

2022 Annual Final Review Comprehensive Plan Amendment Recommendation
Council-initiated Amendments

Transportation Policy Recommendations

Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend these proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments because the applications satisfy Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a City Council-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Curb Management: Concur with the Transportation Commission recommendation to amend the Transportation Element and Downtown Subarea Plan to embed policies that support a comprehensive approach to curb management.

Application Number: 22-103136 AC

Proposal: Policy amendments

Elements: Transportation Element

Subarea Plans: Downtown

Final Review is normally the second step in Bellevue’s two-part plan amendment review process. Proposed amendments initiated by the City Council go straight to this step, as the Council’s decision to initiate validates the proposal as worthy of plan amendment consideration. Final Review evaluates the merits of proposed amendments included in the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program. Final Review evaluation and decision includes staff review, a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation by resolution, and City Council action by ordinance. The City Council initiated the comprehensive plan amendments on February 14, 2022.

PROPOSAL

After three study sessions, culminating on June 9, 2022, the Transportation Commission voted unanimously to forward policy recommendations that support curb management to the Planning Commission.

Work Program

On February 14, 2022, the City Council initiated a work program to amend policy in the Transportation Element and Downtown Subarea Plan in support of curb management as part of the 2022 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPA). The Transportation Commission prepared a recommendation that included repealing existing policy, amending existing policy and adding new policy to establish a comprehensive approach to curb management and to create alignment with the forthcoming Curb Management Plan.

OVERVIEW OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

These proposals satisfy the Final Review Decision Criteria for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment:

- ✓ The proposed amendment is **consistent with the Comprehensive Plan:**

Proposed policy amendments pair with the Transportation vision stated in the Comprehensive Plan: “Moving into, around and through Bellevue is reliable and predictable.” Improved curb management practices will add clarity and reduce friction at the curb, respond to changing new mobility landscapes, and establish a supply-and-demand framework for the curbside that will result in better curbside operation reliability, availability, and predictability.

Existing Comprehensive Plan policies provide guidance to address curb management issues ad hoc. Proposed amendments provide more intention to enhance existing policy direction while staying consistent with all other Comprehensive Plan policies and goals.

- ✓ The proposed amendment **addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city:**

The rapid growth of new mobility solutions and curbside placemaking strategies – as well as the accelerating growth within Bellevue’s urban neighborhoods – have placed new burdens on traditional curbside uses and highlighted new importance on establishing better long-range curb management practices. Proposed policy amendments will allow the city to approach rising curb management challenges in a more deliberate and mindful manner. Additionally, new policy and operational frameworks will be needed to ensure that the use of curb spaces is aligned with other City goals, such as the Environmental Stewardship Plan. Improved practices and policy direction will provide benefit to all users of the transportation system within Bellevue.

- ✓ The proposed amendment **addresses significantly changed conditions (since the last time the pertinent map or text was amended):**

New mobility options and curbside strategies have risen both locally and nationally within the last ten years. Competing demands among new mobility uses – such as app-based rideshare and taxi services, urban freight uses, employer shuttles, and micromobility functions like free-floating bikeshare – have placed greater emphasis on the importance of curbside management. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Bellevue and other cities around the country have experimented utilizing curb space for placemaking functions, such as creating outdoor dining areas, installing public seating zones, establishing dedicated food truck spaces, and expanding tree canopy and greenery zones. Other innovative curbside functions include the advent of common carrier delivery lockers, mobility hubs, and electric vehicle charging stations.

Proposed policy amendments will help address these significantly changed conditions in a measured and proactive manner. The Transportation Commission has a workplan to recommend a Curb Management Plan to the City Council, which will operationalize policy considerations.

- ✓ The proposed amendment **demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety and welfare:**

Proposed policy amendments are intended to enhance safety, efficiency, and flexibility of valuable curbside areas within Bellevue. A comprehensive curb management strategy that considers competing demands as well as limited curb supply will both optimize critical transportation infrastructure as well as utilize public right-of-way in a more sustainable manner.

BACKGROUND

On November 15, 2021, the City Council approved a consultant contract and scope of work for the Curb Management Plan (CMP). This CMP effort seeks to establish more deliberate policies, practice, and guidance on how curb areas should be design, maintained, and operated over time.

