

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting

June 25, 2024  
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn<sup>1</sup>

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Mayor Robinson led the flag salute.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Robinson said Item 4(b) had been removed from the agenda.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, amended to remove Item 4(b). Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

3. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days.

(a) Neal Mulnick spoke on behalf of the owners of the Ford dealership at 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street. He said they are pleased to see the implementation of the Wilburton Vision moving forward. He urged the Council to approve the policies and land use map recommended by the Planning Commission. He noted the critical need for housing.

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<sup>1</sup> Councilmember Zahn participated remotely until arriving in person at 6:25 p.m.

- (b) John Darvish, an owner of property near Overlake Hospital Medical Center, thanked the Planning Commission and City staff for their hard work to create the future land use map for the Wilburton area. He urged the Council to approve the recommendations as presented by the commission and staff. He said the area around the hospital was historically all medical offices. However, the Planning Commission recommended mixed use zoning for the area. He said the commission envisions a vibrant community of a variety of land uses, trails, residential development, activities and transit service. Mr. Darvish opined that the BelRed area has not been able to create such a community due to the abundance of office buildings and a shortage of housing.
- (c) Steve Kramer, KG Investment Properties, spoke in favor of the proposed Wilburton Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA). He said they are developing a seven-acre site in the Wilburton area at the intersection of the Eastrail and the Grand Connection. He said they are a member of the Eastrail Partners advisory council, Friends of the Grand Connection and the Wilburton Property Owners Group. He thanked the Planning Commission, City staff and the public for everyone's work on the CPA since the Wilburton Citizens Advisory Committee first convened eight years ago. He noted the community's enthusiasm for the recent opening of light rail on the Eastside, the opening of the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street Eastrail bridge and the future construction of the Wilburton Trestle. He commented on the opportunities for housing, recreation, arts, entertainment and community events in the area. He said it will be important to have development and zoning regulations that provide a feasible path to realizing the Wilburton Vision.

The Council agreed to suspend the rule regarding a limit of three speakers on either side of an issue to allow a fourth speaker in support of the Wilburton CPA.

- (d) Bill Finkbeiner, representing the Wilburton Property Owners Group, expressed appreciation for the work of the Planning Commission and City staff. He urged the Council to adopt the recommended CPA and noted that the extensive multimodal travel investments in the Wilburton commercial zone provide the opportunity for creating a new vibrant neighborhood.
- (e) Pamela Johnston commented regarding the recruitment of a permanent city manager. She encouraged the Council to use a national recruiting firm to build a candidate pool and to allow the public to meet the finalists.
- (f) Alex Tsimerman began making disparaging comments about members of the Council.

Mayor Robinson asked Mr. Tsimerman to comment regarding City business.

Mr. Tsimerman commented regarding a past class action lawsuit against the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

Mayor Robinson interjected to again inform him that his comments should be focused on issues or matters related to City of Bellevue business.

4. Council Business and New Initiatives

(a) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointments to the Independent Salary Commission

Mayor Robinson said she and Councilmember Stokes interviewed nine candidates for the Independent Salary Commission and selected five individuals. Ms. Robinson said City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo and Human Resources Department Director Joy St. Germain also participated in the interviews.

→ Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the appointment of the following individuals to serve on the Independent Salary Commission: Lori Mcree Keller, Claire Sumadiwirya, Ken Liang, Byron Rodriguez and Mona Shen. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian seconded the motion.

Councilmember Lee thanked all of the applicants for their interest in serving on the commission to determine the adequate resources, incentives and recognition for City Councilmembers. He said he had a number of concerns, however, about the process going forward.

Mayor Robinson recalled that the Council previously voted to approve the appointment of an Independent Salary Commission to work with a consultant and develop a recommendation. The Council will not take any formal action regarding the commission's recommendation.

