

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

April 8, 2013  
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Robertson and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, and Stokes

ABSENT: Mayor Lee and Councilmembers Davidson and Wallace

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Robertson called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. There was no Executive Session.

2. Oral Communications

- (a) Bill Thurston, President of the Bellevue Club, thanked the Council and the community for their work on the light rail project. He supports the alignment along the west side of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and the Road-Over-Rail option at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street.
- (b) Heather Trescases, Eastside Heritage Center, expressed concerns about the potential impacts of the light rail project on the historic Winters House. She said the cost savings option with an at-grade alignment undermines visitor access by moving the driveway much farther south, almost to the Park and Ride. She recalled computer animations shown during the previous week's Council meeting and said that the view of and from the Winters House will be concrete barriers instead of the current trees and vegetation. She is concerned that the cost savings option puts this historical asset at risk.
- (c) Katherine Nye asked the Council to consider adopting a policy regarding rental houses. She would like regulations to require homeowners who rent out their homes to properly maintain the property. She has taken it upon herself to sometimes sweep in front of the rental homes on her block. She expressed concern about the adverse impact on property values and the quality of the neighborhood. Ms. Nye said a corporation is buying up most of the houses in her neighborhood as rentals. She described unkempt lawns, debris on roofs, and littered sidewalks. Ms. Nye asked the Council to adopt an ordinance to regulate rental homes.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Ms. Nye said her neighborhood is in the vicinity of 140<sup>th</sup> and Kamber Road, near the QFC store.

- (d) Betsy Blackstock thanked the Council for scheduling a public hearing for next Monday on the East Link light rail cost savings options. She expressed concern that the Steering Committee finalized its recommendations on April 5 and plans to present them tonight, however. She observed that allowing staff to present their recommendations tonight excludes consideration of the public input scheduled for next week. Ms. Blackstock said that residents of Surrey Downs and Enatai want to preserve both trench options (Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup>). She noted that a man was hit by a light rail train in Seattle around 5:00 p.m. that day. She said it is not fair to ask residents to pay for a tunnel.
- (e) Robert Rosell spoke regarding the Bellevue Way light rail alignment. He expressed concerns regarding the potential for noise impacts and the loss of views due to sound walls and retaining walls. He said the goal of the Council should be to minimize impacts so that mitigation can be most successful. He opposes lifting the train out of the trench to a surface alignment. He is concerned that the light rail option with the addition of a HOV lane essentially turns Bellevue Way into a highway. He is also concerned about the loss of trees and environmental impacts. Mr. Rosell said that property values in the neighborhood are already plummeting. He encouraged minimum damage and maximum mitigation.
- (f) Alex Zimmerman, StandUP-America, asked the Council who it represents – the government, a private corporation, or the people. He expressed concern that oral communications are not allowed during King County Council meetings. He asked the City Council to try to do something about that and to talk with the County Council and encourage them to allow citizens to speak at their meetings.
- (g) Ralph Guditz said he found out on March 19 that the City closed southbound traffic on West Lake Sammamish Parkway for an eight-month project. He has a development project involving a 24-space underground parking structure and needs to excavate a large amount of dirt. The roadway project is impeding truck access to his site. Mr. Guditz said he spoke to the Council two weeks ago and the Mayor said he would receive a response. Mr. Guditz said he received a call from a staff person, a couple of hours before tonight's meeting, who said he cannot change permits. The permits will irrevocably expire within 90 days. He is willing to delay his project until the public works project is completed if his permits can be extended.

Deputy City Manager Brad Miyake said he would look into the matter and get back to Mr. Guditz.

- (h) Peter Marshall expressed concern that the East Link project State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review did not accurately reflect the qualitative nature of the visual environment after the light rail project. The report characterizes the retaining walls as similar in character to the existing development. The report also inaccurately depicts the

trees along Bellevue Way looking essentially the same as now. Mr. Marshall said the current trees are mature, very tall, and large in diameter. They will be replaced with a decorated wall and/or smaller trees, which will not be anything like the current bluff and stretch of mature trees and vegetation.