On February 14, 2022, the City Council provided direction to initiate a 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) workplan in support of curb management. The Transportation Commission developed initial policies and transmitted recommendations to the Planning Commission for consideration as part of the 2022 annual CPA process. The Transportation Commission reviewed, discussed, and debated material regarding the 2022 CPA workplan during three study sessions between April and June. At the meeting on June 9, 2022, the Transportation Commission voted unanimously to approve policy recommendations that support curb management in Bellevue.

FINAL REVIEW DECISION CRITERIA

The Final Review Decision Criteria for a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment are set forth in the Land Use Code in Section 20.30I.150. A proposal must meet all of the criteria to be recommended for approval. Based on the criteria, staff recommends **approval** of the proposed amendments:

Final Review Decision Criteria	Meets/ <i>Does Not Meet</i>
A – Obvious technical error	N/A
B1 – Consistent with Plan and other plans and law	Meets
B2 – Addresses interests and changed needs of entire city	Meets
B3 – Addresses significantly changed conditions	Meets
B4 – Could be suitably developed	Meets
B5 – Demonstrates a public benefit	Meets

This conclusion is based on the following analysis:

A. There exists obvious technical error in the pertinent Comprehensive Plan provision, or

Not applicable to this proposal.

B1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other goals and policies of the city, the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), the Growth Management Act and other applicable law; and

The proposed amendment is consistent with such plans, goals, and policies of the city and of the CPP, the GMA, and other applicable law.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because enhanced curb management policies pair with the overarching goals of both the Transportation Element (to improve all mobility options so that everyone in Bellevue has a safe, comfortable, and efficient experience on their preferred mode, while encouraging and transitioning to more environmentally and fiscally sustainable modes) and the Downtown Subarea Plan (to become the symbolic and functional heart of the Eastside Region through the continued location of cultural, commercial, entertainment, residential, and regional uses). The various policy recommendations address numerous curbside use cases which directly reflects Bellevue’s commitment to maintaining an efficient, reliable, and safe transportation system while identifying opportunities to enhance adjacent land uses.

Countywide Planning Policies

The proposed CPA is consistent with the overall intent of the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to provide for an “integrated, multimodal transportation system that supports the regional vision for growth, efficiently moves people and goods, and is environmentally and functionally sustainable over the long term.” CPP’s also recognize the importance of mobility via “A well-integrated, multimodal transportation system” and optimizing system operations through “A transportation system that is well-designed and managed to protect public investments, promote equitable access, provide mobility, promote public health and safety, and achieve optimum efficiency”. Specific CPP policies that pair with proposed curb management policies in Bellevue include:

- **Policy T-4:** Reduce the need for new roadway capacity improvements through investments in transportation system management and operations, pricing programs, and transportation demand management strategies that improve the efficiency of and access to the current system.
- **Policy T-12:** Promote the mobility of people and goods through a multimodal transportation system based on regional priorities consistent with VISION 2050 and local comprehensive plans.
- **Policy T-20:** Consider mobility options, connectivity, active transportation access, and safety in the siting and design of transit stations and mobility hubs, especially those that are serviced by high-capacity transit.
- **Policy T-22:** Respond to changes in mobility patterns and needs for both people and goods, encouraging partnerships with nonprofit providers and the private sector where applicable.
- **Policy T-32:** Plan and develop a countywide transportation system that supports the connection between land use and transportation, and essential travel that reduces greenhouse gas emissions by advancing strategies that shorten trip length or replace vehicle trips to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- **Policy T-33:** Apply technologies, programs, and other strategies (e.g., intelligent transportation systems (ITS), first and last mile connections) to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and support equity; improve mobility; and reduce congestion, vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Policy EC-19:** Add to the vibrancy and sustainability of our communities and the health and well-being of all people through safe and convenient access to local services, neighborhood-oriented retail, purveyors of healthy food (e.g., grocery stores and farmers markets), and transportation choices.

Growth Management Act

The proposed CPA will ensure that curb management decisions are paired with direction provided within the city's Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP). The MIP was adopted by City Council in 2022 and provides a new approach to meeting concurrency guidelines established through the Growth Management Act (GMA). The MIP has created, among other structures, a supply-and-demand metric for mobility to pair with multimodal concurrency.

