

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

July 28, 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, Bill Thurston

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pamela Unger

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Kattermann, Janet Lewine, Planning and Community Development Department; Phil Harris, John Murphy, Stacy Cannon, Paula Stevens, Department of Transportation

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Chair Lampe who presided.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Hammond. The motion was seconded by Ms. Powell and the motion carried unanimously.

With regard to the minutes of the June 23, 2015, meeting minutes, Senior Planner Mike Kattermann noted that he had received an email from Mr. Plummer raising a question about what was stated in the minutes, implying that that the Bel-Red steering committee based some of its decisions on the advisory statement from the light rail permitting CAC. He offered some amended language for consideration.

Mr. King pointed out that on the first page of the minutes the arrival of Chair Lampe should be shown as 4:17 p.m. rather than 6:17 p.m.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Ms. Powell. The motion was seconded by Mr. Breiland and the motion carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, said none of the minutes of the Committee's meetings to date offer a full and complete picture of traffic in the area, specifically in the Bellecrest and Surrey Downs neighborhoods. She urged the Committee members to ask for and

get the full and complete picture. She also noted that the minutes included no substantial discussion about the neighborhood traffic issues and impacts. Information about that topic should be shared and discussed. When the downtown was rezoned in the 1980s, a promise was made to the neighborhoods that along with the upzone would come protections for the neighborhoods from the impacts. The neighborhoods are looking to be protected from the traffic impacts resulting from development in the downtown.

3. PRESENTATION OF HOW PLAN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

Mr. Kattermann explained that there are three types of recommendations that come out of a station area plan: 1) capital projects such as sidewalks, bicycle facilities or roadway changes; 2) code and policy amendments; and 3) other plans and programs, usually things the city already has under way, like residential parking zones, traffic calming, and the Main Street corridor study that will be done for the area. The recommendations from the Committee will be forwarded directly to the City Council for action. The Council can accept the recommendations as submitted and dole them out to the proper authority for implementation; provide additional direction on specific recommendations; or kick them back to the CAC with direction to do a bit more work in some areas.

Code and policy amendments are required under state statute and city code to be addressed by the Planning Commission. The details of any code changes, such as setbacks, landscape requirements, building height and parking requirements, along with any Comprehensive Plan amendments, map or policy changes, will all be addressed by the Planning Commission which will then make a recommendation to the Council for action. The Council hands off specific work program items to the appropriate city department, and those issues often require additional evaluation before being turned into capital projects, which require Council approval and funding.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Rogers, Mr. Kattermann said it typically takes two or three years to get from a recommendation, through the Planning Commission, to final adoption by the Council. The public is involved throughout the process.

4. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF DRAFT VISION STATEMENTS

A. Hide-and-Ride Parking in the Neighborhood

Transportation Planner John Murphy said the issue related to hide and ride parking is whether or not the city should evaluate the potential for implementing a residential parking zone (RPZ) in the portion of the study area where an RPZ does not currently exist, which essentially is the area adjacent to Surrey Downs Park. Aside from doing nothing, the options include creating a new RPZ or expanding an existing RPZ.

Ms. Hammond asked if the different RPZs that are in place have different rules associated with them. Mr. Murphy said RPZs have been implemented over time. RPZ-1 was established in the mid-1980s in anticipation of downtown growth spilling over into the neighborhoods. RPZ-3 was created to address spillover parking from Bellevue High School as well as the downtown, and

RPZ-8 is also tied to the downtown. Each RPZ can have slight differences relative to parking time restrictions.

Answering a question asked by Chair Lampe, Mr. Murphy said RPZ-1 could be expanded southward to include the area in question, but that would create quite a large zone that could result in residents who live toward the south to use their permit to park somewhere near the light rail station. Creating a new RPZ for the area would keep that from happening.

Ms. Powell said she would like to see the Committee explore the time restrictions for the RPZs already in place. The trains will run between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. and the RPZs could be the means by which people are kept from seeking hide and ride options during those hours. Mr. Murphy said RPZs are generally implemented to address spillover parking. Restrictions against parking at any time are usually related to safety concerns. There are not currently any “no parking any time” restrictions in place to address spillover parking but that philosophy could change by the time the East Main area is reviewed for an RPZ.

