

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

October 28, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Moolgavkar, Vice Chair Malakoutian,
Commissioners Bhargava, DeVadoss, Ferris, Morisseau

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COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Brown

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STAFF PRESENT: Thara Johnson, Nicholas Matz, Janet Lewine, Matt
McFarland, Emil King, Mac Cummins, Department of
Community Development

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COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Barksdale

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Morisseau who presided.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:30 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Brown.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
(6:32 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Vice Chair Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

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4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
(6:33 p.m.)

Councilmember Barksdale offered no reports but took a moment to thank the Commissioners for their hard work on the Comprehensive Plan amendments.

6. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS
(6:34 p.m.)

Ms. Naomi Elizabeth See with the Low-Income Housing Institute (LIHI), expressed support and gratitude for the work the city has done to implement HB-1377, granting incentives to faith-based organizations that want to dedicate land to affordable housing. Faith-based organizations

across King County have excess land they are willing to use for the benefit of vulnerable community members. LIHI has worked with several faith-based organizations through King County who are committed to using their land to support housing for the most vulnerable populations. The organizations need to be given the tools they need to provide for their community members. The experience of LIHI with faith-based organizations has been incredible and the result has been both the creation of housing and community for the residents. Bellevue has stepped up and is setting a precedent for affordable housing policies.

Ms. Betsi Hummer, 14541 SE 26th Street, [Chair of the East Bellevue Community Council](#) addressed the Commission as a private citizen and thanked the Commissioners for their service. She said she looked forward to in-depth discussions and robust conversations. She voiced concern about the need to bring new Commissioners up to speed. She said Meydenbauer Beach Park triggered a lot of controversy as it was going through the planning steps, but it serves as a testimony to how Bellevue works and how Bellevue sets the pace.

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5. STAFF REPORTS – None
(6:41 p.m.)

Comprehensive Planning Manager Thara Johnson briefly reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings and events. She highlighted the Commission’s annual retreat slated for November 4, which she stressed would be open to the public. She also underscored and highly recommended an upcoming virtual training opportunity put on by the Department of Commerce on December 3.

7. PUBLIC HEARING
(6:46 p.m.)

- A. Final Review Public Hearings: 2020 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments
 - i. 100th Bellevue Way SE

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz acknowledged on behalf of the city of Bellevue that the land on which the city is located as the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people, the traditional home of all tribes and bands within the Duwamish and Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. [We take this](#) opportunity to honor and express the city’s deepest respect to the original caretakers of the land, a people who are still here, continuing to honor their heritage.

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The Commissioners were shown the final review criteria on which the Commission’s recommendations must be based and which applicants must address. [Mr. Matz noted that all criteria](#) must be met in order to recommend an application for final review approval. He also noted that three of the five applications, the privately initiated NE 8th Street Partners and Glendale Country Club NE, and the city initiated Affordable Housing C-1 Strategy, were subject the jurisdictions of the East Bellevue Community Council.

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Mr. Matz noted the staff were recommending approval of three of the four privately initiated and [of the one city-initiated plan amendment](#). Cumulatively the proposals implement Comprehensive Plan policies to help communities maintain their local and distinctive neighborhood character while recognizing that some neighborhoods may evolve. He noted that all of the proposed plan

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amendments addressed the issue of housing capacity. Three of the four privately initiated amendments suggested that the Office designation represents housing redevelopment opportunity based on location. The city initiated amendment provides an affordable housing focus and what staff have termed a bookend opportunity to compare to the market capacity generally as proposed by the other privately initiated amendments.

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Senior Planner Janet Lewine clarified that the C-1 amendment is not a site-specific proposal, rather it seeks to allow for a density bonus on certain qualifying properties. The potential qualifying properties were highlighted on a map for the Commission. She noted that the four categories of qualifying properties were public surplus properties in multifamily districts; housing non-profits in multifamily districts; and faith-owned properties in both multifamily and single family districts. She stressed that only a small percentage of the sites may choose to take advantage of the proposed density bonus.

Specifically addressing the 100th Bellevue Way SE application, Mr. Matz said the proposed plan amendment seeks to amend the map from Downtown mixed use (DNTN-MU) and Office (O) to all DNTN -MU. The 0.8-acre site is located to the southeast of the intersection of Bellevue Way and Main Street. He said the recommendation of the staff was to approve the proposed amendment because the application satisfies all of the Land Use Code decision criteria for final review of a privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment. The southern third of the site has the O designation and the northern two-thirds has the DNTN-MU designation.

Mr. Matz said the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in that it mirrors the approach used to amend similarly situated split designations in previous plan updates and subsequent amendments. It addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city because the city has the policies and tools to successfully manage the hard line transitions between similarly situated Downtown neighborhoods and their adjacent high density neighborhoods. It addresses significantly changed conditions affecting the subject property because of changes related to the pertinent plan map. The split designation across the properties created a changed condition since implementing a Comprehensive Plan should not prevent compatible redevelopment and realization of the land use vision for both the Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods. The subject property can be suitably developed under the potential zoning classifications because the amendment supports the effective use of the transition elements in the Land Use Code to assure that environmental impacts and a change of land use designation, specifically forecasted trip generation, can be mitigated under the existing city code. The proposal demonstrates a public benefit because it acknowledges community interest in making the boundary more regular and in resolving some of the odd parcel configurations while maintaining the established policy direction of not extending the Downtown into residential neighborhoods to the south.

Mr. Matz noted that there had been some public comment throughout the course of the review process, both from the applicant and the public. The applicant has generally provided comments addressing the role they see the corner site playing in the Downtown as an gateway entry function, and noting that there are specific opportunities to have the proposal, if approved, all for a project that could enhance the vitality of the area of the Downtown.

Mr. Matz also reviewed the Commission's comments at its September 23 study session. These comments were generally supportive of the proposal as a way of increasing capacity and bringing about the dynamic gateway. Questions were asked about meaningful traffic impacts and the possibility of trip reductions due to the idea of a mixed use designation of housing and commercial. The Commission affirmed on September 23 that the boundary would not be moved

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southward as a result of giving both sides of the split equal due under the Zoning Code, and affirmed that a precedent would not be created regarding changed circumstances.

Chair Moolgavkar opened the floor to the applicant to address the proposal.

Mr. Thaddaeus Gregory, representing SRM, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. He said the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is aimed at fixing one of the last remaining underdeveloped split-zone parcels in the Downtown. The site in question is part of a future development at a crucial intersection, a designated southern gateway into and out of the Downtown. The site currently contains a one-story drive-through restaurant and a one-story strip mall. SRM has a different vision for the site and intends to provide a mixed use development that will incorporate much-needed centrally located housing with ground floor retail and commercial space. The help of the Commission is needed to achieve the vision for the site. The site is one of the last-remaining underdeveloped split-zone parcels along the southern edge of the Downtown boundary. The zoning line bisects an existing building. The Commission has a demonstrated history of fixing such split-zone parcels, and the current Commission can help to finish the work prior commissioners began.

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Mr. Gregory said there are numerous additional reasons to support the proposed amendment.

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There are many changed conditions affecting the property that have not previously existed. First, the project site is under common ownership which allow for a cohesive approach when redeveloping the parcel as part of Bellevue's signature southern gateway into the Downtown. Second, Bellevue now has enhanced policies tailored to manage Downtown's edge transitions. Third, Bellevue's renewed focus on fostering compatible redevelopment. Bellevue and the surrounding south Puget Sound region is currently in a housing affordability crisis that can only be improved by providing more housing. The project is consistent with the goals of the Growth Management Act and local city goals found in the Comprehensive Plan. By supporting the proposal, the Commission can help encourage density near transit options and strengthen the identity of City Center South as a mixed use neighborhood, all while preserving a buffer of Office and Professional Office parcels surrounding the split-zone parcel.

Mr. Gregory acknowledged the hard work of both the Commission and the staff to ensure moving the process forward in the middle of a pandemic. Despite numerous impediments, there has been perseverance to find a way to make it happen. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak and asked for their support of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Absent additional speakers, a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

ii. Safegard Self Storage

(7:05 p.m.)