- (i) Todd Woosley, an Enatai resident, commented on the East Link project. He recalled the creation of the Central Business District (CBD) plan and the promise that commercial development would not creep into neighborhoods. However, now light rail will be going through neighborhoods and fundamentally changing them. A second promise that has been made and broken relates to the creation of the Regional Transit Authority, which committed to using funds only within the specific subarea generating the revenues. Sound Transit is now directing several hundred million dollars of East King Subarea taxes to pay for light rail in the North Seattle King Subarea. Light rail from Seattle's International District to the Eastside, with the exception of the Rainier Station, is being charged to the East King Subarea, whose boundary is at Mercer Island. Mr. Woosley said the City of Seattle is using a huge boring machine to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct with a tunnel. At the same time, Sound Transit is planning what will be an imposing and ugly transportation system in Bellevue to save money by not building tunnels.

### 3. Study Session

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives

No discussion.

- (b) Report on the Development of the 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update

Deputy City Manager Brad Miyake opened staff's presentation on the 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update process.

Patrick Foran, Director of Parks and Community Services, welcomed Jan Stout and Stefanie Beighle, Human Services Commissioners, and Stephen Miller, Parks Department student intern.

Emily Leslie, Human Services Manager, asked Ms. Stout to provide the Commission's report on the needs update process which will guide 2015-2016 funding recommendations.

Ms. Stout explained that the human services needs update provides information about the demand for services within the community. Two years ago, a major focus of the allocations was recession impacts. An upcoming report will focus on health care reform and how it will potentially affect residents. Additional focus areas will include an analysis of collective impact projects (e.g., Eastside Pathways) and their positive contributions to overall quality of life. The needs update provides a snapshot about the demand for services, changing demographics, and emergent issues. All of the information gathered informs the funding recommendations that the Commission will bring to the Council in the fall of 2014.

Ms. Stout recalled a previous recommendation that staff conduct outreach to diverse populations to gather feedback on the community's health and human services needs.

Commissioner James McEachren, pastor of St. Andrews Church, provided suggestions to staff about contacts within the faith community providing human services. The Commission has hosted focus group discussions with citizens.

Stephen Miller, the graduate student intern, recently spoke with the entire staff at the Kindering Center. The Center has identified the need for more infant and family health services, parenting education in languages other than English, affordable housing for large families, and certificate training programs for respite care workers who assist families with special needs children or other family members. Ms. Stout said the Center also identified the need for dental care and medical needs. A phone survey is conducted as well to gather input and suggestions.

Alex O'Reilly, Human Services Planning Coordinator, said the needs update is conducted every two years to gather information that helps guide the Commission in developing its funding recommendations. Information is collected through phone and online surveys, contacts with faith-based groups, consumers/users, and community leaders in Bellevue and throughout East King County. The final draft of the needs update is expected to be approved by the Commission in late November. The Commission will bring its findings to the Council early next year.

Deputy Mayor Robertson said she is looking forward to seeing the report next year. She thanked the Commission and staff for their extensive work on this program.

Councilmember Balducci thanked staff and the Commission for their work. She commented on how much the community has changed over the past 10 years in terms of demographics and needs. This helps the Council to focus its advocacy and efforts. Ms. Balducci said she is fascinated with the dual language programming in schools. She recalled discussions in past years about children translating for their parents and believes it will be good for the community when more citizens can speak common languages.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Ms. O'Reilly said she presented to The Bellevue Network on Aging one month ago and some of their suggestions have been incorporated into the community conversations. One is outreach to Circle of Friends, a group of Eastern European aging adults.

Mr. Chelminiak said such groups are good resources for the City to determine needs and to get suggestions for how to address the community's needs.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. O'Reilly said the survey of residents reflects a random sample of households including, potentially, those in the newly annexed areas. She said the results can be analyzed by zip code.

Mr. Chelminiak believes it is important to closely monitor the need for transient shelters, whether 24-hour or 12-hour centers. He requested information on car camping in other

jurisdictions. He noted copies in the desk packet of an April 7 editorial in *The Seattle Times* written by a woman on the verge of homelessness. Mr. Chelminiak observed that the article highlights how easy it is to miss people who need help, even individuals who have worked.

Commissioner Stout confirmed that there are thousands of citizens in King County, including the Eastside, in a similar situation (i.e., those who have worked and been responsible but are now homeless or nearly homeless).

Councilmember Stokes commented on the importance of the Human Services Commission's work. He noted the value of the Eastside Pathways program and other connections to education and the school system. He said light rail is bringing a new level of urbanization to the community. He noted his and Councilmember Wallace's involvement in addressing the issue of human trafficking. Councilmember Stokes referred to the City's work on the Downtown Livability study and commented on the role of appropriate human services in maintaining livability.