Mr. Breiland suggested the Committee should direct staff to evaluate either a new or extended PRZ, and as the light rail opening nears verify that the hours are going to be effective for the existing RPZs in the area. If things are not working, tweaking the hours will not be a difficult matter. Mr. Murphy reminded the Committee members that there will be a review of what is driving the spillover parking concern, and that review may frame the hours of restriction. Additionally, an approval from the neighborhoods will be required.

Ms. Hammond said her concern is less about the 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. period and more about making sure the Committee is clear about what it wants to see happen over time. The resources that would be required to conduct a complete review of all that is needed in the short term could be put to better use. She added that unless there is enforcement, it will not matter what the restricted hours are, and said she personally favored creating a new RPZ for the area adjacent to Surrey Downs Park.

Ms. Powell reminded the Committee that the ultimate goal relative to the RPZs is making sure people from outside the neighborhoods do not try to park in the neighborhoods and then ride the train.

Mr. Kattermann said the RPZ issue will have its own process that will involve the neighborhoods. He said the issues raised have been noted and will be raised again as part of the analysis, and those issues are the hours, the process of revisiting existing RPZs in the area, and enforcement.

Mr. Murphy said the other issue related to hide-and-ride parking has to do with the hammerhead area at SE 1st Street and 111th Avenue SE adjacent to the future park. He noted that concerns have been raised about the location being attractive for dropping off and picking up train riders. Drop-off actions could occur quickly, but there is the likelihood of someone arriving early to pick up someone from the train and parking in the area while they wait. The question is whether or not monitoring of pick-up and drop-off patterns there should occur to evaluate possible enhanced enforcement of parking infractions. The area is currently covered by RPZ-1.

Ms. Hammond suggested the monitoring area should include up to where NE 2nd Street joins 111th Avenue SE. Currently many local homeowners park vehicles on 111th Avenue SE and while the streets in Surrey Downs are fairly wide, when there are cars lining both sides of the street it is very difficult for cars to pass each other when driving down the street. Mr. Murphy stressed that the initial focus will be on the conditions at SE 1st Street and 111th Avenue SE. If problems extend beyond that area, evaluations will be done as necessary.

Mr. D’Agnone suggested that the problem will be created in part because of the hammerhead design. A cul-de-sac design would be more user friendly. Another approach would be to create parking stalls and use them as a source of revenue. Mr. Kattermann said the hammerhead design is a requirement of the fire department to facilitate turning trucks around. A cul-de-sac would take more property to construct. The Committee has been clear about wanting to discourage people from using the area for picking up light rail commuters and striped parking would not achieve that goal. The design of the park will be at such a level that people likely will not drive to it to use it. Surrey Downs Park will have some parking associated with it that probably will be used by people from the neighborhood.

Ms. Powell proposed installing bollards to keep cars out of the hammerhead area, and designing them so that they could be removed by the fire department when they need to turn around a truck. Mr. Kattermann said the monitoring will determine how much of a situation exists, after which appropriate measures will be taken. The area will be marked for no parking.

B. Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements Within the Station Area

Senior Planner Phil Harris said over the course of the work of the Committee questions and comments have been raised about the need for ped/bike improvements in the station area. The group has talked about the need for a new crosswalk on the east side of the intersection of Main Street and 110th Avenue SE. There is an existing crosswalk there but only on the west side of the intersection. The Committee has also highlighted the need for a new sidewalk on the west side of 110th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 2nd Street. Also mentioned by the group is the need for improved pedestrian facilities at neighborhood entrances.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Hammond, Mr. Harris explained that the improvements at neighborhood entrances could take the form of ADA ramps, sidewalks where they do not exist, and neighborhood entrance signs.

Mr. Breiland said he would like to see a sidewalk constructed on 110th Avenue SE between Main Street and SE 1st Street. There was agreement on the part of the other Committee members in favor of including a sidewalk there.

Ms. Hammond pointed out that not all of the neighborhood entrances have sidewalks, but added that not all of them need one.

Mr. D’Agnone asked if the notion of adding a traffic signal at the intersection of Main Street and 110th Avenue SE is to allow westbound traffic on Main Street to make a left-turn into the

neighborhood. He added that such a facility would help to balance out the fact that some entrances into the neighborhood from 112th Avenue SE will be eliminated. Mr. Harris said options of that sort have not been precluded. It will be up to the Committee to make a recommendation. Chair Lampe added that providing better access to the neighborhood will benefit local residents but at the same time will make it easier for non-residents to seek hide-and-ride locations.