Responding to Ms. Robinson, City Clerk Arredondo said the decision to appoint the commission was made last November and Human Resources Department staff will be involved in the process moving forward. A consultant has been hired to conduct a market analysis and to assist the commission in formulating its final report. In further response, Ms. Arredondo said staff is currently developing the process. She said there could be some engagement with Councilmembers through a survey or other method.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mayor Robinson clarified that the motion is only to approve the appointment of commission members.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Acting City Manager Diane Carlson said the Independent Salary Commission operates independently from the Council, as outlined in the city code. She said an update will be provided to the Council regarding the process after it is finalized by the consultant.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested allowing comments about the specific appointments. However, he agreed with Mayor Robinson that comments about the process are not relevant.

Councilmember Lee said he supported the Independent Salary Commission. However, he wanted to comment regarding what he would like to see from the commission. Mayor Robinson said that was not within the Council's role.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0, with Councilmember Lee abstaining [*Pursuant to Council Rules, an abstention is counted in the affirmative.*].

- (b) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointment to the Transportation Commission

[*Item Postponed*]

- (c) Future of the Bellevue Library Advisory Board

Councilmember Hamilton, liaison to the Bellevue Library Advisory Board, noted the management brief in the meeting packet regarding the board. He said the library boards were established by the King County Library System (KCLS) in cities that transferred their municipal libraries to the King County system. He said these community boards are not advisory to the KCLS, which has its own county-appointed board. Of the 35 cities served by King County libraries, only nine (including Bellevue) continue to have a library board.

Mr. Hamilton said there have been a number of resignations from the Bellevue Library Advisory Board this year. He suggested this might be a good time to assess the future of the board. He said staff conducted initial research. He requested Council support to direct staff to continue its research, outreach and analysis beyond the eight-hour limitation on staff time applicable to Councilmember initiatives, and to return with a recommendation.

Councilmember Lee said he appreciated Councilmember Hamilton for bringing this issue forward. Mr. Lee said it is important for Councilmembers to be heard.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed support for the recommendation to conduct a review and analysis of the board. If the Library Advisory Board is dissolved, he suggested exploring the creation of another board or commission, including perhaps a neighborhoods board or commission.

Councilmember Zahn said it is good to periodically evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of different boards and commissions. She expressed an interest in discussing the potential for a new board or commission at the Council's next retreat.

Councilmember Stokes noted that the management brief specifically requests staff time to evaluate the Library Advisory Board and to provide a recommendation. He said the Council will make the final decision.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked Councilmember Hamilton for the proposal and said he looks forward to learning the results of the research and analysis.

Mayor Robinson said she would be comfortable with staff considering whether there would be the capacity for another board or commission as part of the analysis.

Councilmember Lee said it will be important to have sufficient information to fully understand the results of the analysis and to make a decision.

Mr. Lee indicated he wanted to comment regarding the Independent Salary Commission.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to conduct the necessary research, outreach and analysis to bring back a recommendation for Council consideration at a future meeting on the future of the Bellevue Library Advisory Board. Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Robinson thanked Councilmember Hamilton for the proposal.

Councilmember Lee said that when the Council voted above to approve appointments to the Independent Salary Commission, he was very frustrated. He said he now wanted to cast his vote in favor of the commission appointments.

Mayor Robinson noted that an abstention is counted in the affirmative and thanked Councilmember Lee for his comments.

- (d) Trip Summary Report: Bellevue Federal Relations Annual Visit [*Written report*]
- (e) Trip Summary Report: South Korea International Leadership Mission [*Written report*]

## 5. Study Session Items

- (a) 2024 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA): Wilburton Vision Implementation

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the proposed 2024 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) to carry out the Wilburton Vision Implementation plan.

Emil King, Director, Community Development Department, said this is a major milestone for the City and the culmination of more than two years of work including significant community engagement and refinement of the 2018 Wilburton Citizens Advisory Committee report. He said the Wilburton Vision establishes new polices and code provisions for the transit-oriented development (TOD) area east of I-405.

Mr. King said staff is requesting Council direction to move forward with the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA.