Deputy Mayor Robertson questioned whether the City and Human Services Commission are looking at human trafficking and considering what could be done with the next budget to protect and assist victims.

Ms. O'Reilly recalled that this came up during the last budget discussions. Staff and certain human services providers have been working with law enforcement, and there have been presentations before the Human Services Commission. A regional training on human trafficking issues for human services providers is scheduled for April 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m., in Bellevue City Hall.

Deputy Mayor Robertson asked Ms. O'Reilly to send information on the training session to Councilmembers.

At 7:22 p.m., Deputy Mayor Robertson declared a short break.

The meeting resumed at 7:29 p.m.

(c) East Link: Joint Steering Committee Recommendation on Cost Savings Options

Deputy City Manager Brad Miyake said the City and Sound Transit have been working together through a collaborative design process to identify potential cost savings for Bellevue's East Link alignment. Discussions will continue through April with a Council decision anticipated on April 22.

Transportation Director Dave Berg said the evening's presentation includes a follow-up from April 1 on Sound Transit's noise analysis and mitigation and on the Bellevue Way HOV lane analysis. Tonight, staff will review the decision process, public involvement, and the joint staff Steering Committee's recommendations.

James Irish, Sound Transit Deputy Director for the Office of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability, provided an overview of Seattle's light rail line. He acknowledged that there were noise issues above federal standards in the Rainier Valley and Tukwila when the system first opened in 2009. These were related to rough rail surfaces, wheel squeal, crossover noise, and bells.

Mr. Irish said Seattle's system is different than the project for Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Rainier Valley's alignment is center running at grade, and the Tukwila alignment is almost entirely elevated. One issue with Seattle's system was that the 1998 analysis of impacts was conducted without knowing the specific operating system and vehicles to be used. Portland's light rail vehicles, which operated at 75 dBA, were used as the basis for that analysis. However, Seattle's system actually operated at 79 dBA when it began operations.

A second issue related to a rough rail surface, which resulted in a whining and howling sound, primarily in the Rainier Valley but somewhat in Tukwila. It was necessary to regrind the entire rail system, including a third time in some areas. The problem has been resolved for East Link and the finished rail surface will be very smooth.

A third issue in Seattle was wheel squeal. Sound Transit has installed solar-powered wayside lubricators on curves of 600 feet or less. All curves 600 to 1,000 feet in radius will be designed to accommodate lubricators in case they are needed later.

A fourth issue related to Rainier Valley crossovers, connectors between two main lines, which cause a noise when there is a gap. Two crossovers in the Rainier Valley were constructed in embedded tracks in concrete and did not include the appropriate noise-reducing switches. Sound Transit was able to modify the switches somewhat for a minimal noise reduction. It has also been necessary to insulate a number of homes. He said there will be a connector on 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue and any noise impacts will be mitigated. Sound Transit is no longer putting crossovers in embedded track because they become essentially impossible to retrofit.

Moving to a fifth issue, Mr. Irish said vehicle warning bells are used at all at-grade crossings and stations. An initial problem in Seattle was that the bells were set by the factory at approximately 86 dBA at 50 feet. Sound Transit has reduced bell level to 80 dBA at 50 feet during the daytime and 72 dBA at 50 feet for nighttime. Sound Transit has also revised its operator rules to reduce the number of bell rings required at crossing and stations. To minimize impacts, wayside bells at pedestrian crossings in the Rainier Valley adjust automatically to background noise. East Link's model is 66.5 dBA at 50 feet, which is approximately 10 dBA above the average ambient noise level along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Mr. Irish said he has heard there have been questions about the mitigation Sound Transit has completed in the Rainier Valley. Sound walls were not considered because the train is center-running at grade. Residential sound insulation mitigates the noise at receivers, and noise impacts are largely to front-line receivers/structures near a crossover and the Mount Baker elevated station.

Mr. Irish said Sound Transit has had an extensive program of residential sound insulation. The agency provided insulation prior to system opening and plan to do the same in Bellevue. He acknowledged that problems occurred after light rail began operating in Rainier Valley, and Sound Transit is still working on mitigating all affected housing units. The typical sound insulation includes replacing windows and doors and providing air exchange units or air conditioning.