The GMA emphasizes the following goal:

"Transportation concurrency should encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans."

The curbside environment is crucial to providing efficient transportation systems while also ensuring livable environments that pair with land use. Curb management decisions will pair with performance metrics established in the MIP to ensure supply of mobility matches intended demand as city growth continues.

B2. The proposed amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city as identified in its long-range planning and policy documents; and

Existing policies in the Transportation Element and Downtown Subarea Plan provide some direction on Bellevue's high-level approach to curb management. However, existing structures related to curb management are insufficient to keep up with accelerating growth seen in Bellevue.

Policy amendments, as recommended by the Transportation Commission, provide clearer guidance to consider a variety of curb designs, demand allocation strategies, and tools to better respond to growth and new curb uses. Recommended policy amendments provide direction to allow, monitor, and restrict specific curbside use cases, including policies directed towards curb technologies, electric vehicle charging stations, curbside placemaking and retail activity, and mobility-focused curb functionality. Additionally, some policy amendments refer directly to the Curb Management Plan, with the intent to ensure that the plan is tied to policy and is actionable long-term. The final plan is anticipated to be completed in early 2023.

B3. The proposal addresses significantly changed conditions since the last time the pertinent Comprehensive Plan map or text was amended. See LUC 20.50.046 (below) for the definition of “Significantly Changed Conditions:”

Significantly changed conditions. Demonstrating evidence of change such as 1) unanticipated consequences of an adopted policy, or 2) changed conditions on the subject property or its surrounding area, or 3) changes related to the pertinent Plan map or text; where such change has implications of a magnitude that need to be addressed for the Comprehensive Plan to function as an integrated whole. This definition applies only to Part 20.30I Amendment and Review of the Comprehensive Plan (LUC 20.50.046); and

Bellevue population and employment have rapidly grown since the last Periodic update the Comprehensive Plan in 2015, and existing policy language speaking to curb management tools and techniques are insufficient to properly track and handle demands. The rise of new mobility services – including app-based rideshare services, increased urban freight activity, multimodal travel spaces, and others – have proliferated in the last ten years. Additionally, new curbside placemaking functions, such as on-street dining, have been shown to enhance the urban environment in certain locations in Bellevue. The proposed CPA provides broad direction to better handle changing conditions within the multimodal transportation network, and gives the city a better ability to integrate transportation decisions with land use intent. Additionally, certain policies refer to the Curb Management Plan, which is a component of the Transportation Commission’s ongoing work as directed by the City Council.

B4. If a site-specific proposed amendment, the subject property is suitable for development in general conformance with adjacent land use and the surrounding development pattern, and with zoning standards under the potential zoning classifications; and

Not applicable to this proposal.

B5. The proposed amendment demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety and welfare of the city.

Comprehensive curb management policies will strengthen the city’s ability to respond proactively to a changing mobility landscape, pair transportation right-of-way with land use direction, and promote efficiency in the transportation network. The CPA will also promote more predictable and dynamic curbside environments that will enhance safety and efficiency of the transportation network. This policy direction will benefit the city as a whole by promoting more sustainable practices that meet the mobility demands of today and predict the demands of the future.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT

The 2022 proposed annual CPA was introduced to the Planning Commission at their March 9, 2022 meeting. The CPA was also discussed at the June 22, 2022 Planning Commission meeting which included a recommendation from the Transportation Commission.

Notice of the Application was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on April 21, 2022 and mailed and posted as required by LUC 20.35.420. Notice of the September 14 Final Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on August 25, 2022, and included notice sent to parties of interest.

Effective community engagement, outreach, and public comments at Final Review

Applicants, residents, and communities are engaging across a variety of media in proactive public participation during the 2022 annual review process. The city’s early and continuous community engagement includes tools and occasions to provide and respond to public information and engagement.

Public comments come in throughout the process. All comments written and oral are included in the public record, for reference and for use by decision-makers. At the various steps, the comments are included in their original form to the Planning Commission as attachments to staff report recommendations.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

A final environmental threshold determination has not been issued by the City, which is anticipated to occur in advance of the public hearing on September 14.