

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Introduction to BelRed Look Back and Scope of Work Topics

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POLICY ISSUES

The City adopted the BelRed Subarea Plan and BelRed Land Use Code provisions in 2009, followed closely by a financing and implementation plan. Considerable progress has been made in BelRed consistent with the vision through a series of public and private implementation actions.

At the time of adoption, Council policy in S-BR-42 and S-BR-85 recognized that future adjustments to implementation strategies may be needed based on an assessment of early actions in the Subarea.

POLICY S-BR-42. Monitor the supply of affordable housing in Bel-Red and make adjustments to implementation strategies, including development regulations and incentives, as needed to meet the identified targets. A review of housing affordability strategies should occur three to five years after the 2009 adoption of the Subarea Plan.

POLICY S-BR-85. Monitor and assess the implementation of the Bel-Red Subarea Plan and make adjustments to assure success of providing affordable housing, parks and open space, a mix of uses, and other aspects of the Bel-Red vision. A review of the implementation of the Bel-Red Subarea Plan should occur approximately five years after the Plan's initial 2009 adoption and periodically thereafter.

Staff will be working with Council over the course of two meetings (one tonight and one in February) to develop the scope, project schedule, and guiding principles for the BelRed Look Back.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

Tonight, staff will be providing an overview of the BelRed vision and goals to Council along with a summary of public and private implementation actions and identified implementation challenges to date. Staff will also be seeking concurrence from Council on the general topical areas that should be included

in the BelRed Look Back process. Staff would return to Council in February for formal approval of a detailed BelRed Look Back scope of work, project schedule, and guiding principles.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The BelRed Vision

Adopted by Council in 2009, the vision and implementation framework for the BelRed Subarea provides for the transformation of a 910-acre urban infill site into a series of compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhoods organized around a series of new transit stations and high capacity transit line that spans the corridor.

The BelRed planning process that occurred from 2007-2009 was exemplary of broad public engagement and collaboration. Community meetings and open houses included scoping meetings at the beginning of the project, as well as community-wide meetings for review of draft land use alternatives and development of the preferred alternative. The City convened business and property owners in the corridor. Six City commissions took on the role of forming the policies and project lists to make a complete, comprehensive plan for BelRed. An extensive public hearing with the Planning Commission generated oral and written testimony by a range of stakeholders and resulted in review of more than 340 individual comments that helped refine the plan. The final code provisions adopted by Council set forth an entirely new, forward-looking regulatory framework for BelRed.

As articulated in the City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, BelRed will be an area that is unique within Bellevue and the entire Puget Sound region. Development in BelRed would complement, and not compete, with Downtown Bellevue. Each BelRed station area would have a unique character based on the surrounding context and desired vision for the individual neighborhood.

Strategically located between Downtown Bellevue and the Microsoft Headquarters in Redmond's Overlake neighborhood, the BelRed Subarea would create the opportunity for 10,000 new jobs and 5,000 new housing units by 2030. Through an incentive system and other investments, streams and ecological functions in the area would be improved over time, new parks and open space added, and affordable housing provided through new development. Significant mobility investments would occur, including light rail, new and enhanced arterials, local grid streets, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements. And finally, the award-winning¹ BelRed Subarea Plan represented a tremendous opportunity for local, regional and state collaboration in achieving growth management and economic development goals through the efficient use of urban land, large scale transit-oriented development, climate action, and economic vitality.

Implementation Highlights to Date

While the BelRed Plan acknowledged that full implementation of the vision would occur over many growth cycles, today new BelRed neighborhoods are beginning to take shape. The effects of the Great Recession that extended through 2012 delayed some of the early development, but significant progress

¹ BelRed Plan awarded with:

- 2010 Washington State Governor's Smart Communities Award for Outstanding Achievement in Creating Livable and Vibrant Communities;
- 2010 Joint American Planning Association of Washington & Planning Association of Washington Award; and
- 2011 Green Globe Award from King County recognizing Bellevue as a Leader in Open Space Conservation for participation in the regional transfer of development rights program.

has been made from both a public and private development and infrastructure investment standpoint as described below:

Public and Private Development

- Seattle Children’s Hospital opened Bellevue location on 116th Avenue NE.
- Wright Runstad received master plan approval for the 36-acre Spring District development; Pine Forest Properties pursuing master plan near Spring District.
- Global Innovation Exchange (GIX) partnership between the University of Washington, Tsinghua University and Microsoft welcomed its first class in fall 2017 in the Spring District.
- New 0.9-acre park space developed by Wright Runstad in the heart of the Spring District.
- REI announced plans to relocate their headquarters to the Spring District, opening in 2020.
- A total of 761 new multifamily units completed to date and 1,326 more apartment, townhome, and senior housing units currently under construction, including on-site development of 89 affordable housing units and payment to date of \$1.2 million in in-lieu fees to go towards affordable housing and \$2.0 million towards parks and streams through the incentive zoning system.
- Adaptive re-use of many older buildings for new businesses such as the Bellevue Brewing Company and Mox Boarding House (unique restaurant and board game format).
- King County’s Transit-Oriented Development plan allocated \$10.0 million for affordable housing around BelRed light rail stations.
- Ongoing work between Sound Transit and Bellevue to ensure transit-oriented development occurs at Operations and Maintenance Facility East (OMFE) along 120th Avenue NE and at 130th Avenue NE station/park-and-ride.
- Bellevue School District purchased property in BelRed for new elementary school to accommodate projected population growth.