Mr. Irish said that, as the East Link project moves into final design and is developed to approximately 60-percent design, a final noise analysis will be conducted to determine mitigation.

Councilmember Balducci said that some Bellevue residents are concerned about the number of residences being insulated in Seattle, especially given the distance of some of the homes from the light rail line, which were never anticipated to need mitigation.

Mr. Irish said Sound Transit insulated approximately 135 residences in the Rainier Valley before light rail began operating and continues to insulate 165 more units, including apartments. He reiterated that the train-related noise is 4 dBA higher than anticipated in the early analysis. The East Link analysis includes the measured noise levels of Seattle's trains and bells. He reiterated that the Central Link crossovers were poorly designed and that will not be repeated with East Link.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Irish said a peer group of representatives from five transit systems has evaluated Sound Transit's Central Link system. The agency has incorporated those lessons into East Link planning.

Deputy Mayor Robertson said a main issue related to the need for residential insulation has been the lack of noise walls in Rainier Valley. She noted that Bellevue's line has sound walls and almost no at-grade crossings, and she questioned the level of sound insulation anticipated by Sound Transit for East Link. Mr. Irish said residential insulation will potentially be needed at certain locations on 112<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Robertson referred to the lower train bells in Seattle at night of 72 dBA at 50 feet. She said Bellevue's Noise Code reflects 45 dBA at night, and she questioned whether the East Link bells will be down to 45 dBA.

Mr. Irish said Sound Transit uses federal criteria, and it is unlikely that the bells would be that low for the full alignment. Ms. Robertson noted her concerns about the appropriate residential noise levels and said she will address her issues with staff.

Ms. Robertson questioned whether Sound Transit could install noise walls before construction begins to mitigate construction noise for residents. Mr. Irish said that has been discussed. Sound Transit was able to do that next to the Park and Ride in Tukwila. However, certain areas along Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup> have noise walls on top of retaining walls, which will have to be built in

that sequence. Mr. Irish said that is something that Sound Transit could address further. Ms. Robertson said she would appreciate that as Sound Transit sequences the construction.

Deputy Mayor Robertson recalled visiting San Diego's rail system, which installed landscaping as segments were completed to mitigate the impacts incrementally.

Councilmember Stokes observed that Sound Transit intends to address noise mitigation proactively in Bellevue to avoid problems that developed in Seattle after the trains began operating. He said Bellevue's alignment includes a substantial amount of vegetation along with retaining walls and sound walls. These factors, along with the design changes to avoid track noise, should have a substantial mitigating factor.

Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Irish said the majority of homes needing insulation in the Rainier Valley are along the street. Relatively few structures farther from the rail line needed insulation.

Mr. Stokes noted that the Bellevue alignment is relatively straight and that Sound Transit has explained how curves will be mitigated. He feels this is a big difference from the Seattle project, and Sound Transit is now aware of these issues.

Councilmember Chelminiak said it would be good to know the number of structures affected. He noted that many structures are apartment buildings, which increases the number of housing units affected. This is different than the primary type of development with fewer residential units along Bellevue's light rail line.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Irish said ground-borne noise is created by vibration. Sound Transit has identified three buildings in Downtown Bellevue with potential ground-borne noise issues. He said this can be relatively easily mitigated.

In further response to Chelminiak, Mr. Irish said if the light rail project requires a substantial change in the roadway, those noise impacts are taken into consideration as project impacts. This concept applies to Bellevue Way if the road is shifted to the west.

Moving to 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Mr. Irish described the SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Emergency Access-only option, Open (right turn in and right turn out) option, and Retained Cut option. He described the 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Road-Over-Rail alternative, noting that it has lower noise impacts with any of the three SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street sub-options than the currently identified alignment. The SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Emergency Access-only option has the lowest overall cumulative noise levels. Noise impacts are highest with the elevated rail in the current/MOU alternative.

Mr. Irish continued with more comments on 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. He described the use of walls, special track work at the crossover, and building insulation to mitigate impacts. He said it might be necessary to insulate windows at the Bellevue Club.



Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Irish said the current level of analysis indicates that the sound walls will effectively mitigate noise impacts for residences. However, the potential gap in the wall at SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street presents a challenge and some insulation might be necessary.

