

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

June 9, 2015  
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-112

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christie Hammond, John King, Scott Lampe, Jim Long, Erin Powell, Danny Rogers, Bill Thurston, Pamela Unger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Breiland, John D'Agnone

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Kattermann, Department of Planning and Community Development; Stacy Cannon, Phil Harris, John Murphy, Hu Dong, Shuming Yan, Department of Transportation; Adam Parast, The Transpo Group; Dan Bertolet, VIA Architects

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Lampe.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Unger. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thurston and it carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the May 26, 2015, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Long. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammond and it carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, referred to her comments in the minutes of the May 26, 2015, meeting and stated that while she did support the comments made by Mr. Pardoe she had gone on to praise citizens who take the time to come to meetings and make in-depth and well thought out comments and that they should be given more than three minutes to speak. She noted that the employment and household projections have been revised and suggested the Committee should ask to see the most recent information. Some of the forecasted traffic numbers appear to be unrealistic, particularly along 112th Avenue SE which actually decrease even in light of development in the downtown, the city's population increasing, and tolling coming to the freeways. The traffic numbers that were given to the Committee for the Surrey Downs and Bellecrest entrances were for the PM peak period only, not for the big picture; the numbers may be averaged but the Committee should seek clarification. The point is there is a lot of traffic coming but the numbers presented to the Committee are quite rosy. The Committee should ask to see the

raw data to make sure the figures truly accurately reflect reality.

### 3. PRESENTATION OF ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC MODELING ANALYSIS AND ACCIDENT DATA

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann reminded the Committee members that in doing traffic modeling work certain assumptions are made. One assumption made in the work done to date has to do with the existence of 114th Avenue SE; the roadway currently exists and is anticipated to exist into the future. Models typically include any projects that are reasonably foreseeable and the in case of I-405 there is a future widening project in the funding package being considered by the state legislature. If approved, the first phase widening of I-405 could occur within the planning horizon of 2035, making it a reasonably foreseeable project. The first phase of that project, however, would take out a part of 114th Avenue SE, decreasing it to a single lane, likely southbound. The roadway serves to feed a lot of traffic out of the downtown and reducing it to a single lane could potentially impact the redevelopment area to the east of 112th Avenue SE. Before the next level of modeling is done for the preferred recommendation, it will be necessary to get a better handle on the ramifications.

Ms. Hammond said she understood that NE 4th Street is not within the purview of the Committee, but the absence of a left turn from NE 4th Street coming off of I-405 onto 112th Avenue SE does affect accessibility to the neighborhood. Mr. Kattermann said that is included in the modeling work that is under way, as is the notion of left-turn arrows at the intersection of 108th Avenue SE and Main Street.

Ms. Powell commented that the suggestions previously made about putting 108th Avenue SE and Main Street on a road diet does not sync with the suggestion to include a left-turn lane from Main Street onto southbound 108th Avenue SE. Mr. Kattermann said the modeling work will inform whether or not doing so would help or hurt in terms of access and through traffic. Ms. Powell said she found Mr. Pardoe's presentation intriguing in terms of livability for the Surrey Downs and Bellecrest neighborhoods and encouraging a street-level experience.

Ms. Hammond pointed out that no recommendations had yet been made regarding either Main Street or 108th Avenue SE. She urged exploring all options before reaching any conclusions. She also suggested the Committee should have a discussion about when its recommendations should be made to the Council in order to have the most impact.

Mr. Kattermann said the Committee is not tasked with recommending a specific detailed reconfiguration of the 108th Avenue SE/Main Street intersection. The Committee should, however, comment on how the intersection should function in terms of safety and access.

Ms. Unger asked if the proposed road diet would open options for 110th Avenue SE to permit better access into and out of Surrey Downs without increasing traffic on 108th Avenue SE. Mr. Kattermann said that will be considered.

Senior planner Philip Harris called attention to the list of principles spelled out in Attachment 7 of the packet. He asked the Committee members to read them over and come to the next meeting ready to provide comments on them. He also noted that Attachment 8 focuses on the 2009 conceptual design project involving Main Street and NE 2nd Street that included reducing Main Street to a three-lane cross section and also allowing for on-street parking and wider sidewalks. At the time the concept was developed all decisions regarding light rail were still in the air and the Council was opposed to losing any traffic capacity on the arterial streets in the downtown area, so the concept was shelved. Now that the rail alignment is fixed, the situation has changed somewhat and transportation staff will be looking at some of the corridors in the downtown, including Main Street. The Committee could make a non-specific recommendation regarding what should happen generally with Main Street as a way of influencing the staff's work when it gets under way later in the year.

