



Bellevue Planning Commission

July 26, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Study Session on Wilburton Vision Implementation draft Comprehensive Plan amendments

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

The Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative will amend the existing Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, and the Land Use Code. These amendments will consider how Wilburton's future is a key component in implementing the citywide growth strategy for housing and jobs for the next 20 years.

In this study session, staff will share draft amendments to policies for the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (Wilburton TOD) study area (Attachment A), focusing on a discussion and guidance on draft policies related to *Future Land Use* within the Wilburton TOD, and a potential adjustment to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea boundaries to support future land use changes.

This study session is one in a series of Planning Commission study sessions intended to lead to a Planning Commission recommendation to the City Council for the Comprehensive Plan amendment (CPA).

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Boards & Commissions Feedback

The second Planning Commission study session on draft amendments to policies on July 12 focused on *Community and Cultural Connections*. For each of the key policy moves discussed, staff received direction to consider the following feedback from the Commission that includes:

- 1) Cultivating an active, vibrant identity
 - Fostering activity and vibrancy all throughout the year, especially in wetter and darker months
 - Treatment of edge conditions
 - Fostering cultural events and venue spaces
 - Emphasis on public safety ("eyes on the street")
- 2) Fostering a unique mix of businesses
 - Identifying different communities that will be visiting future businesses in the area
 - Emphasis on flexibility making it easier / reducing barriers for business owners

3) Multimodal connections to and through Wilburton

- Emphasis on making it safe for people of all ages to access Eastrail and Grand Connection

On July 13, the Transportation Commission approved draft transportation policy amendments for the Wilburton TOD study area. Their recommendations will be packaged with other policy topics when a full draft of policy amendments is shared with the Planning Commission in the fall.

Relationship to Environmental Review

The Planning Commission recommended a Preferred Alternative for study in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that is being reviewed by the City Council. Deliberations were based on the Council's initial direction on the update, findings of the DEIS, and comments from the public. The analysis of the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS will expand on and refine the work to date to inform the Planning Commission's recommended growth strategy in the fall, including policies and land use designations for the Wilburton TOD study area.

POLICY UPDATE PROGRESS

This study session focuses on draft policies for *Future Land Use* part of a new section of the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan on the Wilburton TOD study area (Attachment A). This includes policy changes in support of Land Use; Housing; and Implementation goals. As part of the land use policy updates, staff will also share an update on the potential boundary change for the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subareas that would impact their future land use maps.

I. Subarea Boundary Adjustment

The Wilburton TOD study area is in both the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subareas. During the March 22 study session, staff discussed a boundary adjustment to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea to include some Wilburton TOD study area parcels currently in the BelRed Subarea, bounded by 116th Avenue NE to the west, NE 12th Street to the north, 124th Avenue NE to the east, and NE 8th Street to NE 10th Place to the south.

Staff preliminary recommends adjusting the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea boundaries (Attachment B), as it provides clarity and consistency for implementing Wilburton TOD study area policies:

- Allows for Wilburton light rail station and most of the quarter-mile walkshed around the station to be included within the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea boundary
- Avoids policy duplication or cross-references to both Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea Plans
- Future land use designations and zoning in the adjusted area will be adopted through the Wilburton CPA/LUCA process rather than the BelRed CPA/LUCA (BelRed Look Forward)

Three existing policies in the Neighborhoods/Districts section of the BelRed Subarea Plan (S-BR-86, S-BR-91, S-BR-96) provide guidance on future land uses and densities in the adjusted areas. Amending these policies as part of the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan would have minimal impact to the BelRed Subarea Plan since these policies are not directly connected to other policies in that document.

Additionally, these policies are no longer consistent with the future land uses or densities envisioned for the Wilburton TOD study area or BelRed and would need to be revised for better alignment.

In addition to this proposed boundary change, there were DEIS comments requesting a change to the Wilburton TOD study area to include parcels outside the TOD study area (e.g. north of NE 12th Street along 116th Avenue NE and north of NE 8th Street near 124th Avenue NE). If the Commission would like to discuss these comments, staff can prepare information for review at a subsequent meeting.

II. Land Use

The Wilburton TOD study area vision includes a walkable, trail- and transit-oriented land use pattern with mixed use areas that complement adjacent neighborhood uses. Amended policies provide guidance on land use components that support transit-supportive uses and densities throughout the area.

As part of the CPA process, there will be an update to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Land Use Plan maps (see Attachment C), which designates most of the Wilburton TOD study area as generally office or commercial, with limited multifamily residential. The Wilburton TOD mixed-use vision will see significantly more capacity for housing than what exists today, in addition to office, retail, and medical office growth.

The Planning Commission recommended for study in the FEIS a preferred alternative for Wilburton that takes elements of the action alternatives studied in the DEIS, including increased capacity for housing and job growth, a diverse land use mix that emphasizes increased residential throughout the area, and higher-density redevelopment that transitions from high-rise buildings closest to I-405 and Grand Connection to mid-rise buildings along the east and southeast edges. For both Wilburton TOD policy and Preferred Alternative development, flexibility was emphasized as an important planning consideration.