In closing, Mr. Lewis said that Councilmember Balducci and her colleagues on the Sound Transit Board have focused on the lessons learned with the Seattle system, which staff takes very seriously. Sound Transit wants to ensure that impacts are fully addressed earlier in the design process.

Mr. Berg introduced discussion regarding the proposed Bellevue Way SE southbound HOV lane. He was joined at the table by Mike Brennan, Director of the Development Services Department (DSD), and Chris Salomone, Director of the Planning and Community Development (PCD) Department.

Mr. Berg highlighted policies related to Bellevue Way SE including the Southwest Bellevue Subarea Plan, Downtown Subarea Plan, 2003 Transit Plan, and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Berg reminded Council that the South Bellevue Park and Ride will be expanded from 519 stalls to 1,450 stalls with the East Link project. The East Link project includes a southbound HOV lane from the Park and Ride to I-90. City staff is proposing, in conjunction with the light rail cost-savings option, a southbound HOV lane from the Y at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and Bellevue Way to the Park and Ride. This proposal addresses the underlying growth in traffic and draws Enatai cut-through traffic back to Bellevue Way SE. This option involves a City cost share of \$11 million, which is less than the \$18 million estimated to complete the project separately from the light rail project.

Mr. Berg presented Southwest Bellevue travel times anticipated in 2030, with and without the full HOV lane from the Y at Bellevue Way SE and 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. He noted significant savings in travel times with the full southbound HOV lane.

Mr. Berg compared traffic volumes estimated in 2030 with and without the full HOV lane. He said the HOV project pulls traffic out of the Enatai neighborhood onto Bellevue Way. He described additional comparisons of traffic speed and traffic queues.

Mr. Berg outlined the next steps required for HOV lane project implementation: 1) Complete the City's Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) process, including the environmental impact statement (EIS); 2) Adopt the TFP in July; 3) Amend the CIP Plan to fund the project; 4) Prepare the SEPA checklist and other environmental work, and 5) Conduct project-level permitting, including SEPA permitting.

Councilmember Stokes observed that the charts and comparisons indicate a fair amount of transit on the road. He has heard comments that this is not accurate because a number of buses will be eliminated or rerouted with the implementation of light rail.

Mr. Berg said it is hard to know for certain, especially given the funding challenges now and into the future. There will still be transit routes serving the Park and Ride. Some bus routes, like the 550, might become local only with riders connecting to light rail to go to Seattle.

Councilmember Chelminiak expressed concern that adding the HOV lane will attract more traffic to that corridor and increase cut-through traffic into the Enatai neighborhood due to congestion and traffic backups. He believes this is a key issue, how regional traffic will be prevented from going through that neighborhood. With the HOV lane scenario, traffic gets slightly worse at the Y at Bellevue Way SE and 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Berg said it is difficult to say what a normal or typical travel time would be. However, he acknowledged that there are consistent delays along the route to I-90 whether on 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue or Bellevue Way.

Deputy Mayor Robertson observed that the corridor is very congested today. She said the information presented tonight comparing conditions with and without the full HOV lane is helpful. She said it is important to stop cut-through traffic into the Enatai neighborhood. She observed that cut-through traffic is significantly reduced with the full HOV lane.

Ms. Robertson expressed concern about cut-through traffic during the construction of the light rail project and after the Park and Ride triples in size. She suggested putting the PowerPoint presentation on the City's East Link project web page.

Councilmember Balducci said she is opposed to expanding Bellevue Way. She expressed concern about spillover traffic, qualitative changes to the corridor, and the lack of consideration of other alternatives for expediting traffic flow instead of adding the HOV lane. She wants to avoid a double hit of impacts on this neighborhood in terms of light rail project construction and operation as well as the HOV lane project construction and increased long-term cut-through traffic.

Ms. Balducci it is said important to make a decision on the HOV lane project and the Bellevue Way light rail alignment at roughly same time in order to clarify the plan for the community.

Mr. Berg acknowledged that there would likely be a long construction period with both the HOV lane project and the light rail project.

Deputy Mayor Robertson questioned how, if the two projects could be done together, that might work. Mr. Berg said they have talked about expanding the pavement to the west first (which could be used during light rail construction for general purpose traffic), building the light rail project, and then going back to finish the HOV lane.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Berg acknowledged that there will be one lane in each direction on Bellevue Way during parts of the construction period.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Berg confirmed that the HOV lane from the Park and Ride to I-90 is considered Sound Transit's mitigation of the impacts of the expanded Park and Ride facility.