Ms. Powell said it seemed to her that the argument could be made that the location of the East Main station could encourage putting Main Street on a road diet to embrace transit-oriented development that relies less on cars and less on funneling traffic through the border streets into the neighborhoods and more on walking, biking and transit. Mr. Harris said the 2009 concept for Main Street included a widened path on the north side of the street, but as things have changed the idea of including a widened path on the south side of the street has come up. The recommendations of the Committee will be taken into consideration.

Transportation modeler Hu Dong explained that in addition to the intersection level of service calculations, a sensitivity test was run to see how the levels of service responded to the traffic changes. A fundamental assumption made in the sensitivity test is that people will have the same travel behaviors relative to mode.

Overall, the updated baseline volumes on 112th Avenue SE increase a little bit and decrease a little bit on 114th Avenue SE. For all other areas away from the redevelopment area, the volume changes are minimal. Under the midrise scenario, the biggest volume changes relative to the baseline are on 112th Avenue SE and 114th Avenue SE.

Mr. Dong confirmed for Ms. Powell that the figures all relate to the PM period.

Ms. Unger noted that the Committee had previously discussed what happens along 108th Avenue SE as high school students arrive at the school and the need for an analysis of traffic between 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Transportation forecasting manager Shuming Yan said generally the worst hour is between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. though congestion often lasts longer than a single hour depending on location. The modeling work is focused on the worst case scenario, which is the PM peak hour. Ms. Unger said parents begin to pick up their kids from the school around 2:30 p.m. and that activity impacts 108th Avenue SE. There is more than one worst case scenario that should be factored in. Mr. Yan said the request of the Committee to expand the scope has not been forgotten,

but the work in the current phase is focused on what is most critical. He stressed that the volume changes on 108th Avenue SE is not significant between the scenarios. The impact of the high school on traffic is significant but it is not related to redevelopment and as such is a separate issue.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Thurston, Mr. Dong explained that the updated volume numbers resulted from additional analysis. Mr. Kattermann said the numbers previously presented were based on running a macro model that is less refined in terms of individual segments and intersections and which simply distributes the traffic on the network. The new modeling work was more refined in that it looked at individual intersections and took into account how traffic moves under certain circumstances. The result was a redistribution of the traffic on the system.

Ms. Powell asked what assumptions were changed to get the updated numbers. Mr. Dong said the latest modeling was based on the Synchro model which involves signal timing optimization and which yields more detailed intersection data. Mr. Kattermann stressed that the model does nothing to change the background traffic numbers and focuses only on the traffic added under the various scenarios. According to the model, trips added from the redevelopment area will not add as much to 108th Avenue SE as it will to 112th Avenue SE. Ms. Powell said it would be foolish to proceed on the assumption that development in the downtown and elsewhere will not affect the whole area in terms of traffic. That is why there needs to be a clear picture of the collective impact.

Mr. Yan commented that over the past 20 years employment in the downtown has roughly doubled, and population figures have substantially increased as well. The historical traffic counts on 108th Avenue SE, however, have remained fairly stable. In part that explains why the new modeling work does not show much traffic from the redevelopment area using 108th Avenue SE.

Mr. Dong said level of service is categorized on a scale of A to F, where LOS A is free flowing traffic and LOS F is highly congested. He shared with the Committee a diagram showing the intersection levels of service under existing conditions and noted that two intersections are LOS E and others are LOS D or better. He noted that under the 2035 baseline scenario there were three LOS F and three LOS E intersections. Under the 2035 midrise scenario, there were four LOS F intersections. Under the highrise scenario, there were even more LOS F intersections.

Mr. Dong said there are planned projects on the books that will improve traffic flow. Among them is the NE 2nd Street widening project and the NE 6th Street extension to 116th Avenue SE. While planned, those two projects are not included in the model. Given options, some of the traffic would divert. Additionally, the city has effective travel demand management strategies which cannot be directly modeled. That is why sensitivity testing is conducted. Sensitivity testing can make the assumption that traffic volumes will decrease by set percentages based on various actions. Reducing traffic volumes through utilizing transportation demand management techniques by ten percent

would reduce the number of LOS F intersections to two; reducing traffic volumes by 20 percent would result in reducing the number of LOS F intersections to only Main Street and 112th Avenue SE. Additionally, adding to that intersection a southbound right turn from 108th Avenue NE and/or northbound right turn from 108th Avenue SE could result in improving the intersection to LOS E.

