwest corner without limiting retail to that area only.

Ms. Powell commented that the new Red Lion property owner is poised to develop on a faster timeline than the Hilton site and as such retail could radiate out from that area. Mr.

Kattermann said the 112th Avenue SE/Main Street intersection will certainly be the most visible and the Committee should be clear about indicating what it wants to see occur there.

Speaking for the Bellevue Club, Mr. Thurston said it will not matter which property decides to redevelop first. Once the code adjustments are in place, those ready to redevelop will do so. The entire redevelopment area, however, should be viewed singularly and the principles should not include language that might limit redevelopment to starting in just one area.

Ms. Powell suggested the Surrey Downs people would be concerned about a mix of retail and pedestrian-oriented uses radiating down Main Street. Mr. Kattermann clarified that the radiating would be toward the east of 112th Avenue SE, not to the west. Ms. Powell proposed making that very clear in the sentence.

Mr. Long referenced a memo received from a local resident regarding redevelopment of the area. He noted that the individual believes having retail along the east end of Main Street would enhance the appeal of walking down to the East Main station. The person also expressed a desire to see Main Street maintained with only two lanes and a turn lane with some on-street parking.

Mr. Kattermann said the character of the south side of Main Street is something that certainly will change due to the construction of the light rail line. The north side will change as well when that area redevelops. In terms of land use and redevelopment, the Committee will not be talking about the area to the west of 112th Avenue SE on Main Street, but will be talking about the street itself. The paragraph in question is focused on the land use that would be to the east of 112th Avenue SE and south of Main Street. He allowed that the proposed language, however, was creating confusion rather than offering guidance and suggested that it should simply be deleted. There was agreement on the part of the Committee members.

Mr. Breiland called attention to the fourth bulleted item under "Be complementary to the neighborhood..." and suggested deleting the word "views." He pointed out that there are varying perspectives as to what constitutes a view and to incorporate the word would simply be to invite controversy. The Committee members concurred.

4. TRANSPORTATION ITEMS FOR OPEN HOUSE

Senior planner Philip Harris noted that preparations are under way for the upcoming open house on April 28, and the online open house that will go live on April 20. At the event the public will be asked to comment on what they would like to see studied and analyzed as the project is moved forward.

Mr. Harris said the topics discussed by the Committee at its March 10 meeting will be used to generate comments from the public. The closure of 112th Avenue SE will definitely restrict access for residents of Surrey Downs, both by vehicle and as

pedestrians. There are also concerns about rail riders parking in the residential areas, increased traffic on 112th Avenue SE, and possibly increased traffic on the residential streets. The redevelopment area to the south of Main Street and east of 112th Avenue SE currently is home to commercial uses and lacks a street network; redevelopment could potentially bring in new streets, new sidewalks, and new land uses.

The public will be asked to offer suggestions for ways to improve safety and access to, from and within the residential areas. Suggestions for ways to improve safety for those going to and from the station will also be sought.

Pedestrian access across the light rail line is another concern. With the closure of access from 112th Avenue SE, the only pedestrian access to the neighborhood will be at the new park over the tunnel portal at the intersection of Main Street and 112th Avenue SE. The Committee and the public have both asked if another way of getting across the tracks to the south of Main Street could be identified. Mr. Harris said staff intends to analyze the options but cannot make any promises that a crossing will be built.

Chair Lampe asked what factors will be analyzed. Mr. Harris said cost certainly will be a factor, along with the pros and cons of providing additional pedestrian access to and from the residential areas. Other factors include where such a facility should be located and what it would look like. Any crossing of the tracks will require input from Sound Transit.

Mr. Thurston asked if pedestrian access could go under the tracks. Mr. Harris said anything is possible but cost and other factors would need to be taken into consideration. Such a facility passing under the tracks would need to be designed and completed ahead of construction of the rail line.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Powell, Mr. Harris said there is an existing crosswalk on 112th Avenue SE at SE 6th Street. It might make sense to consider a pedestrian crossing of the track at or near that location.

Mr. Breiland pointed out there is also pedestrian access in the vicinity of SE 1st Place on 112th Avenue SE. It is currently blocked, however.

Associate planner John Murphy said staff have gauged the tenor of the comments heard from the Committee to date and is formulating questions and ideas to test with the public. The Committee has been informed that along 112th Avenue SE, SE 1st Place and SE 4th Street will be closed to cars, bicycles and pedestrians, along with the current vehicular and pedestrian access to the park, but that may be new information to the public. The open house will provide the opportunity to educate the public about those upcoming changes and to ask them what that will mean for them relative to access within the wider station area. The park is going to be downgraded to more of a neighborhood facility, parking will be decreased, and the ball fields will be removed.