Mr. Harris said the Main Street study called for in the Downtown Transportation Plan does not have a kickoff date but will be happening. The recommendations the Committee makes relative to Main Street will help inform that process.

Ms. Powell pointed out that currently there is no sidewalk from 108th Avenue SE connecting with the high school. Local residents have for many years been asking for a sidewalk to keep students from having to walk in the street.

The Committee members confirmed their support for a new crosswalk on the east side of the intersection of Main Street and 110th Avenue SE; a new sidewalk on the west side of 110th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 2nd Street; and improvements at neighborhood entrances.

Mr. Harris noted that the Committee had previously discussed calling for a pedestrian bridge over 112th Avenue SE and the light rail tracks roughly in the area of Surrey Downs Park near SE 6th Street. Once the light rail line is constructed, there will be no way for pedestrians to get across 112th Avenue SE unless they walk all the way up to the park near Main Street. Such a facility would improve pedestrian access to the light rail station but would also improve access to places like the Bellevue Club.

Mr. King asked if there would be any downside to having a pedestrian bridge, other than cost. Mr. Harris said a bridge would certainly be expensive to construct. The timing of building the bridge would also be an issue; if not constructed until after the light rail project is completed and operational, Sound Transit likely would raise concerns.

Mr. Long said the bridge is a very good idea. He said there are up to 3500 people working in the area around Bellefield Office Park and the bridge would certainly benefit them.

Ms. Hammond pointed out that there is a bus route serving 112th Avenue SE and many who work at the nearby hotels can be seen daily hopping on buses from the west side of the street. She asked what will happen to the bus service once the light rail project is completed. Mr. Harris said the bus routes will be reconfigured ahead of the light rail opening, but what the reconfiguration will look like is unknown.

Chair Lampe commented that if the pedestrian bridge gets constructed, there will need to be some enforcement carried out to make sure people are not parking at Surrey Downs Park and walking to jobs on the east side of 112th Avenue SE. Given the height of the catenary system, he asked if it would be feasible to look at an undercrossing rather than an overcrossing. Mr. Harris said while an undercrossing would likely be more costly, it is probably feasible. He suggested

what the Committee should do is simply include a recommendation to look at some way for pedestrians to cross the street and the tracks.

Ms. Hammond noted her support for a pedestrian bridge or some other way of getting across the tracks. She said crossing the tracks will simply not be safe unless some provision is made. Mr. Thurston concurred.

Mr. Murphy clarified that there will be crosswalks to facilitate the crossing of 112th Avenue SE. The pedestrian bridge issue is focused on getting across the tracks.

There was general consensus in favor of recommending a pedestrian bridge crossing the tracks in the vicinity of Surrey Downs Park.

Mr. Harris noted that the Downtown Transportation Plan includes ped/bike improvements and other recommendations that involve Main Street, and an upcoming corridor study will also focus on Main Street. Some of the assumptions involved in the previous study conducted in 2009 have changed. For instance, it is now known what the light rail alignment will be, and there has been additional growth.

The Downtown Transportation Plan calls for creating an enhanced crosswalk at 112th Avenue SE and Main Street. It could involve a wider crossing area and a change in paving material. Related to the enhanced crosswalk, the plan calls for enhanced intersection components such as weather protection at the corners. The overall plan generally calls for improving the sidewalk environment.

Ms. Powell said she would like to see a master planning approach taken to ensure coordination of sidewalk and street tree designs for each street.

There was agreement on the part of the Committee members in favor of the general idea of improved sidewalks and planter strips along Main Street in line with the Downtown Transportation Plan.

Mr. Harris asked the Committee to comment as to whether or not facilities should be designed for ease of access by all ages and abilities. He noted that while there are ADA requirements that address access for persons with disabilities, those requirements do not extend to generally designing facilities to be easily used by others, including seniors and children. There was agreement in favor of recommending the practice.

Mr. Harris noted that there will be pedestrian and bicycle routes through the neighborhoods connecting to the light rail station and he asked if safety should be enhanced along those routes by making certain improvements, such as sidewalks or marked pedestrian areas, and signage showing the way to the station. There was agreement to recommend making improvements to enhance safety.