Mr. Chelminiak said the Park and Ride will close for some period of time. The environmental impact statement indicates that two southbound lanes can be kept open on Bellevue Way in the evening without extending the HOV lane to the Y at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. This would be achieved with a reversible lane which would handle northbound traffic in the mornings. Mr. Chelminiak said there will be less traffic with the Park and Ride closed during construction.

Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Berg said it would be necessary to close a lane on Bellevue Way to build the retaining walls for the HOV project.

Mr. Chelminiak said there has been a lot of discussion about the HOV lane as mitigation. However, he observed that it is not. He said the City owes it to residents of Enatai to properly address cut-through traffic. He reiterated his concern about drawing more traffic to Bellevue Way SE which will spill into the Enatai neighborhood.

Mr. Chelminiak said he would like to take the HOV lane project out of the light rail discussion, and to step back and have a broader, more careful discussion with Enatai residents.

Councilmember Stokes said he is trying to cut through the rhetoric to make the best decision. He encouraged focusing on the whole city in assessing the benefits of specific projects. He believes that traffic congestion will continue to increase without the HOV lane. He noted that Bellevue Way SE is a major entrance to the city. He would like to better understand the underlying basis of the HOV lane analysis.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Berg confirmed that staff originally recommended the HOV project, and the Transportation Commission added it to the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP).

At 8:52 p.m., Deputy Mayor Robertson declared a short break.

The meeting resumed at 9:01 p.m.

Staff moved on to present the Joint Staff Steering Committee recommendations on the cost savings options.

Mr. Berg noted ongoing work to analyze, refine and narrow the cost savings options. Staff will be back next week for a public hearing and additional Council discussion. A Council decision is anticipated on April 22, and the Sound Transit Board is scheduled to take action on April 25.

Ron Lewis, Sound Transit, explained that the Joint Steering Committee recommendation is based on the goals of the Collaborative Design Process Management Plan, technical information in the EIS Addendum, and work plan direction to narrow the options and focus on particular areas.

Mr. Lewis described the public feedback received through stakeholder outreach activities. An open house was held the previous week at Bellevue City Hall with approximately 100 attendees, which resulted in approximately 40 written comments. Staff heard strong overall support for the retained cuts on Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, more support for the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Downtown Station, as well as concerns regarding impacts, mitigation and construction. Sound Transit continues its outreach regarding right-of-entry requests and final design scoping. The City will continue its efforts with the community for station area planning.

Mr. Berg described the two options for Bellevue Way. The baseline alignment is a retained cut on the east side of Bellevue Way. The cost saving option shifts Bellevue Way to the west and adds the southbound HOV lane. He recalled that the Council has indicated it would like to minimize the elevated portions of the alignment as much as possible.

Mr. Berg said there will be retaining walls along Bellevue Way SE, with or without the HOV lane. He described the heights of the retaining walls and sound walls with each option. The full HOV lane design includes segments along the alignment with higher retaining walls plus noise walls.

Deputy Mayor Robertson said she was shown graphics the previous week which she believed depicted walls from the Park and Ride south to I-90, and she does not see that in this presentation. Mr. Brennan said he will research that project segment.

Continuing, Mr. Berg said potential retaining wall treatments include vines, plantings, and art work. He noted concerns about the view from Enatai homes and displayed examples of potential views overlooking the station and the Mercer Slough.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Berg confirmed that residents would still have views of the slough and the Cascade Mountains.

Mr. Berg described the Joint Steering Committee's recommendation for shifting Bellevue Way to the west and adding the HOV lane. Key considerations are the cost savings of combining the light rail and HOV projects, benefits of the HOV lane based on the transportation analysis, noise reduction benefits for the corridor, construction efficiencies, and an improvement to the light rail rider experience by smoothing out the different elevations of the alignment. The cost savings option eliminates the risks associated with the trench/retained cut option and reduces maintenance costs.

Moving to 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Mr. Lewis said the cost savings option is the Road-Over-Rail design at SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street, which can be combined with one of three sub-options for SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street. He noted increased costs for the rail trench under SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street sub-option due to property acquisitions. The SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Emergency Access Only option and the Open (Right Turn in/Right Turn out) option each reflect a savings of \$2 million to \$4 million.