Ms. Hammond pointed out that the intersection of Bellevue Way and 108th Avenue SE is LOS E under current conditions and remains LOS E under each scenario. She said the question should be asked why that is the case. Mr. Dong said it is clear that the development within the area the Committee is concerned with simply does not have an impact on that intersection. Mr. Harris added that the historical traffic numbers along 108th Avenue SE indicate the traffic patterns have not changed much over time.

Mr. Thurston asked how traffic volumes could remain about the same over the 20-year period in which employment in the downtown doubled. Mr. Dong said driving behavior has changed. More commuters are choosing transit, online shopping is reducing the number of trips to the mall, the number of people who work from home has increased, and a growing number of people have chosen not to even own a car. Mr. Kattermann added that the traffic model baseline assumes having the light rail system in place and operational. If that were not the case, the numbers would likely be a little higher.

Ms. Powell asked if the model includes traffic from the development to the west of Bellevue Way in Old Bellevue. Mr. Dong said it is all included in the baseline figures.

Answering a question asked by Mr. King, Mr. Kattermann said the downtown is broken into 43 geographic units and for each there is a certain amount of growth that is assumed. The model does not factor in each individual building or parcel; rather it works with aggregate figures.

Mr. Yan thanked Mr. Dong for his modeling work. He said it is relatively easy to determine what will happen if people continue to do things as they have always done, but it is far more difficult to calculate the effect of changed habits or circumstances. Additional growth is projected for the downtown, but it can be expected that traffic flow will remain about where it has been for many years. In part that is due to the city's package of mitigation measures.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Rogers regarding the level of service lettering of intersections, Mr. Dong explained that they are based on the standards included in the Highway Capacity Manual. Each letter grade is based on total delay. Mr. Kattermann said cities use the ratings to measure the relative functionality of intersections. The standards deemed to be acceptable are policy decisions approved by the City Council. In Bellevue, the standards are different in different areas of the city. Any development that violates the standard triggers mitigation in order to achieve the standard.

#### 4. VIACITY ANALYSIS AND TRAFFIC CALMING RESEARCH

Adam Parast, consultant with The Transpo Group, said he reviewed the traffic calming programs of four different cities - Redmond, Salt Lake City, Palo Alto, Montgomery County to the north of Washington D.C. - to understand their policies and procedures. The research included looking at programs such as education, encouragement and enforcement, as well as engineering measures. More research is yet to be done around kiss and ride facilities.

Bellevue has a robust traffic calming program that includes a large toolbox of options. Most of the tools being utilized by the four study cities are already in use in Bellevue. Bellevue's guidelines are clear and accessible; other cities offer very technical guidance and less user friendly. Bellevue's approach does a good job of balancing hard thresholds and flexibility; other cities utilize very specific requirements. Many of the programs rely on residents to identify areas where traffic calming is needed; that certainly is the case in Bellevue. The 85th percentile is a common measure used across the various programs to identify the threshold for traffic calming measures. Similarities with other programs include the specific roadway treatments.

The city of Redmond has a two-phase implementation. In the first phase the city engages in encouragement, education and enforcement; physical measures are employed in the second phase if the actions in the first phase do not work to reduce traffic calming. Salt Lake City uses a formula in determining whether or not traffic calming measures should be used; they also consider whether or not a road has sidewalks in deciding if traffic calming measures should be implemented. Palo Alto employs an extension public outreach process; three public meetings are required to be held before any physical measures can be installed. They also identify the high-level objectives of their traffic calming program right up front so they can be universally understood. Montgomery County has very specific requirements around traffic calming and they require a simple majority of local residents to support the implementation of physical traffic calming measures.

Mr. Parast said his research turned up very little around kiss and ride facilities. However, the literature includes some technical guidance that generally recommends locating kiss and ride facilities separate from bus stops and taxi stands to avoid creating conflicts. The guidelines also recommend good line of sight to the station, and identify insufficient kiss and ride capacity as a potential issue for joint use sites such as transit-oriented development above a station or somewhere within the parking lot around the building. Additional research will be conducted.