Discussion on future land use designations and policies will continue after the FEIS publication. Draft land use policies at this stage are intended as high-level policy guidance that could apply under any of the growth options studied as part of the EIS. This includes:

- Transition in building heights between Downtown and neighborhoods to the east and southeast
- Allowing for mixed-use development and ground floor uses
- Right-sizing vehicle and bike parking opportunities near trails and transit
- Land use patterns that support active transportation

Several existing land use policies in the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea and BelRed Subarea are proposed to be repealed, as they provide guidance on zoning and heights within the Wilburton TOD study area that is instead appropriate to address through the land use code. The intent of these policies is to provide a framework for land use code amendments that will implement the policy guidance through amendments to the land use tables, density/dimensional standards, site organization, design standards/guidelines, landscaping, and development / calibration of incentives.

2) Housing

The Wilburton TOD vision includes a range of housing options across unit types and affordability levels, and amended policies provide guidance on housing that both supports a diverse and growing population within Bellevue, and contributes to a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community.

Housing affordability is a key component of the Wilburton TOD study area. The Planning Commission recommended for study in the FEIS both mandatory and voluntary affordable housing programs. The FEIS will provide the opportunity to examine, at a policy level, how mandatory affordable housing requirements would compare to voluntary provisions when development potential is increased.

Further discussion on affordable housing within the Wilburton TOD will occur after the FEIS publication. Draft housing policies are intended as high-level policy guidance that address priorities that could be considered under any future housing strategy. This includes:

- Mixed-income communities integrating both market rate and affordable housing development
- Range of residential unit types serving different community needs
- Opportunities for workforce living close to where they work
- Green affordable housing aligned with sustainable district opportunities
- Residential units and amenities at ground-level

3) Implementation

The Wilburton Vision Implementation requires a robust set of implementation tools. The proposed CPAs will inform the development of the LUCA as one set of tools to implement the policies. Draft implementation policies support other city strategies for advancing the Wilburton TOD vision, including financial tools, public-private partnerships and coordination, incentives, and strategic city acquisitions.

DISCUSSION

Draft Comprehensive Plan amendments provide a foundation for future land use code amendments that will direct how the Wilburton TOD study area develops. At the July 26 study session, staff requests guidance from the Planning Commission on the following:

- Do draft policies provide adequate direction to achieve the Wilburton TOD vision, including land use regulations and other implementation tools?
- Concurrence on proposed subarea boundary adjustments to Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed subareas

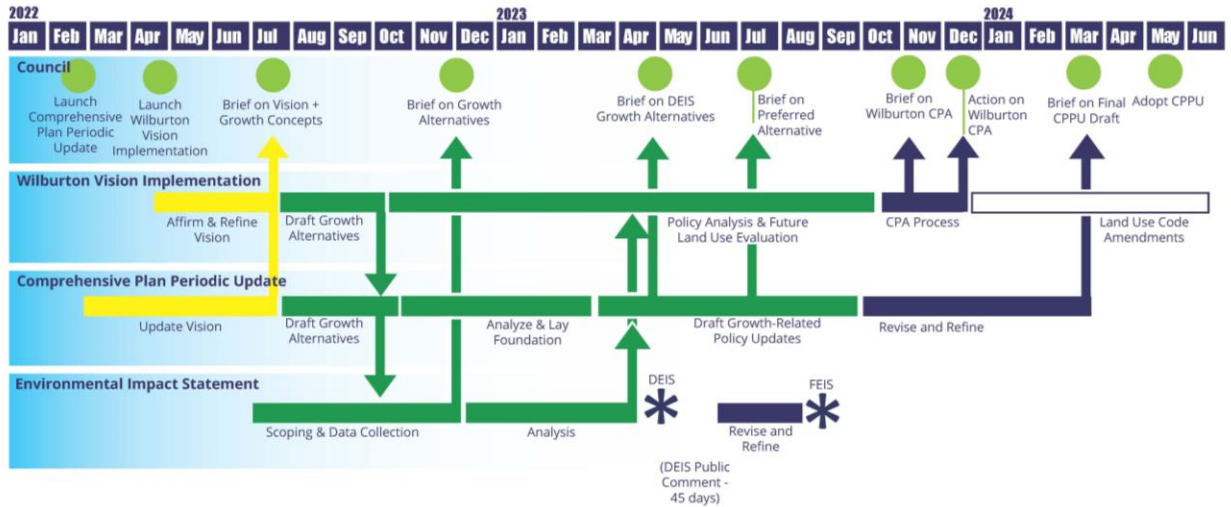
SCHEDULE & NEXT STEPS

Staff plan to return to the Planning Commission in the fall with the following topic:

- Full draft of Wilburton TOD policy amendments
- Wilburton Vision Implementation Public Hearing

Upcoming Community Engagement

Following the series of study sessions in July on draft CPAs, staff will be providing opportunities for community to learn about the work to date and provide feedback through Engaging Bellevue and an in-person Open House in August. The full draft of Wilburton TOD policy amendments staff will bring to the Planning Commission in the fall will be informed by several feedback streams, including board & commission direction, community input, and FEIS analysis.



OPTIONS

This briefing is provided for Commission discussion and guidance on draft Comprehensive Plan amendments – no action is required.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Comprehensive Plan Amendments to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan – *Future Land Use*
- B. Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea Existing Boundaries & Proposed Boundary Adjustments
- C. Existing Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Land Use Plan maps