Mr. King said Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan includes subarea plans. The proposed CPA involves the Wilburton/NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street subarea, as well as an amendment to the BelRed subarea plan because a small portion of the Wilburton TOD area is in that subarea. Mr. King said the proposed CPA reflects policy and map amendments with a focus on the TOD study area. He noted meeting materials that describe modifications to create consistency with House Bill 1110. He said the CPA updates the glossary with the future new land use designations.

Mr. King said the Planning Commission approved the proposed CPA by a vote of 6-0.

Thara Johnson, Planning Manager, said the future redevelopment of the Wilburton area is an integral component of the City's overall strategy and approach to planning for growth. When the Comprehensive Plan periodic update was launched in early 2022, the Council focused on guiding principles related to equity, environmental sustainability and housing. The citywide overall growth strategy focuses on growth capacity in mixed use centers, especially the Downtown, BelRed and Wilburton TOD area. The growth strategy objectives encourage a broad range of housing choices, provide commercial uses and services for the community and enhance the health and vitality of neighborhoods. Ms. Johnson said the strategy provides ample opportunities to meet Bellevue's growth targets established through the Countywide Planning Policies (i.e., 35,000 housing units and 70,000 jobs) and is consistent with the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) calling for growth in urban centers and near transportation options.

Ms. Johnson highlighted the timelines for the overlapping work involving the Comprehensive Plan periodic update and Wilburton Vision Implementation. Since starting this process in early 2022, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was developed with continuous community engagement.

Janet Shull, Strategic Planning Manager, recalled Council direction in April 2022 to use the 2018 Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee as a baseline and starting point for developing the Wilburton Vision to incorporate housing policies, growth targets, consideration of the Grand Connection integration and impacts, sustainability objectives, equitable access policies, multimodal transportation options and universal design. The vision integrates a number of plans and studies including the Wilburton Commercial Area Draft EIS (February 2018), Wilburton Commercial Area Study (July 2018), Grand Connection Framework Plan (2017-2018), Environmental Stewardship Plan (December 2020), Eastrail Framework Plan (September 2023) and the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation EIS.

The Comprehensive Plan reflects new policies and text related to the Wilburton TOD study area including goals and policies to guide future development, an updated future land use map with higher density mixed-use designations, and updated subarea boundaries for the BelRed and Wilburton/NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street subareas.

Ms. Shull said there was significant community engagement since 2022 to review the broader Comprehensive Plan and the Wilburton Vision plan and policies. Key themes reflected in the significant public input prioritize increasing the tree canopy, preserving mature trees, promoting native landscaping, supporting small businesses, providing affordable housing for all income

levels, and considering future density and building height modifications (e.g., transitions in scale, appropriate parking considerations, and standards regarding light, air and public views).

Justin Panganiban, Senior Planner, described the major policy areas addressed in the Wilburton CPA: 1) open space and natural systems, 2) cultural and community connections, and 3) future land use. Open space and natural systems policy elements include sustainable district opportunities, expansion of green infrastructure, enhancement of existing natural features, connected urban open space system, streetscapes, major civic public spaces and the Eastrail corridor. Cultural and community connections policies address placemaking and cultural activation, pedestrian-oriented design, diverse economic opportunities, multimodal transportation system, arterial streetscape enhancements and pedestrian and bike connections to Eastrail.

Future land use policy elements reflect a focus on light rail and the Grand Connection, transition in scale from higher density development toward neighborhoods, trail and transit uses to create an engaging pedestrian environment, a diversity of affordable housing and unit types, access to neighborhood amenities and services and the implementation tools to deliver affordable housing, open space and cultural amenities as public benefits.

Mr. Panganiban said the land use policies are supported and reflected in the future land use map for the Wilburton area. The proposed new land use designations are: 1) urban core, along the Grand Connection between I-405 and Eastrail, 2) highrise mixed use, along major arterials (116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE), 3) midrise mixed use, north of the Main Street wetland along I-405, and 4) midrise residential mixed use, along the east and southeast edges of the Wilburton TOD area. The Wilburton CPA reflects a boundary adjustment moving the Wilburton TOD area, which is currently partially in the BelRed subarea, fully into the Wilburton/NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street subarea.