C. Future Look and Feel of Main Street

Mr. Harris asked whether or not Main Street should have a distinct character difference between each street side. He reminded the Committee that the principles for the study included being complementary to the downtown and reflecting the distinction between the downtown and adjoining areas. That could be interpreted as meaning the downtown side of Main Street could have a different look and feel from the residential side of Main Street relative to urban design.

Mr. Kattermann pointed out that Tully's is located on the downtown side of Main Street. It has a wide sidewalk, a bit more landscaping, and tables on the sidewalk. The storefront is oriented toward the sidewalk to draw pedestrians in. On the other side of the street is Baylis Architecture. The sidewalk there is also wide but there is no street front activity. Further to the west there are taller buildings going in and the character there will be different, so the question is whether or not a distinction should be created between side of the street between 108th Avenue SE and 112th Avenue SE.

Mr. Long said making distinctions for each side of the road would be fine but should not necessarily be required.

Chair Lampe said given that one side has commercial uses and the other butts up against a single family neighborhood, and that calls for treating both sides according to their context. That could play out in a number of different ways.

Ms. Hammond said the area between 108th Avenue SE and 112th Avenue SE fronts a neighborhood and the neighborhood side of the street should be different from the downtown side. The downtown side of the street should reflect the general character of what exists on the Tully's site.

The Committee members were asked if Main Street should be a key ped/bike connection between Old Bellevue and the downtown to the light rail station in terms of sidewalk enhancements and bicycle facilities.

Chair Lampe noted that the Transportation Commission is in the process of updating the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan for the city, which will include the Main Street area. He suggested the Committee should simply call for good ped/bike connections.

Ms. Powell said when she bikes she likes to choose routes that include options for getting out of the traffic and onto a sidewalk. The Main Street corridor should be a key bicycle friendly place with plenty of safety features.

Mr. Kattermann said Main Street will be used as a ped/bike corridor given that it provides a direct route from Old Bellevue to the East Main station. The question is to what degree the route should be made inviting and friendly to bicyclists.

Ms. Hammond suggested the whole city should be inviting and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. Mr. Kattermann said while that is true, there are things that can be done above and beyond what has been done in other places to make Main Street a designated bicycle route.

Mr. Harris asked the Committee to comment on the types of design features that should be included on a future Main Street. Ms. Hammond said she would prefer to see wide sidewalks, a landscape strip, street trees, and pedestrian lighting. However, lighting between 108th Avenue SE and where the park will be should be designed to avoid the adjacent single family homes. Mr. Kattermann said pedestrian lighting as a term refers to low-scale lighting options rather than street lights.

Chair Lampe he would be surprised if on-street parking were to be considered for Main Street. Mr. Kattermann said it is possible for some sections. The corridor study will explore that.

Mr. Breiland said he would prefer an Old Bellevue treatment along Main Street rather than the look and feel of Bellevue Way near Lincoln Square. On the south side, there should be wide sidewalks and during part of the day on-street parking. Mr. Thurston concurred.

Ms. Powell said she would like to see taller trees planted along the roadway that will provide adequate shade in the summer months. Ms. Hammond agreed the trees should provide shade for pedestrians on the sidewalk but they should not be so tall as to reduce sunlight on the adjacent single family homes.

Mr. King suggested that outdoor seating and accommodating bicycles on the sidewalks are mutually exclusive. Mr. Breiland agreed and said where the choice has to be made, bicycle safety should trump outdoor seating.

Mr. Kattermann noted that 112th Avenue SE is a very different street and he asked if it should be a key ped/bike connection as well to the light rail station and the redevelopment, and what types of design features should be included.

Ms. Hammond said it should be a given that any street connecting with the station must include ped/bike amenities and safety priorities. She said she would like to see the Main Street feel on the east side of the road but suggested it is too soon to be too specific.

Mr. D'Agnone suggested that 112th Avenue SE is far different from Old Main and will have a different look and feel. There is far more traffic on the road and the speed of the traffic is higher. He said he would like to see a wide planter strip between the road and the sidewalk to buffer pedestrians from the traffic.