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bhargava and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz said the privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment would amend the map designation on five parcels totaling 6.4 acres from Office (O) to Community Business (CB). The site is located at 1015 164th Avenue NE. He said the recommendation of staff was to recommend approval of the amendment because the application satisfies all of the Land Use

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Code decision criteria for final review of a privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment. The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it aligns with the Land Use Element to maintain the vitality, quality and character of Bellevue's neighborhoods while recognizing that the neighborhoods will continue to adapt while maintaining their character. The proposal addresses the interest and changed needs of the entire city within the framework of the Crossroads subarea plan, which has been amended over the years to build in policy guidance regarding the land use mix of the subarea by redefining the role of the shopping center in the community. There is a particular focus in Crossroads on opportunities for mixed use development as well as a historically ongoing community focus regarding that. It is adaptive to the changing economic conditions by creating land use and building types that are needed to meet changing markets.

The proposal addresses significantly changed conditions affecting the subject property and the surrounding area. The changed conditions are essentially the Crossroads subarea plan amendments which redefined the role of the shopping center in the community as a transit-oriented development and centerpiece for other elements that have come up over the years, including specialized housing types, social services for youth and the elderly, recreational and park services, and the evolving role of the park itself. The site can be suitably redeveloped under the potential zoning classifications because the CB designation has proven itself adaptable to appropriately mixing residential and commercial uses, both of which are permitted in the zone. Any combination of the permitted uses would need to address access to the site through a traffic study, and the use of a development agreement to appropriately integrate multifamily into the commercial area. The proposal demonstrates a public benefit in that it acknowledges the use of conventional zoning districts to create the potential for walkable communities while assuring continued support for Crossroads redevelopment that redefines the role of the shopping center in the community.

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Mr. Matz said to date there have been fewer comments received from the public than from the applicant and the applicant's agent. At the threshold review hearing, and in an additional comment from September 23, the applicant generally recognized the role and the responsibility the site has and its relationship to Crossroads Park and the other land uses in the area. The applicant has noted the intent to create a walkable mixed use neighborhood to benefit the community.

Mr. Matz summarized commission comments at its study session on September 23. The Commission inquired about how much ground floor commercial redevelopment the site could support, and whether a minimum amount of commercial uses would be required under CB should the site be predominantly residential, whether the loss of office capacity is a concern, how development ideas proposed by the applicant at the plan amendment stage could actually be realized, why the applicant chose CB, and whether a development agreement could require affordable housing. Those questions were addressed in study session and in the staff recommendation.

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Mr. Jeff Foster said the site is unique in its relationship to Crossroads Park given that it is surrounded by the park along both its southern and western edges. To the north is existing low-rise multifamily development, and to the east across 164th Avenue NE are the single family neighborhoods of Lake Hills. The site has the benefit of being in close proximity to public transit, in fact Bellevue's transit stop frequency map shows it is well within a quarter-mile radius of transit stops, including multiple stops with a frequency of more than four per hour. Adjacency to public transit makes the site attractive to multifamily development since residents can easily get to jobs, recreation, shopping and other destinations and leave their cars at home. There are

several public facilities within the park, including Youth Eastside Services, the Bellevue Youth Theatre, the water spray playground, Crossroads skate park, the picnic pavilion, and the community center. Crossroads Shopping Center can easily be connected to the existing trail system.

Mr. Foster noted that questions were previously asked about the viability of Office development on the site, but suggested it is unlikely to occur there. The CB zone allows for a variety of permitted uses but it is most well-suited for multifamily since there are no other significant commercial office developments adjacent to the property, there is no visibility that would be conducive to office or retail uses, and the site has no direct frontage on 164th Avenue NE. The height restriction in CB is unattractive to commercial office buildings. There is existing low-rise multifamily to the north, single family across 164th Avenue NE, and the park to the south and the west. A multifamily mixed use housing site presents the most appeal for the site, including some commercial businesses likely to be sited along NE 11th Street.

Mr. Foster presented the Commissioners with a potential concept plan illustrating how the park's open space could be extended into the development, and how future residents could access the site with pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Neighborhood-serving retail uses, live/work housing and/or commercial businesses could be located along an improved NE 11th Street connecting to the park. Opening the site to the park and the surrounding neighborhood will support the shopping center and other nearby businesses. Full-time residents will enliven and keep eyes on the park, contributing to the safety and vitality of the area. Previous discussions have included dialog around the eventual development that may come to be. In the likely scenario of multifamily development, the Land Use Code requires a Council-approved development agreement in Planning District E, including design guidelines. That will give the city the opportunity to review the proposal and influence the project. The proposal is consistent with and supported by the discussion contained in Crossroads subarea plan policy S-CR-79 that notes multifamily uses are commonly integrated into commercial areas in an attractive mixed use development, and which states that such development in Crossroads could encourage reinvestment in the commercial area that will enhance the commercial activity and community gathering opportunities at Crossroads.

Ms. Tia Fergusson, one member of the family that owns and manages the Safeguard Self Storage property, said her family has been involved in the planning and growth of the Crossroads area since 1954, including conveying land to the city that became Crossroads Park. The family is excited about the opportunity to continue supporting the community by facilitating the redevelopment of the storage site into a walkable mixed use community that will support the park and the new development of Crossroads Mall. She said her family has never heard from anyone expressing an interest in building office, or a significant commercial center, on the site, but has had numerous inquiries about residential development. The site is well suited to residential with a small component of neighborhood service uses. Live/work space could also make sense. Currently the site is cut off from the park and is only active during the day. There have been some issues involving criminal activities in the area where the site abuts the park. If opened and connect to the park via a trail system, the area will be more active and safe. She asked the Commission to support the CB designation.

Absent additional speakers, a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

iii. NE 8th Street Partners

(7:21 p.m.)

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bhargava and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz said the privately initiated application seeks a map change from Office (O) to Multifamily-High (MF-H). He said the staff were recommending approval of the proposal for the nearly one-acre site at 13635 and 13655 NE 8th Street. The finding of staff was that the application satisfies all the Land Use Code decision criteria for final review of a privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment. The site, currently designated O, is [adjacent to](#) Multifamily-Medium immediately to the east, west and south, and other single family areas further to the south and east. The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it aligns with a major objective of the Land Use Element to maintain the vitality, quality and character of Bellevue's neighborhoods while recognizing the neighborhoods will continue to adapt even while maintaining their character. It addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city because the land use strategy seeks to enhance the health and vitality of the neighborhoods while providing for commercial uses and development that serves community needs. In the absence of overt small business retention policy, the proposal is adaptive to changing economic conditions by ensuring the city will have the land use and building sites it needs to meet the changing markets. The proposal addresses significantly changed conditions resulting from the unanticipated consequences of adopted policy where higher density multifamily has emerged as a major residential land use pattern in the areas along NE 8th Street, which is the recipient of an increasing transit focus.

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Continuing, Mr. Matz said the property could be suitably developed under the potential zoning classification because the amendment supports the effective use of transition elements built into the Land Use Code. The adjacent multifamily actually creates more of a land use burden in terms of the transition area requirements on office redevelopment than it does on multifamily due to those transition area requirements. That translates into multifamily being a better fit for the site because it will not have to provide transition as it would if it were developed with office uses. Both Multifamily-Medium and Multifamily-High have comparable site dimensions in terms of setbacks and building height. The proposed amendment demonstrates a public benefit by essentially resolving a revolving door plan designation on the site and balances local business retention with managing the city's land use growth strategy.

Mr. Matz noted that four persons, including the applicant and agents, spoke at the threshold review hearing. The sole public comment at that hearing pointed out the proposal would align with existing multifamily in the area and would be congruent with everything around it. The applicant and agent has noted the site has great potential to provide high-quality housing that is well-served by transit. Having been designated Office in the 1980s, the site has been isolated from the rest of the commercial core and the neighborhood. From the applicant's perspective, the significant investments in transit and the oncoming operational light rail means a multifamily designation will be the best fit for the site.

[Mr. Matz noted that](#) the Commission at its September 23 study session asked about policy incentives, such as increased density, in exchange for creating a pedestrian trips within a certain area, recognizing that people would come to higher density multifamily with transportation means other than a car, and noting that having policy incentives within a certain distance from a neighborhood could be a way of avoiding vehicle trips. The Commission also asked about giving consideration to an arts center treatment in the area similar to Bel-Red, and asked why staff believed the policy question should be around business retention given that the small site is close

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to business centers to the east on 140th Avenue NE and the Bel-Red corridor.