Infrastructure Investment

- East Link construction well underway in the BelRed corridor, with four light rail stations opening in 2023 to serve BelRed Subarea transit nodes (at Wilburton/Hospital district, 120th/Spring District, 130th, and 152nd/Overlake).
- Safeway/Mid-Mountain site along West Tributary purchased by City to accommodate future transportation right-of-way, an expanded wastewater pump station, and a neighborhood park space incorporating stream restoration and a wetland mitigation site.
- Design-build contractor selected by Sound Transit Board for the Operations and Maintenance Facility along 120th Avenue NE.
- City secured \$99.6 million in a federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) low-interest loan for major transportation efforts.
- Range of new transportation projects in construction or recently completed, including new and significantly upgraded arterials and intersections, bicycles facilities, and new sidewalks. Major City projects in BelRed include Northup Way, NE Spring Boulevard, 120th Avenue NE, 124th Avenue NE, and 130th Avenue NE.
- Planning refinements to local street network implementation and BelRed streetscape standards currently underway.
- Interim improvements occurring for Eastside Rail Corridor multi-purpose trail through the western portion of BelRed.

Implementation Issues Identified to Date

Development in BelRed is largely proceeding according to plan, but some areas of the vision have lagged and exposed policy and code areas that offer opportunities for improvement. Based on the track record of the first wave of development and infrastructure investment, there are a series of implementation issues that Council could direct staff to address. **Staff is recommending the following topics be examined through the BelRed Look Back or a complementary effort as directed by Council.**

Topic: BelRed Policy and Regulatory Framework

Informed by a series of stakeholder and community focus groups, interviews, and continuing public engagement with staff regarding what has been working well and areas for improvement, there are a number of policy and code issues that have been identified for examination, including:

- **Existing use provisions** to examine greater flexibility for transitional uses to happen prior to full redevelopment.
- **Land use chart** review for additional uses in certain zones (such as private schools).
- **Density and dimensional standards** review in targeted areas for floor area ratio (FAR), building height, and related standards (e.g. BelRed Medical Office District maximum FAR).
- **Amenity incentive system** review to determine if the BelRed vision for parks, stream restoration, affordable housing and other amenities is being adequately delivered.
- **Regional Transfer of Development Rights** program review to see if it should be extended; the transferred credits have all been used.
- **Development standards and design guidelines** review relating to the desired character of the development occurring in the emerging neighborhoods.
- **Landscape and streetscape standards** update based on current best practices and lessons learned from initial development/infrastructure investment.
- **Parking** examination for new issues such as residential visitor parking and electric vehicle charging areas.
- **Potential map amendments/legislative rezones** relating to split-zoned parcels or modest changes to the extent of the BelRed transit node zoning.
- **Cultural District** review to explore mechanisms to further this BelRed Subarea Plan concept.
- **Sustainability best practices** review to broaden the range of opportunities to occur in the BelRed Subarea.

Staff recommends these types of policy and code issues be included in the BelRed Look Back.

The analysis would focus on potential BelRed Subarea Plan policy amendments and Land Use Code amendments to Part 20.25D LUC, BelRed.

Topic: Funding and Development of Parks, Open Space, and Stream Enhancements

The BelRed Subarea Plan includes goals for having a robust parks and open space system and redeveloping as a model of environmental sustainability, including significant improvement to current conditions of the creeks that pass through the area. The amenity incentive system has collected \$2.0 million to date, but has not yet produced large new park investments or stream enhancements. The Safeway/Mid-Mountain site provides one opportunity for park and stream improvements, but is still a number of years out. **Staff recommends an analysis from a regulatory**

or land acquisition/capital improvement standpoint of how to further the parks, open space, and streams vision for BelRed.

Topic: Lack of Early Development Activity at 130th Avenue Node

The BelRed Plan calls for a new mixed-use neighborhood to be developed around the 130th Avenue light rail station. There is also policy direction for an Arts/Cultural District near 130th. Unlike the hospital station, 120th/Spring District station and 152nd/Overlake station, no new transit-oriented development has occurred to date near the 130th station. The City is currently working with Sound Transit on a conveyance agreement so the City can facilitate development of TOD along with the station's park and ride. The City is also moving forward with design and construction of 130th Avenue NE improvements and NE Spring Boulevard in this area. Some of the unique issues with the 130th station area are the fragmented ownership pattern, small lot sizes, existing light industrial uses and piped stream segments in the area. **Staff recommends the City explore potential additional mechanisms to accelerate development in the 130th station area along with necessary public amenities, such as parks, stream restoration and open space.**

Based on the conversation with Council tonight, staff will develop a recommended scope of work for the BelRed Look Back, project schedule, and guiding principles to be brought back for Council approval in February. This will include a "report card" on the topics suggested by Council for the Look Back or any complementary efforts assessing where the City stands on implementation of the BelRed vision. The BelRed Look Back would involve a cross-departmental team managed by Planning and Community Development (PCD) and Development Services Department (DSD) staff with significant stakeholder engagement opportunities.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to develop a refined scope of work based on the recommended topics for study, project schedule, and guiding principles to be brought back for City Council approval in February.
2. Provide alternate direction to staff.

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1

ATTACHMENTS

- A. BelRed Subarea Plan

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

- A. BelRed Subarea Plan
- B. BelRed Land Use Code Provisions
- C. BelRed Transportation Improvements Map (Capital Projects)
- D. BelRed Park, Trail and Open Space System Plan