Mr. Thurston said the trees planted by the Bellevue Club more than 30 years ago are mature and have been fostered over time. The city came along and planted trees along the sidewalk in addition to the Bellevue Club trees so the area is somewhat overplanted. The roadway needs a consistent approach to landscaping on the east side of the street, offering something like a greenbelt that is pedestrian friendly. Mr. D'Agnone agreed and said the planting strips should be wide enough to accommodate public art.

Ms. Powell commented that wider planter strips may require larger setbacks, all of which could accommodate larger trees.

With regard to the frontage along the east side of 112th Avenue SE beyond the sidewalk, Mr. Kattermann offered some pictorial examples of possible outcomes, including storefronts that are aligned with the back of the sidewalk; a different landscaped setback for residential; building heights that step back on the upper floors; and overall building heights that are lower to a certain distance away from 112th Avenue SE to prevent shadowing of and to preserve privacy for the adjacent residential development.

Ms. Hammond pointed out that the redevelopment area includes opportunities for both residential and commercial. She said she would like to see consistency along the street regardless of land use type to avoid chopping up the redevelopment area into little individual blocks.

Mr. Thurston said the setbacks required for each of the properties in the redevelopment area are distinct from the sidewalk issues. He said his vision for the area is for a beautiful pedestrian friendly commercial neighborhood district. That will require allowing for flexibility to accommodate the geographical difference each property has.

Ms. Hammond said she would like to see any residential development designed to be inviting.

Mr. Kattermann noted that the Committee had previously voiced a preference for reducing building heights closer to the street to create a more pedestrian scale. He reminded the Committee that there currently is a transition zone that applies to the east side of 112th Avenue SE. The transition zone carries with it a requirement to lower building heights and he asked if the restriction should be retained in some fashion.

Mr. Thurston said the information provided in previous meetings to the Committee have made it clear that shadowing is a non-issue even under the worst-case scenarios. Mr. King agreed but said the need to reduce building mass close to the sidewalk should also be considered as an argument for lowering building heights along the street.

Ms. Hammond said those with properties along 111th Avenue SE will be taking the brunt of everything from train noise to visual blight. Everything that can be done should be done to minimize the impacts they will have to deal with. Lower building heights along the street will help in that regard.

5. SCHEDULE

Mr. Kattermann briefly reviewed with the Committee the agenda items for the upcoming meetings.

Ms. Hammond said she was still waiting for the Committee to discuss the capacity a collector/arterial is intended to carry in comparison to what 108th Avenue SE is currently carrying. She also stressed the need for the Committee to be given a complete picture with regard to traffic in the area. Mr. Kattermann said those questions will be addressed in a comprehensive fashion. Transportation staff are working to develop a memo addressing the issues; it should be ready later in August for discussion in September.

Ms. Powell highlighted the need to discuss the degree to which all subarea, Sound Transit and specific area planning efforts are integrated and consistent. She also pointed out that as the downtown continues to develop there will be additional traffic impacts by the Surrey Downs and Bellecrest neighborhoods, particularly as the new apartments open at Bellevue Way and Main Street. Traffic is bad and will only grow worse as Sound Transit begins construction and Bellevue Way closes. Mr. Kattermann said that is part of the work being done by transportation staff. The Committee is not tasked with looking specifically at what will happen as a result of the development at Bellevue Way and Main Street, but the data does need to be included in the model.

Mr. Kattermann said there is the possibility that a second meeting will be needed on September 8. As things stand it looks as though the work of the Committee will not be completed until early in 2016. There was consensus to continue with the regular schedule to see what can be done before scheduling additional meetings.

Mr. Kattermann urged the Committee members to take pictures during the August break of things they think would work well in the station area.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renay Bennett, 826 108th Avenue SE, asked if the Main Street corridor and Downtown Transportation Plan studies were completed. Assistant Transportation Director Paula Stevens noted that only the Downtown Transportation Plan has been completed and has been folded into the Downtown Livability study which has been approved by the Planning Commission and the Council. Ms. Bennett stressed the need to expand the kiss and ride area in light of the fact that people will be dropping off people on 108th Avenue SE. Signage in the neighborhoods directing people to the light rail station could draw even more people into the area; those living in the neighborhood will not need signs showing them how to get there. The Main Street corridor study has not yet been done, and the Downtown Transportation Plan is not yet adopted, so it would not be right to ask the Committee to make a recommendation before seeing those documents completed.

7. ADJOURN

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.