The application is one that is subject to the jurisdiction of the East Bellevue Community Council. At their October 6 courtesy public hearing, East Bellevue Community Council members commented on the potential dimensional aspect of realizing the proposal, and asked about alternatives available to the community regarding the displaced businesses, noting in particular a concern about displacing a veterinarian business, and whether ground floor retail is allowed by the proposed plan change. The applicant and agent spoke to the Community Council regarding the impacts of the site redevelopment to multifamily.

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Mr. TC Wu spoke as the owner/manager of the subject property. He said he is a local real estate owner and developer and runs a family real estate business that has been around for 50 years. He said there are currently no plans to redevelop the site. Ultimately, the local community will be better served by having the site designated consistent with the surrounding area. As a landlord, the company has always had an excellent relationship with tenants. The property was purchased four years ago and since then the feedback from the residential tenants has been great; they enjoy the location and the convenience of being on NE 8th Street. The feedback from the commercial tenants, however, has been quite different. They have indicated attracting new customers to the location is difficult given the traffic on NE 8th Street and the fact that there are no other businesses nearby. At the time the site was purchased, the commercial level for one of the properties was vacant and it took a year and a half to find a new commercial tenant. The Covid-19 outbreak has made things worse for the tenants. The veterinarian business is the only long-term tenant. The Commission was asked to support the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Mr. Harold Moniz, a senior planner for CollinsWoerman, 710 2nd Avenue, Seattle, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He said the subject property is made up of two separate parcels totaling just less than an acre. It is a donut hole of office surrounded by multifamily land use designations. A commercial office node is located around the intersection of NE 8th Street and 140th Avenue NE. The site is well-served by transit, including the RapidRide Line B that connects Redmond with Downtown Bellevue, and from there through the region with the coming light rail. The site represents a tremendous opportunity for infill transit-oriented housing. If adopted, the Multifamily-High designation would allow for R-30 zoning consistent with the surrounding zoning to the north, south, east and west. No conceptual design work has been done, but the R-30 zoning would allow for a maximum of 28 residential units on the property. Some preliminary traffic analysis has been done which showed the change would produce fewer morning and evening peak hour trips than office. He urged the Commission to support the proposal.

Ms. Jessica Roe, a land use attorney for the applicant, thanked the Commissioners and staff for their work to date. She voiced support for the staff report which indicates that the proposal meets all of the final review criteria. The fact that the existing commercial space often experiences vacancies speaks to the point that the property can provide a greater public benefit to the city as multifamily housing near transit. The neighborhood is served by the commercial zones to the northeast. The veterinarian office on the site is not a local business rather it is part of chain that has other locations nearby serving the community. The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies as previously pointed out. The site offers a great opportunity for transit-oriented development on a major transit corridor connecting the east side of Bellevue to the Downtown. The request for Multifamily-High is consistent with the surrounding R-30 zoning. The Commissioners were asked to support the proposal.

Ms. Dana Nunnley, 11020 127th Place NE, Kirkland, spoke in favor of the proposed amendment. She said she has lived her entire life on the Eastside having grown up in Medina and graduated from Bellevue High School. She said she currently lives in Kirkland where she serves as Chair of the Kirkland Cultural Arts Commission and Vice President of the Kirkland Parks and Community Foundation. She said her support for the amendment is based on the fact that the proposal seems very reasonable in that it would align the zoning for the site with the surrounding properties, and the residential focus would fit with the area along NE 8th Street. The property owners did their due diligence and held an open house event for residents and businesses within 500 feet of the subject property. The change would facilitate the construction of additional housing which the Bellevue definitely needs. She urged the Commissioners to support the amendment.

Absent additional speakers, a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

iv. Glendale Country Club NE
(7:40 p.m.)

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Johnson explained that the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment seeks a change to the land use designation from Single Family-Low (SF-L) to Multifamily-Medium (MF-M). The site in question is located within the Glendale golf course property which approximates about 113 acres. The application is focused on a 3.3-acre portion of the overall site. She said the recommendation of the staff was not to approve the proposal because the application does not satisfy all of the Land Use Code decision criteria for final review of a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The staff reviewed the proposal against the city's Comprehensive Plan policies, the King County Countywide Planning Policies and the Growth Management Act and concluded that the proposal does not meet several of the policies. Additionally, the proposal is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan since it does not establish a critical land use nexus between the site and the remaining golf course using several elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the environment, parks and open space, and the land use Comprehensive Plan policies. Staff also found the proposal does not address concerns expressed in the city's land use strategies within the Comprehensive Plan related to ensuring that new infill development appropriate fits into existing neighborhoods. The public benefit component was deemed to not be met by the proposal due to the fact that the amendment could result in future development that is not directly connected to surrounding development in an area that is not currently dense. City policy is to focus development within the city's growth centers where there is available infrastructure and services to support more intense development.

Mr. Matz reiterated the recommendation of the staff not to approve the proposal because it does not satisfy the final review decision criteria for a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The staff concluded the proposal does address significantly changed conditions resulting from the unanticipated consequences of adopted policy where multifamily development has emerged as a major residential land use pattern. The same circumstance was found for the NE 8th Street Partners proposal. The proposal does not, however, meet the balance of the final review decision criteria.

Mr. Matz said the amendment is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it does not

establish a critical land use nexus between the site and the remaining golf course using environment, parks and open space and Comprehensive Plan policies. It does not address the concerns expressed in the city's land use strategies, which are focused on growth, about ensuring new infill development appropriately fits into existing neighborhoods. Splitting off a portion of the site without a clear nexus fails to affirm the appropriate role of other parks and open space and city policy. The proposed amendment also does not address the interest and changed needs of the entire city because it would not enhance the livability of the community not maintaining elements the residents cherish. It does not focus the level of growth in dense or mixed use centers, and it does propose redevelopment within an existing set of comparable land uses, rather it takes an environmentally valuable area and leverages its own financial acquisition and property tax history into a proposal that would not maintain the city's outstanding natural environment as well as the health and vitality of established residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Matz said the staff were unable to determine whether the property could be suitably developed under the potential zoning classification because of the presence of steep slopes and wetlands and the associated critical areas buffers. The information and testimony provided by the applicant at threshold review suggested development is possible on the site, but the larger policy question is whether or not such development should be done. The proposed amendment also does not demonstrate a public benefit in that it presents a plan amendment that rests on a financial perspective rather than an environmental or land use perspective.

Mr. Matz noted that an extensive amount of public testimony had been received regarding the proposal, both at threshold review and final review. A number of people spoke at the threshold review public hearing and over 30 comments were received. Comments have continued to be received for final review, though not as many. Two of the comments addressed environmental concerns regarding the development of the site and made reference to existing environmental features. The balance of the comments were in favor of the application for a variety of reasons, notably around the Club's commitment to community and the work it has done in stewarding its property as a golf course throughout the years. The testimony provided at the threshold review public hearing also referred to the club's intent in providing underutilized land to respond to the housing demand while ensuring the future financial success of the golf course and its role as a community asset. Testimony was received regarding the history of the club and reason for reinvestment in the club by taking a small underutilized area of the site and aligning it with the city's vision to support the club and continuing its use as a golf course, which is also consistent with the Wilburton subarea policies.

Mr. Matz noted that the Commission at its September 23 study session voiced concern about the environmental utility of the site for flora and fauna. In thinking about wildlife and environmental corridors, considering is generally given to more than just a specific site. The City Council specifically wanted the Commission to look for ways to find affordable housing opportunities during the review of the various plan amendments. The Commission voiced a generalized concern regarding the impacts of upzoning, and asked if the Transportation Commission would have review authority.