Mr. Murphy said staff has collected some newer data relative to traffic counts in and out

of the neighborhood. The new data will enable staff to look at the wider station area in terms of what the redevelopment scenarios could mean for traffic generation and access. He shared the data with the Committee and pointed out that on average 276 vehicles per day come into and out of SE 1st Place, and an average of 461 vehicles come in and out of SE 4th Street. With those entrances closing, that traffic will need to utilize one of the other three neighborhood entrances.

Ms. Hammond commented that since the last Committee meeting she had given thought to traffic flow into 108th Avenue SE from Main Street. She suggested the access issues for the neighborhood actually begin much farther north. Traffic getting off of I-405 headed for the neighborhood is forced to go through the downtown due to the prohibition against turning left onto 112th Avenue SE, though carpools can turn on SE 6th Street. With the closure on 112th Avenue SE, the traffic that would have entered the neighborhood will have to pass through the downtown. Mr. Murphy said the current restrictions at Main Street and 108th Avenue SE and 110th Avenue SE relate to traffic coming from the downtown. Those on 108th Avenue SE to the north of Main Street who might have been forced to travel into the downtown cannot get across Main Street because of the restriction.

Mr. Murphy added that while the areas north of Main Street are outside the purview of the Committee, it will be worth making the point when the recommendation is forwarded to the Council. All of the streets clearly work as a system and need to be addressed accordingly.

Mr. Murphy said the current restrictions at Main Street and 108th Avenue SE and at Main Street and 110th Avenue SE have been discussed often by the Committee. One of the things the wider public should be asked to comment on making the current approach either more or less restrictive. A less restrictive approach could increase access into the neighborhood, but with that greater access could come more cut-through traffic.

Ms. Hammond pointed out that there are currently no left-turn signals on Main Street; traffic turning left must yield. The amount of traffic on Main Street and the fact that it backs up to and beyond 108th Avenue SE at peak times would seem to argue in favor of having left-turn signal; a signal for left turns from Main Street to 108th Avenue SE is needed to accommodate cars, and a left-turn signal from 108th Avenue SE onto Main Street is needed to accommodate pedestrians.

Ms. Powell pointed out that the through restriction on 108th Avenue SE is often ignored. She said it would be interesting to know what percentage of cars simply do not obey the restriction. Mr. King said the problems are going to be aggravated as the closures on 112th Avenue SE are put into play.

NOTE: The CAC approved the minutes of the April 14, 2015, meeting on May 26, 2015, including the following partial transcript (in italics) from time stamp 51:07 to 55:20.

Time Stamp: 51:07 – begin transcript

Ms. Hammond – *You know I was thinking about it and wonder about what everybody else thinks. I think it's really turning from Main Street onto 108th. I don't think, let me think about that. No, if you're on 108th trying to turn onto Main Street, it doesn't seem to me like it's too, like it's not, like it's difficult to do that. But if the straight through restriction comes off that may, that may change that picture.*

Ms. Powell – *But the straight, I would love to know what the degree of problem with the law occurs, is it? I mean I don't know if it's 1 in 4 blows through, or, and I'm sure it goes on throughout the day, because traffic on 108th is getting pretty, pretty bad.*

Mr. Lampe – *Just my own observation because I walk that a lot.*

Ms. Powell – *Yeah, I see you walking.*

Mr. Lampe – *Yeah, and I see occasionally someone go through, but it's actually I would guess maybe 10% at most.*

Ms. Powell – *And I would disagree with that respectfully because I've been almost hit twice {**Mr. Lampe** – sure} and my husband has been almost hit twice. I've almost been hit as a pedestrian as well as a driver. {**Ms. Hammond** – numerous times}. And I think it's the, you know, the 4 to 6 window in the afternoon, and then kind of in the morning but especially in the 3 to 6 or 3 to 7 that's when it happens a lot, I think.*

Mr. Murphy – *So is the concern more about pedestrian safety at the intersection itself or is it also increased traffic in the neighborhood.*

Ms. Powell – *Both. Increased traffic and increased safety for pedestrians. Because people are in a hurry and they want to get to I-90 to they're going to blow through the neighborhood. And I mean pedestrians and also cars.*

Mr. King – *But this is going to become definitely more aggravated as the closures are made (Powell – yeah) on 112th and I think it requires imagination not just to think how bad it is now and may be getting, but how much worse it will likely be on 108th when the other side of Surrey Downs is sealed off.*

Ms. Hammond – *You know what? I think that I would say the left turn signal is important from Main Street for the car. I would say that the left-hand signal from 108th is important for the pedestrians. I have had difficulty crossing Main Street at that intersection on numerous occasions when I clearly had the walk light. But, and actually the only time that I actually saw somebody stopped by a police officer was when somebody cut in front of me and almost hit me and there happened to be a police officer right there. And, but so often pedestrians get cut off at those intersections.*