Ms. Unger asked what the research shows specifically about kiss and ride facility insufficiency. Mr. Parast said there is an equation used to calculate the optimum number of spaces. The equation is based on the number of people getting off the train, train frequency, and some other factors. Dropping people off is usually not the issue; that usually happens pretty fast. Problems with kiss and ride facilities usually center on people waiting for someone to get off a train that has not yet arrived.

With regard to non-motorized facilities, Mr. Parast said projects investigated included

filling in gaps in the sidewalk network, including the trail that goes up to Bellevue High School; a pedestrian bridge from Surrey Downs Park over the light rail line to connect with 112th Avenue SE; an improved network within the redevelopment area under Scenario 3; improvements within the neighborhood; and a pedestrian connection to the private road in the Bellefield neighborhood.

Mr. Parast said the redevelopment area will result in a large increase in the building space within the walkshed of the East Main station. The Main Street corridor will be very important for getting people to and from the station. Addressing the sidewalk gaps will be very important to both Main Street and 110th Avenue NE. The pedestrian bridge from the park will improve access to the station but will do even more to improve access to the redevelopment area. The pedestrian connection in the Bellefield neighborhood would offer only limited benefit.

Mr. Parast said four major improvements were looked at with regard to the bicycle network: an east-west multiuse trail on Main Street between Bellevue Way and the Eastside rail corridor; the multiuse trail to be constructed by Sound Transit along 112th Avenue SE and Bellevue Way between the South Bellevue station and Main Street; improvements to 114th Avenue SE, 112th Avenue SE and 118th Avenue SE to add bike lanes; and improvements to SE 8th Street from roughly 118th Avenue SE to the Lake Hills Connector.

The analysis highlighted the importance of the Main Street corridor for east-west circulation connecting Old Bellevue to the east side of I-405. Additionally, the multiuse trail on SE 8th Street is a valuable connection for getting across I-405. The next step will be to finalize the analysis and create some maps. Other measures, including costs and safety, will be included as well.

Ms. Powell asked if the lack of sidewalks within Surrey Downs proper are also being analyzed. Mr. Parast said the analysis tool takes safety into account for local streets. The lack of sidewalks can be factored in as one measure for the traffic calming program.

Ms. Unger suggested that the residents of Surrey Downs who want to walk to the East Main station will walk whether there are sidewalks or not, so the real issue is not access to the station but safety for pedestrians. Mr. Kattermann said there are means by which safety can be improved that do not necessarily involve sidewalks, and those are the kinds of things the Committee can consider in drafting its recommendation.

Ms. Unger suggested that if the final recommendation suggests traffic calming measures should be implemented where there is a majority of support by local residents, there should also be a recommendation to follow-up two years after light rail goes in if there is not a majority supporting a proposed action.

## 5. DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Kattermann shared with the Committee two pages from the Bel-Red steering

committee that outlined their recommendation. He pointed out that the document is short of detail but long on creating a vision and direction. He suggested the Committee should aim for the same general target, though in some areas more detail may be appropriate. The Bel-Red report was primarily focused on land use whereas the East Main station area planning report will include a combination of recommendations regarding land use and pedestrian/bicycle and roadway improvements.

Mr. Kattermann also provided the Committee with a discussion guide built around the principles previously discussed, including the two new ones for transportation. He said the guide is intended to focus the discussion associated with drafting the recommendation. He noted that additional discussion questions on the remaining principles will be sent out prior to the next meeting, and he asked the Committee members to review the documents and come to the next meeting prepared to discuss them.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Hammond, Mr. Kattermann said the light rail best practices document was included in the notebook as background information. While the document has not been specifically discussed by the Committee, most of the principles actually were derived from that document.

#### 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, thanked Mr. Harris and Mr. Murphy for their excellent responses to her in-depth questions. She noted that the 2055 light rail ridership number from Sound Transit are 0.4 percent of the total number of transit riders. With regard to the redevelopment area, she commented that the focus has been on how to move ahead with rezoning the area and allowing for more growth; nothing has been said about possibly not wanting to do that. It will be difficult for the Committee to make a decision about upzoning the area without taking into consideration what is happening in the downtown as a whole. The Committee should be shown information about traffic modeling for the rest of the downtown and what impacts will result from upzoning the redevelopment area.

#### 7. ADJOURN

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.