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The application is under the jurisdiction of the East Bellevue Community Council. At its October 6 courtesy public hearing members of the East Bellevue Community Council commented on the potential buffers to other single family uses in the area; the change to the proposed northeast access point to the site due to feedback from adjacent condominium residents; and on the impact on the community from the financially focused reason for the proposal. The golf club's general manager and the applicant's attorney addressed the East Bellevue Community Council courtesy hearing and noted that the financial incentive behind the proposal was focused on ensuring the

ability of the golf club to remain an environmental part of the community by addressing storm detention upgrades that will allow the course to continue as an environmentally sound land use. The attorney referenced the overriding impact of the Wilburton subarea policy.

Mr. Matz noted that public comment had been received earlier in the day from the applicant's attorney that clarified the club's purpose behind the proposal as being to support reinvestment in the club's drainage facilities in order to provide environmental benefits to the Kelsey Creek corridor. It was noted that the subject site will not remain undeveloped regardless of the outcome of the amendment. A letter from a citizen was received that noted the club's substantial contributions to the community in its role as a golf course, as well as its contributions to Puget Sound Energy in the form of powerline easements. A letter was also received from Betsi Hummer who noted that all things considered, the amendment is not a big deal in regard to some of the city's policy questions associated with redevelopment on similar sites.

Mr. Clint Whitney, general manager of the Glendale Country Club, thanked the Commissioners for their time and consideration. He noted that the club is a longstanding Bellevue institution that is very active in the community. It is home to a very open and inclusive membership. The club is not planning on going anywhere and expects to continue being active in the Bellevue area for many generations to come. The club serves as a significant environmental and recreational resource in the city. It is one of the city's largest private open spaces with over 137 acres in green space and trees. It has been recognized as a certified Audubon property since 1998. The club provides an inviting and welcoming visual and recreational amenity to the community. All of the green spaces are well maintained, something which requires constant capital investment to ensure long-term viability. The club is a not for profit entity, which means it must continue to reinvest in infrastructure to maintain the space. It is not self sustaining. After 60 plus years, the club needs to make major investments in drainage infrastructure to maintain the vibrant landscape, and needs to make updates and expansions to the physical infrastructure. The club is not looking to make any profit through the sale and redevelopment of the subject property. Rather, the resources will be reinvested fully back into the club in the form of capital improvements. The Comprehensive Plan amendment applies to only a very small portion of the overall property, but the club wants to make sure it will remain a good neighbor by listening to all community feedback. The club has hosted a public open house and has provided two separate informational letters to over 500 surrounding residents. Based on the resulting feedback, the proposed access to the property has been reworked and the density has been reduced. The future residents of the housing on the site will be Glendale neighbors for decades to come, thus it is important to be open to comments from the neighborhood. The application if approved will provide a great opportunity to support the club with all the environmental benefits it provides, and will further the city's Comprehensive Plan goals which include keeping the club as an operating golf course well into the future.

Ms. Brenda Barnes, an architect and partner at Clark Barnes, said the buildable area of the 3.3-acre site represents one-third of a percent of the almost six million square feet of the club. The proposal to change the land use designation for the section to Multifamily-Medium will support a future rezone and request to lower density residential housing. It will serve as a great opportunity for modest infill housing along the transit corridor of NE 8th Street. The request is for a lower residential density from the immediately adjacent site, which is zoned Multifamily-High. That will provide for a suitable transition and respect the adjacent higher density neighborhoods. She shared with the Commissioners a streetscape montage looking south with the three-story condominium building shown to give a sense of the scale of a future project. She said the site starts at the power easement and slopes gradually downhill toward the west. She pointed out the RapidRide transit stop and a row of fir trees at the property line, noting that they would remain

as they are, within the required 20-foot setback. A diagram showing the buildable part of the site was shared with the Commissioners, which was noted to be 18,790 square feet and only 13 percent of the site. Under the current zoning, the site would be allowed to include three single family homes. If approved, the proposed amendment would allow for up to 30 multifamily residences. While not in the design stage, a conceptual site plan was tested out for the club to show how infill housing could be accommodated while respecting the critical areas and the Puget Sound Energy easement. If the Comprehensive Plan amendment and subsequent rezone is approved, any development would need to go through design review and critical area review to ensure protection of the critical areas and the buffers. The site plan shows how that can be achieved while still providing for modest infill housing.

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Mr. Ian Morrison, an attorney for the applicant, said the team has spoken in depth about the land use policies and the transit connection on NE 8th Street. He said he appreciated but disagreed with the staff recommendation relative to Comprehensive Plan consistency and the interest in public benefits. There are in fact three benefits, starting with transit near R-30 housing. The environmental benefits are clear in the club's desire to reinvest the proceeds from one-third of one-percent of the site in drainage infrastructure serving one of the city's largest pervious areas. Third, the public will benefit from the continuation of the golf course use. Kelsey Creek lies directly to the south of the site and runs through golf course. The club has worked with the tribe and the city on fish passage improvements, which will be benefited by improving the drainage infrastructure. The Commission was asked to approve the proposal.

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Ms. Ellen Lenhart, 216 131st Avenue NE, said she has been a resident of Bellevue for 20 years. She noted that she had previously provided testimony on three occasions but kept coming back because of her strong feeling that the club's request stands to benefit the entire community as well as the club. It just makes sense. She said she lives on the golf course and gazes out her kitchen window at a beautiful green space through which flows a lovely creek and on which grows hundreds of trees. The site is a gem in the midst of the city and it remains such because of the excellent care provided by the club. The golf course needs to be preserved to perpetuate the club and to embellish the beauty of the city. To achieve that will require additional capital. Selling a tiny unused portion of the golf course site will provide an essential boost to the club's financial stability and its future. Glendale is not just a golf club, it is an entity that provided much to Bellevue throughout its 60-year history. It has shown itself to be a steward of the environment. What the club is requesting is perfectly in alignment with the city's vision for the NE 8th Street corridor, and with the city's Comprehensive Plan vision. It is a win-win for everyone.

Ms. Maureen Rammell, 1020 122nd Avenue SE, said she has lived in Bellevue for almost 30 years and noted her support for the Glendale application. The city should support community assets like Glendale, especially when they need reasonable changes to ensure their long-term viability, and particularly when the city encourages the continuation of the golf course use. The city should not be saying that on the one hand while on the other hand opposing its modest proposal to improve one small area of the course that cannot be used for golfing. The land use change Glendale seeks is modest and low density. It preserves more than 87 percent of the small parcel it seeks to develop as natural wetlands and open space. It adds up to 30 new homes, which is on one of the city's frequent transit area routes and has a RapidRide bus stop within a block of the site. If the application is denied, the current zoning will allow three McMansions to be built on the property instead of up to 30 homes serving ten times the number of residents. Economically having more units generally means the average price for each will be lower, fulfilling a desperate need for moderate to average priced housing. There are not other private golf courses in the city that would also benefit from the change and as such the amendment will set no precedent the city should be concerned about.

Ms. Teresa Gallo, 4726 Lakehurst Lane, said she has lived in Bellevue for over 45 years and has watched the city plan for thoughtful and comprehensive growth. She said she supports the proposed Glendale amendment. Glendale is an important community asset. More than 400 families, seniors and junior golfers use the course for a sport they dearly love. Glendale has been a point of refuge for all of its members and guests, and through proper protocol has been a safe haven for recreation during the pandemic. The members of the community are very philanthropic by hosting golf tournaments for charities. Recently the membership ran a fund drive for Northwest Harvest, raising more than \$100,000. Glendale is an Audubon Society sanctuary property and a founding member of the First Green project dedicated to teaching youth about environmental practices used on the property. The city should support community assets like Glendale when they need reasonable changes to their property. The proposal is simple. Of the five million square feet of property, it applies to only one small isolated area that is not in golf course use. The area equals only one-third of one-percent of the total Glendale property. The site is already zoned for the development of three large single family homes. Glendale is simply asking that designation on the site be changed to match that of the surrounding parcels, allowing for up to 30 new homes while protecting Glendale's critical areas and open space. Bellevue does not need more McMansions. Along the NE 8th Street corridor, multifamily homes are needed. During the threshold review deliberations, city staff stated that the proposal was consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan policies and goals. It was shocking and disappointing to see the city reverse its position upon final review. If the proposal does not move forward, the choice will not be that nothing will be done, rather the property will have to be as zoned for the development of large single family homes. That would represent a lost opportunity for the city to add compatible housing to an already dense corridor that has access to transit. The Commission was urged to approve the Glendale Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Mr. Louis Nickols, 13798 NE 5th Place, said he has been a Bellevue resident since 1964 and a member of Glendale since 1967. He voiced strong support for Glendale's proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment, which is nothing more than a property owner trying to make the best use of their properties for the benefit of themselves and the city. He said he also was surprised to see the staff reverse their initial review. Glendale is an ecological gem in the city. The proposal represents only a modest Comprehensive Plan amendment and it should be approved.