Mr. King – *You were attempting to cross Main Street?*

Ms. Hammond – *Main Street, yeah.*

Mr. Parast – *This was southbound turning left or southbound turning right?*

Mr. Breiland – *It's both.*

Ms. Hammond – *It is both, yeah, it's both. But my experience has been the southbound turning left, but that doesn't mean it isn't just as much the other way.*

Mr. Breiland – *My only concern is that when you put left the turn arrows on at the cycle, the time that it takes the light to cycle through goes up and I wait there, I don't know how much of my life I've wasted waiting at that intersection. It's just I'd prefer that those lights be as short as they can. So it's something I walk through twice a day.*

Mr. Murphy – *This gets back to the opportunity to educate the public as well on some of these trade-offs.*

Time Stamp: 55:20 – end transcript

Ms. Powell commended the city for installing the new bicycle safety measure on 108th Avenue SE to the north of Main Street.

Mr. Murphy said another issue proposed to be addressed as part of the open house will be whether or not the residential parking zones should be expanded, or new zones created, given the possibility of an increase in hide and ride parking in the neighborhood. Additionally, the public could be asked to comment on the use of traffic calming measures in the neighborhood to reduce speeds and discourage cut-through traffic, and whether or not some of the internal neighborhood streets should have sidewalks.

Ms. Powell said it would be very helpful to know where those attending the open house in person or online actually live. Mr. Murphy said a sign-in sheet is used at city open house events that includes an address and how they heard about the event. Direct mailers will be sent out to an area just a bit larger than the station area.

Ms. Powell said she would not be surprised to see people choosing to park their cars at the park and walk to and get on the train. Some restrictions on parking at the park should be explored.

Mr. Harris reminded the Committee members that several scenarios for the redevelopment area have been discussed. The impact resulting from the different scenarios relative to traffic is being estimated and will in time be shared with the Committee.

With regard to pedestrian/bicycle projects, Adam Parast with Transpo said projects have been identified that were either discussed previously by the Committee or called for in the pedestrian/bicycle plan.

Ms. Hammond called attention to the section of Main Street between 108th Avenue SE and 106th Avenue SE and said the sidewalk is a concern. There is no sidewalk at all in places, and where there is it appears the business have over time encroached, leaving only a very narrow area in which to walk.

Mr. Parast said clearly there is a need to have a good linear corridor for pedestrians and cyclists running east and west along Main Street. Additionally, the shoulder on Main Street crossing I-405 is in need of improvements and should be connected to the Eastside rail corridor. Improvements are also needed on 109th Avenue SE, and a crossing of the light rail tracks along 112th Avenue SE has been identified.

Mr. Thurston noted that suggestions have been made about running a street through the center of the Bellevue Club property, an approach that would be problematic, particularly from a safety standpoint. Improved connections to and from the site would be welcomed, particularly pedestrian and bicycle access across I-405. Mr. Parast said the connection through the property may be for pedestrians and bicycles only and not for cars.

Chair Lampe commented that there will be a clear need for good pedestrian access to and from the redevelopment area. In the Surrey Downs neighborhood, however, access should largely be for those who live there.

Ms. Powell stressed the need to have good bicycle lanes running along Main Street, particularly over I-405. Ms. Hammond agreed and pointed out that while technically possible, crossing the freeway on SE 4th Street is very dangerous for bicycles. Mr. Breiland agreed that Main Street offers the best and safest crossing.

Ms. Powell suggested some public education would be in order to let people know that riding bicycles on sidewalks in Bellevue is permissible. If people realized they could do that, it is possible that fewer bicycle-specific facilities would be needed. Mr. Harris said one of the things that has been proposed for the south side of Main Street between 110th Avenue SE and 112th Avenue SE is a widened multipurpose path.

Chair Lampe said it would be useful to know how many light rail riders might be expected to have bicycles with them. Mr. Harris said he would check with Sound Transit to see if they have pertinent information relative to the Central Link line. Mr. Parast said a surprisingly large number of riders on Community Transit's Swift Line actually ride bikes to the bus. He said the Central Link system has the ability to accommodate two bicycles per car.

Ms. Breiland said he suspected most who ride their bikes to take the train will choose to leave them at the station rather than take them with them on the train.

Mr. Kattermann said at the open house the public will be asked questions about the four redevelopment scenarios for the properties on the east side of the 112th Avenue SE. He briefly reviewed for the Committee members the redevelopment scenarios, the drawings that will be presented, and the questions that will be asked.

Mr. Harris reminded the Committee that there will be a shortened meeting just prior to the open house on April 28.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 6:07 p.m.