Mr. Lewis described conceptual depictions of the design options and neighborhood traffic counts in and around the Surrey Downs neighborhood.

The staff Joint Steering Committee's recommendation is the 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Road-Over-Rail design with the SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Open option. Key criteria and considerations supporting this recommendation are cost savings, urban design, visual character of the corridor, neighborhood access, noise impacts and mitigation, the light rail rider experience, and lower maintenance costs.

Mr. Lewis said staff met with Surrey Downs residents to discuss the Steering Committee's recommendation. However, residents generally continue to prefer the trench option.

Mr. Salomone said that, from an urban design standpoint, the trench/retained cut is a less desirable option because it presents a physical barrier unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclists, blocks the view of Surrey Downs Park from the road, and has maintenance and safety issues.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Mr. Lewis said there are not any structures on 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue that are as close to the alignment as the Winters House on Bellevue Way. However, there are other benefits associated with bringing light rail to grade on 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue in terms of noise mitigation as well as the comfort for riders and maintenance of light rail.

Councilmember Balducci noted traffic counts for Surrey Downs and the significant drop in vehicles going in and out of neighborhood via SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street from 2000 to 2012. Mr. Berg said he did not know the reason for the significant decrease.

Moving to the Downtown Station options. Mr. Lewis described the PE Optimized Station. The second option is the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Station with its principal entrance at the City Hall Plaza and a secondary entrance down at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mr. Lewis recalled previous Council questions about how each station would affect ridership and said the model found a negligible difference. The analysis concluded that both options provide good access for riders.

Noting that ridership estimates are for 2030, Mr. Chelminiak said it would be interesting to see what Downtown development is anticipated by 2030.

Mr. Lewis explained that the Joint Steering Committee recommends the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Station due to potential cost savings, accessibility, lower maintenance costs, reduced operational impacts, urban design opportunities, and the opportunity for SEM (sequential excavation mining).

Mr. Salomone said one principle of urban design is to create desirable public spaces. The NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Station provides the opportunity to create an effective public space between City Hall, the Transit Center, and Meydenbauer Center. This could include incentives related to outdoor cafes, pedestrian walkways, a water feature, and/or other urban design elements.

Mr. Brennan said staff will continue to look for ways to improve the pedestrian experience in the Downtown, regardless of the location of the light rail station.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Robertson, Mr. Lewis said the Optimized PE Tunnel Station option uses a cut and cover technique excavating a larger area and then refilling the dirt and restoring the street surface. Sequential excavation mining (SEM) possible with the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street option involves reduced dirt removal and minimal surface disruption. The technique has been used in Downtown Seattle.

In further response to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Lewis confirmed that this translates to fewer truck trips. However, he emphasized that this is still a major civil construction project involving surface street disruptions.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Mr. Irish confirmed a 65-foot width at the platform plus 40 feet for vertical circulation. The entire platform is 380 feet long. Mr. Irish said there is a slight grade change on the platform to ensure that water drains properly.

Mr. Chelminiak questioned the square footage used on the Metro site for this station. Mr. Salomone said he will provide that information.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Robertson, Mr. Berg said the joint staff recommendation was unanimous.

Ms. Robertson said it would be helpful to have a noise impact analysis of the options on Bellevue Way as well as for the three SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street sub-options at 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Ms. Robertson thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilmember Chelminiak questioned what would be reduced from the approved CIP Plan to provide \$11 million for the proposed Bellevue Way HOV lane project.

Councilmember Stokes said it would be helpful to be able to understand the size of the Metro property adjacent to City Hall and the differences between the impacts of the two Downtown Station options.

Mr. Salomone said he would provide information generated from the recent charette.

Mr. Berg summarized the projected cost savings and noted that the Council will address station area planning in May. Discussion of the cost savings options will continue with a decision anticipated on April 22.

Councilmember Chelminiak observed that cost savings for the City are eclipsed if the City spends \$11 million on the southbound HOV lane on Bellevue Way. He has not been able to identify \$60 million in overall light rail project savings, which is the City's obligation under the East Link memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Sound Transit.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Lewis said the East Link project contingencies are adjusted as the project moves forward.

At 10:04 p.m., Deputy Mayor Robertson declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

/kaw