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Mr. Brian Whiteside, 73 Cascade Key, said he has been a Bellevue resident for 29 years and a Glendale member for half that time. He said he has greatly enjoyed playing with his family and friends over the years and said he hoped his children would be able to have the same experiences in the future. He said has served on many committees at Glendale and knows firsthand the stewardship the club provides for the property and the environment. Glendale has been willing and open to help Bellevue protect the environment. People hired by the city are currently walking the stream looking for salmon. Glendale has allowed the city to restore Kelsey Creek in 1993, 2006 and 2013, work that was primarily required by the Muckleshoot Tribe to support the salmon run. Brush was cleared and logs, weirs and rocks were installed the slow the creek for better spawning areas. A large part of the course was shut down for the entire summer, and Glendale did not charge the city even though it had the right to do so. Glendale also has a pond that is used by the city for storm water retention to keep silt out of Kelsey Creek. One example of that benefit occurred in the summer of 2019 when a water main broke on Main Street above Glendale and the water ran down the street and into the clubhouse before continuing down the slope and being captured by the storm water system pond. Water from the pond has also been used during droughts to provide enough flow in the creek for migrating salmon. A minimum 15-foot work buffer is kept along Kelsey Creek so as not to affect the stream in any way. The

biggest expense the club is facing concerns the drainage system, which is over 60 years old and serves over 100 acres. A new drainage system will translate into healthier grounds and a need for less fertilizer and pesticides. The replacement will be expensive and the course will need to close while the work is done, or be greatly restricted, which will negatively affect revenues. The application outlines precisely the type of partnership the city's Comprehensive Plan, environmental and parks policies call for with private property owners. The Commission was asked to move the proposal forward.

Ms. Nancy Johnson, 1812 128th Avenue SE, said she has been a resident of Bellevue for 45 years and a Glendale member for 17 years. She said she lives in the Wilburton neighborhood. In changing times, all that can be done should be done to support the financial health of the non-profits that make Bellevue a great place to live. The Glendale Country Club is a great example as it has been part of the neighborhood for more than 60 years. The economic viability and longevity of a golf course is measured by how well it responds to changes in the sport and in the broader community, and from time to time investments are needed to ensure the club remains viable. She said she strongly supported the club's proposal for a modest Comprehensive Plan amendment change for a small parcel on a corner of the five million square foot site. Allowing for about 30 units to be built on the parcel will create the long-term financial strength needed to ensure that Glendale will be part of Bellevue for decades to come. The low-density approach will retain the height and scale in line with the surrounding community and preserve most of the small parcel as open space and wetlands. The site is within the city's frequent transit area and has a RapidRide stop within a block. It is unclear why city staff chose to first say the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and then to say it is not, especially when they do not acknowledge the city's own policy that encourages the continued operation of the golf course use and the need to partner with private sector owners of open space to find creative solutions to steward their land. The Commission should follow the staff's initial reading which clearly shows the proposal is consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan. Saying no to the proposal will not prevent the land from redeveloping, it simply will mean there will be three massive homes instead of the opportunity for up to 30 more affordable multifamily housing units next to transit. The Commission should move the proposal forward.

Ms. Betsi Hummer, said she is a Bellevue native who graduated from Bellevue High School. She said she loves Bellevue and loves being in close proximity to the Glendale golf course. Since 145th Place SE was redone, Glendale has become the center of the city in a park. Their proposal includes retaining the streetscape as it currently exists. Selling the small portion of the golf course would benefit the entire community. The club has done its due diligence and enjoys great support from its members and the neighbors. With all the environmental conditions in place, there are concerns for which solutions are needed. The Commission should listen to the public and vote to approve the proposed amendment.

Absent additional speakers, a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

v. Affordable Housing Strategy C-1

(8:41 p.m.)

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

Senior Planner Janet Lewine said the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment would amend

the plan to add the C-1 implementing policy to establish incentives for qualifying properties for the purpose of producing permanently affordable housing. She said the recommendation of the staff was to approve the amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for final review. The steps for implementing C-1 involve ongoing staff analysis and public outreach for both the Comprehensive Plan amendment and the subsequent Land Use Code amendment; establishing the amendment as part of the 2020 annual amendment process; and in 2021 developing Land Use Code provisions consistent with the enacted policies and the recent state legislation House bill 1377. The main intent is to avoid future parcel-by-parcel plan amendments and rezones given that the approach does not provide certainty for the community or for applicants. The proposed qualifying properties would include both multifamily and mixed use residential districts that are public surplus, non-profit or faith-owned, as well as single family residential districts that are faith-owned. Properties owned by Parks and Community Services would be excluded, as would all properties in the Downtown, Bel-Red and the Eastgate transit-oriented development areas given that those areas already have robust affordable housing incentives.

Continuing, Ms. Lewine said the proposed action would add three policies to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan as follows: HO-33, Implement Affordable Housing Strategy C-1 by providing bonuses and incentives to increase permanently affordable housing on any qualifying property owned by faith-based or non-profit housing entities, or on surplus property owned by public entities; HO-34, Implement the bonuses and incentives for qualifying properties to respond to the different conditions of multifamily and single family land use districts that are outside of Downtown, BelRed, and Eastgate TOD; and HO-35, Adopt an interim ordinance enabling a demonstration project including affordable housing and is consistent with Policy HO-14, on qualifying non-profit housing entity-owned property and when located in a multifamily land use district and is on an arterial. The interim ordinance shall address standards and requirements for site proximity to transit, residential development capacity, and other land use dimensional incentives for the additional development of permanently affordable housing. Additionally, a definition would be added to the Glossary relating to qualifying properties reading "Qualifying properties: Multifamily property that is owned by faith-based, or non-profit housing entities, or surplus property owned by public entities; or single family property that is owned by faith-based entities."

Ms. Lewine stressed that the proposal meets all of the final review criteria for inclusion in the annual work program. It is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it is a functional policy component of a plan, and it specifically addresses several policies in the plan that support the development of affordable housing through incentives. The proposal addresses the interests of changed needs of the entire city in that it addresses the city's affordable housing need identified in the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element. The proposal addresses significantly changed conditions, including the adoption of the affordable housing strategy in 2017 that recommended Action C-1, and the 2019 state legislation House Bill 1377 which requires the provision of an increased density bonus for the development of affordable housing on properties owned or controlled by a religious organization. The proposal demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety and welfare by improving affordable housing opportunities across the city.

To date, some 75 public comments have been received regarding Action C-1. One letter sought additional information. One letter urged the Commission to delay the Comprehensive Plan amendment recommendation until next year to allow for more review and analysis. A letter from the Church Council of Greater Seattle voiced appreciation for the action under review and raised issues regarding the need for support for the faith community in making sure the approach taken

will be the right course. The balance of the comments were in support of the actions and the policies. The list of groups that submitted comments included Downtown Action to Save Housing, Imagine Housing, the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, the Housing Development Consortium, Microsoft and [Commercial Real Estate Development Association \(NAOIP\)](#).

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[Ms. Lewine noted that at](#) its September 9 study session, the Commission raised several questions. Questions were asked about the city's outreach efforts; whether the action is responsive to community interests; why a proactive code incentive is a better path than a project-by-project process; why the incentive was not proposed in areas like Bel-Red, Downtown and Eastgate; why the proposal did not include market-rate developers; whether the proposal would lead to even distribution of affordable housing across the city; the decision framework for the density bonus that will be considered under the Land Use Code amendment; and about the city's ability to provide funding for the new targeted affordability housing.

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The [proposed amendment includes](#) areas under the jurisdiction of the East Bellevue Community Council. At its October 6 courtesy public hearing, the East Bellevue Community Council commented on the sudden interest in workforce housing; the ambiguity of the definition of faith-based; the historic role of church sites in the neighborhood; seeing a concentration of affordable housing located in Lake Hills and Crossroads; the incremental approach to housing density increases rather than organic increases; the effects of implementing the policy on existing vacant properties and existing church properties; and the concern that affordable housing development under the proposal may fall more in the eastern half of the city.

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Ms. Mallory Van Abbema with the Housing Development Consortium offered her enthusiastic support for the critical initiative and recommended four actions: 1) bold leadership to implement C-1 and the affordable housing strategy; 2) maximize development capacity given the high need and the fact that supply is falling behind the demand by applying the Bel-Red Tier 1A affordable housing incentives to all C-1 properties and prioritizing deeper affordability by allowing additional density for housing provided below 50 percent of area median income; 3) expand on the city's transit-oriented development approach through the C-1 by increasing the allowable density by 1.5 FAR within a quarter mile and 1.0 FAR within a half mile walkshed of frequent transit service; and 4) effective collaboration in scaling up a range of strategies. The scarcity of land and the price of acquisition are two parameters that act as impediments, and the amendment will empower communities of faith, non-profits and public entities interested in pursuing onsite affordable housing. The Housing Development Consortium stands ready to partner with the city to advance swift implementation of the amendment to the city's Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Betsi Hummer, 14541 SE 26th Street, urged the Commission to delay the vote on the affordable housing strategy C-1 until after the first of the year. The C-1 strategy was only recently introduced to the Commission. No robust discussion on the proposal has been witnessed and there is no clear understanding of exactly what is entailed. To avoid as many unintended consequences as possible, the Commission needs a thorough overview of the affordable housing strategy to understand the impact each strategy will have when joined with the others. For instance, the reduced parking requirement, C-5, mixed with the retention of older buildings, A-1, and the increased density allowed on some residential-zoned properties, C-1, should be taken into consideration together instead of individually in silos. The neighborhoods that will be most impacted are Crossroads and Lake Hills, both of which already have a large number of aging multifamily units, A-1, a great concentration of affordable housing and subsidized housing, as well as market-rate housing that accepts third-party payments, and limited transit service regardless of what the numbers show. The Commission has two rookie members who should be given the opportunity to thoroughly study the implications of the Comprehensive Plan

amendment in order to make the best informed decision for their constituents, which is the public and the City Council. They should also be given time to better understand the complex system for land use. A draft Comprehensive Plan amendment should be presented along with what the Land Use Code amendment might look like, making the entire process and the consequences more clear. Examples of what works should also be presented.

Ms. Chris Buchanan with Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH), 11018 NE 11th Street, said the organization was founded in Bellevue over 25 years ago to provide affordable housing for working families, individuals and seniors. Currently the organization owns and maintains four properties in Bellevue and nine additional properties throughout east King County. DASH is Bellevue's local affordable housing agency. Affordable housing is hard to do in Bellevue given that the city is one of the most expensive in the state. Housing is rapidly becoming unaffordable for many Bellevue residents. More and more households in Bellevue are becoming rent burdened and the pandemic is only exacerbating the situation. DASH has been working with the Commission and the Council since 2016 as part of the technical advisory group to develop the affordable housing strategy. She voiced the support of the organization for the C-1 Comprehensive Plan amendment and advocated for robust zoning incentives for affordable housing, particularly for parcels owned by government, faith-based and non-profit organizations. DASH supports the strategy to separate the strategies for those properties that are located in single family zones from those properties that are zoned multifamily and which are located adjacent to commercial areas. The organization also strongly encourages adding density incentives to those properties that are close to frequent transit service in order to leverage that public benefit to serve more people. Bellevue has done an outstanding job of attracting more jobs to the city, but those new workers will need housing. DASH looks forward to working with the city to provide housing for them in the future.

Ms. Karen Studders, a King County residents who consults with the Church Council of Greater Seattle and who serves as the Eastside Interfaith coordinator, said the C-1 affordable housing strategy will provide the opportunity to modify Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan to overcome the city's past discriminatory policies and zoning. While zoning changes are needed, the plan and policies disproportionately impact faith communities, suggesting that 10 to 40 percent of Bellevue's affordable housing will be built on non-profit and faith-owned land. Density really needs to be expanded to many more areas within the city for affordable housing. *Bellevue Reporter* has stated that Bellevue is one of the least affordable cities in the entire state. Bellevue is also experiencing increasing numbers of residents experiencing homelessness. Homelessness has been declared to be a regional emergency. A disproportionate number of people experiencing homelessness are black, brown, indigenous and people of color. The global pandemic is also disproportionately impacting those same individuals. King County recently declared racism a public health emergency. Some recent activities that have happened under Covid-19 are not included in the proposed plan. While faith communities can make their land available, the average median income is \$129,000 in east King County. It is concerning that the city is not looking at less than 30 percent of area median income housing, which would be for someone making \$38,700 annually. Less than 40 percent of area median income would allow for housing teachers, yet often the focus in Bellevue is on housing at 80 percent of area median income. There must be a focus on housing at less than 30 percent of area median income. Bellevue led the way in helping to house people living at Highland Village whose incomes were at about 15 percent of area median income. In mid-October the King County Council passed a plan to house 45 percent of persons experiencing chronic homelessness using a .1 percent sales tax. Bellevue adopted the tax amendment but did not partake in the plan to house people experiencing homelessness.

Mr. Ryan Donohue spoke on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Seattle/King County where he serves as the advocate and policy director. He took a moment to thank the Commission for considering the proposed amendment and noted his support for the testimony provided by the Housing Development Consortium representative. The vision of Habitat for Humanity is to build a world where everyone has a decent place to live. The proposed amendment exists to move things in that direction. The opportunity to be able to own an affordable home in a place like Bellevue is an opportunity that gives people the chance to live in a beautiful city. But that dream is becoming more difficult every day. With the adoption of amendments like C-1, housing will be made more accessible and more affordable for more people. The proposed amendment cannot be the whole solution, it is just one step in the path, but it is a step in the right direction. Reforms are needed in order to bring in more affordable housing and more affordable home ownership opportunities. Home ownership helps to create roots in the community.

A motion to extend the meeting to 10:00 p.m. was made by Commissioner Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Sam Basta, 16721 SE 28th Street, said he appreciated the building incentives and stated that much of the proposal will move things in the right direction. Any time the focus is on the faith-based communities, care must be taken to avoid adding any additional restrictions, even unintentionally. The faith communities do a lot to build and promote the community. He said it would make sense to delay voting on the C-1 amendment in order to allow for more thorough analysis.

Ms. Heidi Dean, 11661 SE 56th Street, added her voice to the request of Ms. Hummer to delay voting on the C-1 amendment. She pointed out that the CPA was initiated in July, outside the normal initiation period. To date, very few neighborhood persons have responded, which is an indication that people are unaware of the issue. That could be due to the pandemic and it could be due to the fact that it was initiated during the summer. The amendment will, however, impact a great many people. The Council has made an commitment to keep growth in designated growth corridors. The areas of the city most likely to be impacted by C-1 are not in those growth corridors, making it appear C-1 breaks the promise of the Council to the neighborhoods to appease faith communities, developers, realtors and others who will profit, as well as large employers who keep bringing more people to the city. Churches are usually exempt from property taxes and she said she assumed that non-profit developers would apply for the multifamily tax exemption, which would exempt them from property taxes as well for a certain amount of time. The Commission should consider who will pay for the increased strain on public services and schools. Cities like Everett have bunched together their low-income housing developments and the Commission should consider the impact of concentrating affordable housing in certain parts of the city.

Absent additional speakers, a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

BREAK

8. STUDY SESSION
(9:14 p.m.)

A. Final Review 2020 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

i. 100 Bellevue Way SE

There were no questions for staff from the Commissioners and no discussion.

A motion to recommend to the City Council that it adopt the 100 Bellevue Way SE amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amendment is consistent with all of the final review decision criteria in LUC 20.30I.150.B was made by Chair Moolgavkar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

ii. Safegard Self Storage

There were no questions for staff from the Commissioners and no discussion.

A motion to recommend to the City Council that it adopt the Safegard Self Storage amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amendment is consistent with all of the final review decision criteria in LUC 20.30I.150.B was made by Chair Moolgavkar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

iii. NE 8th Street Partners

There were no questions for staff from the Commissioners and no discussion.

A motion to recommend to the City Council that it adopt the NE 8th Street Partners amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amendment is consistent with all of the final review decision criteria in LUC 20.30I.150.B was made by Chair Moolgavkar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

iv. Glendale Country Club NE

Commissioner Bhargava asked staff to summarize their primary concerns for the Commission. Ms. Johnson clarified that there are two sets of decision criteria utilized as part of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process. The first set is part of the threshold review stage. At that stage a public hearing was held and staff reviewed with the Commission the decision criteria associated with threshold review. The second phase, final review, has a different set of decision criteria. At each level, the staff evaluate proposals based on the specific decision criteria. At the final review level, the first criteria is consistency with Comprehensive Plan policies and other goals and policies, such as the King County Countywide Planning Policies and the Growth Management Act. The staff concluded that the proposal is inconsistent with the criteria. Staff also looked at whether or not the proposal addresses the changing needs of the entire city, significantly changed conditions, and how it fits into adjacent land uses and development patterns. The public health and safety element was reviewed as well in light of the proposal.

Continuing, Ms. Johnson allowed that the public pointed out that during the threshold review process the staff had recommended approval. She emphasized, however, that the criteria used for threshold review are different from those used at final review.

Mr. Matz said at the heart of the matter are two aspects of the work done by staff. First, staff saw an inconsistency between the land use vision and the environmental vision in the [Comprehensive](#)

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Plan. The ongoing discussion at both the initial study sessions and the threshold review public hearing about where to draw the line on the property led staff to the conclusion made. Much has been said about the specific 3.3-acre property and its particular attributes to the larger golf course site. No one is disputing the role the golf course plays in the community, but staff could find no policy justification for drawing a line as proposed. Staff concluded that the proposal does not reconcile the environmental vision and the land use vision and does not justify slicing off a portion from the whole. Staff concluded that the inability to resolve the conflict means the proposal is inconsistent with the plan.

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Commissioner Bhargava asked what specifically is driving the inconsistency with the environmental aspect. Mr. Matz explained that the analysis involved determining how the role and purpose of the golf course facility, which the city's Comprehensive Plan and the specific subarea plan recognizes as a unique thing, is being carried out in the city. The environmental vision states that it is needed as part of making the city a functional and beautiful place to live. The proposal involves cutting off from the whole a portion of the property that the applicant feels does not justify having any continued relationship with the golf course use, and is instead a land use question. Staff felt that one could not separate the environmental role the site plays as part of the whole golf course private open space and As an environmental feature that contributes to the long-range vision of the city, from the land use issue defined by the applicant's proposal. Staff does not believe there is a nexus between where the line should go and still have protection for the open space and community attributes of the environmental issues. From a land use perspective, splitting off a portion of the site could certainly be done, and in fact the threshold review acknowledged that. Mr. Matz concluded by noting that the staff review reached its conclusions by looking at the larger, citywide perspective represented by environmental and land use vision. The applicant began their justification from the perspective of their single site and then looked outward. The comprehensive plan amendment process is inherently the former.

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Department of Planning and Community Development Assistant Director Emil King added that as part of the final review stage, the staff looked carefully at the question of whether or not it would be good land use planning to have a somewhat isolated site function as part of a new development. That site is located in proximity to the Frequent Transit Network, but there are other development ramifications to be considered.

Commissioner Morisseau pointed out that the subject property represents only one-third of one-percent of the entire golf course site. She said she did not see how the conflict pointed out by staff applies to much of a degree. Additionally, she pointed out that most of the sites under consideration as Comprehensive Plan amendments are isolated single sites seeking a change in their land use designation. The NE 8th Street Partners site essentially faces the same issues, making it difficult to apply the argument offered by Mr. King. Mr. King responded by saying the NE 8th Street Partners site is located essentially in the middle of other multifamily development. That in fact was cited as one of the main rationales for making the change. The Glendale Golf Club site is in fact very isolated.

Commissioner Malakoutian asked for a more detailed explanation of final review criteria B-4 relative to suitable development in general conformance with adjacent land use, and B-5 relative to public benefit and enhancing the public health, safety and welfare of the city and how it relates to the Glendale site. Relative to B-4, Mr. Matz said just because development is allowed on a site does not mean development should occur on the site. The conclusion reached by staff around the efficacy of using the development code to answer the question was premised on the response to the other decision criteria that left staff unable to make the connection about where the line should be drawn and what an appropriate amount of development would be. Absent being able to

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reach a conclusion about an appropriate amount of development associated with splitting the site off from the whole, it cannot be argued that the site is suitable for development. While isolated properties can be made to work in terms of access and development, that cedes the argument in favor of a land use solution without addressing the environmental concerns by looking at the site as having a role in the open space. Staff ran the numbers to determine if development could occur under the critical areas constraints and concluded that it is possible, but also concluded they could not say the move would be consistent because the environmental solution would not be met.

With regard to B-5, Mr. Matz said it is a classic and evolving tool to talk about the public health, safety and welfare of a community. In times past one could typically address it by talking about locating things like factories next to residential uses. The public benefit developed for Glendale was admittedly based on the testimony and information provided regarding the club's approach, which was seen as primarily financial. The conclusion reached was that a public benefit could not be achieved when all that being demonstrated was a private benefit.

Ms. Johnson added that the staff evaluation included the surrounding development patterns. That work led to the conclusion that the site is fairly isolated from other development areas.

Chair Moolgavkar said she did not see the site as being as isolated as suggested by staff. It is adjacent to three-story buildings. She asked what would happen should the Commission disagree with the conclusions reached by staff relative to what would go to the Council. Mr. King explained that in cases where the Commission has a recommendation that differs from that of the staff, staff would subsequently determine whether or not a separate staff recommendation should be forwarded to the Council.

Chair Moolgavkar said she heard during the public testimony the claim that Glendale could build three mega mansions on the site. She asked if that is a feasible option and asked what process they would need to follow to achieve that. Mr. Matz said the city does not have a park zone or a golf course zone. The underlying zoning for the golf course is R-1, which is the Single Family-Low designation. To the extent Glendale could subdivide and meet the city's Land Use Code requirements for residential development, they have the right to do so. The minimum lot size under the R-1 zoning classification is 35,000 square feet.

Commissioner deVadoss said he had no questions to ask. He stressed that from the beginning he viewed the proposal as flawed.

Commissioner Ferris said she also had no specific questions.

Commissioner Bhargava asked if there is anything that can be used as a more measurable yard stick for what constitutes an isolated site, such as proximity to an arterial or a quarter mile distance to a transit stop. Ms. Johnson explained that the Growth Management Act has certain policies proposals must meet. One of the requirements is that urban growth and planning goals encourage development where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner. Given the discussion about how the Glendale site is isolated from existing services and is not located within a potential growth area, the staff felt that criteria was not met. There are also the Countywide Planning Policies to consider. The task of balancing all of the various policies is complex, and often it is necessary to determine which policy supersedes another.

Commissioner Morrisseau said what was still unclear to her was the gap relative to the B-1

criterion. She also respectfully disagreed with staff on the issue of the site being isolated. Not only is there a three-story building immediately adjacent to the site, it is developed under Multifamily-High. The ask for the Glendale site is only Multifamily-Medium. The golf course can under the existing zoning build housing on the site; the issue is simply whether it should be single family or multifamily. Commissioner Morisseau suggested the argument could be made that every land use decision is based on a financial decision, and pointed out that the financial gain is not a criteria the Commission is charged with addressing. The larger golf course use will remain and will not be changed by approving the proposal. The issue of park and open space is therefore solved, and it cannot be said that the proposal will not enhance the livability of the community. She said her view was that the proposal should be moved forward to the Council.

Vice Chair Malakoutian said he was sure the intent behind the application was honest. The public testimony was clear about how the public views the club. The job of the Commission is to evaluate if the proposal is inconsistent with any of the five final review criteria. He said the application is not in fact consistent with B-1, particularly in regard to drawing a line to split off a portion of the site without having a clear nexus to the appropriate role of other parks and open space policies. The size of the parcel in question, and the percentage of the property proposed for redevelopment, is not relevant. It also is irrelevant whether or not the club is allowed under the existing zoning to build three single family houses. The fact that the club needs money to make upgrades is also irrelevant to the issue of the application.

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Chair Moolgavkar said her point about the three houses was meant to convey the notion that development on the site can happen one way or the other. If there is an inconsistency with the environmental policy, it is inherent in the fact that they can develop the site no matter what. The same development footprint will be used to develop three single family houses or 30 multifamily units.

Commissioner Morisseau argued that the size of the development parcel does in fact matter. Putting Multifamily-Medium on 18,000 square feet rather than on three acres the density will be a particular concern for the area.

Commissioner Malakoutian said his point about the size of the site was that regardless of the size as a percentage of the whole, be it three percent or ten percent, if the action is inconsistent with B-1, it should not be allowed.

A motion to recommend to the City Council adoption of the Glendale Country Club NE amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as the Commission finds that the proposed amendment is consistent with all the final review decision criteria in LUC 20.30I.150.B. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris. The motion carried 4 to 2 with Chair Moolgavkar and Commissioners Morisseau, Ferris and Bhargava voting for, and Commissioners Malakoutian and deVadoss voting against.

Mr. Matz informed the Commissioners that when staff conveys the recommendation to the City Council, staff will relay the individual comments from the minutes. The position taken that the proposal meets all of the decision criteria will need to be clearly reflected in the record.

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A motion to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m. was made by Commissioner Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

v. Affordable Housing C-1 Strategy

Commissioner deVadoss voiced his support for the amendment but said in his view the plan is a hodgepodge. It was quickly put together and it is flawed. The percent of area median income is nonsensical in that it is based on census data from 2016. In the last five years the levels of inequality have been significantly driven by the federal government to even higher levels. It makes no sense to use five-year-old data. The time should be taken to do the work right. With regard to the exceptions, park land is not included, and Bel-Red, Downtown and Eastgate are all exempted because they have different incentives. In single family areas, the load is put only on faith-owned communities. The intent is correct, but the work needs to be done right. There is clearly a housing crisis, but there is also a schooling crisis. If there is to be a shift from a parcel-by-parcel review to a citywide approval, the city and the Council should also support the school district with land and other resources needed to expand to meet the needs the housing will bring about. Otherwise, the plan will only make life easier for developers.

Ms. Johnson said the proposal seeks to add supporting policies into the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Much of the work will be coming back to the Commission in terms of evaluating the appropriate density metric. With regard to the comment concerning the area median income, she said part of the work program for 2021 will include work on the housing needs assessment. Commissioner deVadoss noted his appreciation for that clarification and proposed that if there are open questions and analysis to be done, the proposed action should be postponed.

Commissioner Morisseau said she had no questions. She applauded the city for taking on the initiative and finding creative ways to tackle affordable housing. While the solution may not be perfect, it is a good beginning.

Commissioner Ferris commented that while it feels like the issue has been rushed forward, the fact is the policy in question was recommended by the technical advisory group some three or four years ago. No action on it has been taken in the meantime. She applauded the fact that it is finally coming forward. She said her biggest concern is that what is on the table is a strategy not a policy. The devil is in the details and the upcoming work is where things will happen. The city will need to reach out broadly to the community in seeking the most effective true policies, and that should be done as soon as possible.

Vice Chair Malakoutian asked what disadvantages there might be as a result of postponing the issue to the end of December or early in 2021. Ms. Johnson said the City Council initiated the C-1 strategy Comprehensive Plan amendment as part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan amendment process. The Comprehensive Plan per state law can only be amended once a year. Deferring action would be inconsistent with the direction of the Council, and it would mean no action for about a year. The Commission is free, however, to recommend to the Council deferral of the action. Staff believe the policies are needed in order to set the stage for future code amendment work, which hopefully will kick off fairly soon for adoption in the first quarter of 2021.

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Commissioner Bhargava said Commissioner deVadoss's comments mirrored his own. The implications and mechanics of the action are unclear. Moving forward and developing land use implications from a policy with mechanics and criteria that are not well established may not be beneficial. He clarified that he truly applauds the intent of the policies. There is a clear gap that needs to be addressed, and the proposal seeks to address that in part. It does feel, however, as though the work is being jammed in so that work can continue in 2021. He asked if there are any exceptions to the Comprehensive Plan amendment process that would allow the Commission to take up the issue early in 2021. Ms. Johnson allowed that there is a process under which the city can initiate an emergency action allowing for adoption of a Comprehensive Plan amendment out

of cycle. That does not occur frequently and typically only when there are extenuating circumstances. The Council has given direction to move forward in addressing the dire need for affordable housing, which is clearly a Council priority. The proposal is consistent with the affordable housing strategy, which the Council enacted in 2017, and in fact staff went to the Council in 2018 seeking a proposed approach to accomplish C-1, only to see the work deferred. The Council now wants to see action on C-1 moved forward. There is significant interest on the part of the faith community. The Commission received some 75 letters and more are coming in all the time, which is evidence of a passionate interest on the part of the community to move the issue forward.

Assistant City Attorney Matt McFarland said the action to include the C-1 strategy in the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process for 2020 was made by City Council. The role of the Commission during final review is to review the proposal against the decision criteria and provide an advisory recommendation to the Council. He reiterated that the result of deferring action would likely mean the issue would be added to the work program for 2021 rather than being picked up early in the new year.

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Chair Moolgavkar agreed that the issue has felt very rushed. It is complicated, and some Commissioners are more steeped in it than others. The concern is the way in which the matter has come through to the Commission. It has in many ways felt unclear. She said, however, that she was unwilling to wait another year to have the matter move forward. From a policy perspective, it is general enough to allow for the details to be worked out at the next stage. She urged staff to convey to the Council the fact that the Commission felt the issue felt rushed, leaving the Commission with less opportunity to properly deliberate the merits.

Commissioner Morisseau noted that in the past instances where the Commission has met with similar situations, the Commission has made a recommendation to the Council and added to it specific areas of concern for the Council to consider. While not ideal, that is an option. Mr. Matz said the Commission can simply direct language to be included in the resolution to the Council. He stressed that the Commission would need to be fairly specific. Since the language becomes a part of the resolution, the Commission must vote on it to approve it or not approve it.

Commissioner deVadoss said there are several challenges. The area median income data is one area of concern given that it is five years old. The specifics of the implementation, especially given the feedback with respect to the public hearing, is a clear indication that things are not clear. The Council has boxed in the Commission, leaving the Commission little room to maneuver.

Commissioner Bhargava suggested that the lateness of the hour made it difficult to come up with the right language on the spot. In simplest form, it should be said that while the Commission agrees with the spirit of the policy proposal, the criteria for implementation as it relates to infrastructure, traffic and adjacencies need testing and validation. Mr. Matz said he would interpret that statement to mean the Commission recommends to the Council that during the Land Use Code amendment process there should be specificity around what SEPA sees as environmental impacts, including traffic and land use infrastructure.

Commissioner deVadoss wanted to see added to the language reference to school district resources.

Mr. Matz said staff would draft language after the Commission's vote and would circulate it among the Commissioners as part of the resolution.

Commissioner Morisseau stressed the need to include in the language using relevant data.

Mr. Matz offered language highlighting the Commission's desire to see accuracy and specificity in data related to income levels and impacts on infrastructure, including transportation, the environment, school district and other services. Chair Moolgavkar said along with "accurate" data she would stress the need for current data. Commissioner Bhargava proposed use of the word "appropriate" in terms of data.

Commissioner deVadoss said he would like the language to include something along the lines of respecting the concerns voiced by some of the religious groups regarding unintended consequences.

There was agreement for staff to draft a statement and circulate it among the Commissioners.

A motion to recommend to the City Council adoption of the C-1 Affordable Housing Strategy amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, along with the desire of the Commission to see current, appropriate data related to impacts on infrastructure, including transportation, the environment, school districts, income levels, and other services, and unintended consequences was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried unanimously.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 23, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Vice Chair Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ferris and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner deVadoss abstained from voting.

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11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

13. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Moolgavkar adjourned the meeting at 10:21 p.m.