Planning Commission Chair Vishal Bhargava said the commission voted unanimously to recommend the Council's adoption of the Wilburton CPA. The commission's review began on May 11, 2022 and continued through 16 study sessions until May 1, 2024. Chair Bhargava said the commission found that the CPA satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria applicable to final review of a CPA.

Chair Bhargava said the commission focused on a number of goals including planning flexibility and emerging conditions in the Wilburton TOD area. The commission discussed a number of policy issues including appropriate densities for uses, environmental priorities, affordable housing, multimodal access and other priorities and elements reflected in the implementation of the Wilburton vision. The commission's review of the Wilburton CPA was coordinated with the broader review of the Comprehensive Plan periodic update and included study sessions on draft policies, the land use map and technical analyses.

Chair Bhargava thanked the public for their input regarding the Wilburton CPA. Many public comment letters were received throughout the Planning Commission's process and 13 speakers provided comments during the public hearing. Three individuals submitted written comments as part of the public hearing.

Mr. Bhargava said the commission continued its discussion following the public hearing and the key topics of debate were how arterial streets were being addressed in Wilburton's transportation vision, environmental protection and open space policies, and the appropriate densities around Lake Bellevue, Bellevue Botanical Garden and light rail stations. The commission's CPA recommendation includes revisions to strengthen language related to actionable policies and how policies should be implemented.

Mr. King said staff is requesting Council direction to return with an ordinance for final action approving the proposed 2024 Wilburton CPA as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Mayor Robinson thanked Chair Bhargava and the Planning Commission for their extensive time commitment throughout this process.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, liaison to the Planning Commission, thanked Chair Bhargava for his leadership and commended the commission's work. Mr. Malakoutian thanked staff for their hard work with the commission and the public.

Referring to the future land use map, Mr. Malakoutian asked staff to comment regarding the recommendation for mixed use, instead of medical office, zoning on the east side of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, across from Overlake Hospital Medical Center.

Mr. King displayed a different version of the map depicting an area between the hospital and the Eastrail that was the subject of the Planning Commission's discussion about medical office and life sciences uses. He acknowledged that in 2009, medical office zoning was designated for that location as part of the BelRed subarea planning. A robust discussion by the Planning Commission addressed the need for life sciences and medical offices while also allowing flexibility. As a result, the commission decided to recommend the highrise mixed use designation, with the understanding that staff would go back to the Land Use Code to determine how medical and life sciences offices can be accommodated more broadly in mixed use districts throughout the Wilburton area.

In further response to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. King said medical care facilities and certain types of senior housing are allowed in the current medical office district. Mr. King said mixed use zoning allows medical offices and significant residential opportunities.

Mr. Malakoutian said he likes providing flexibility in the Land Use Code. However, he expressed concern that current trends might favor residential development, which could neglect the need for medical and life sciences office space. He said it is important to plan to accommodate uses that we know we will need in the community. He said he is a strong advocate for housing. However, he suggested that designating a small area for medical and life sciences uses would not diminish the extensive opportunities for housing development. Mr. Malakoutian said that as the population increases and ages, there will be a need for more medical facilities, research offices, and senior housing. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said it would be beneficial to be able to accommodate medical and life sciences uses where there is good access to transit in the Wilburton neighborhood.



Mayor Robinson asked whether there are other areas in Bellevue that could support medical and life sciences offices and research facilities. Mr. King noted the existing district north of Overlake Hospital Medical Center in the BelRed subarea. In further response to Ms. Robinson, Mr. King said zoning along I-90 has not yet been updated. However, that area could provide opportunities for medical and life sciences uses.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked everyone for their extensive and thorough work on the Wilburton CPA. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Shull acknowledged that most of the speakers during the Planning Commission's public hearing were developers. However, the City heard from many residents throughout the two-year process. Ms. Shull said staff engaged with the Transportation Commission, Parks and Community Services Board, Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA), Youth Link and others. She said there was significant involvement by the public during the environmental review process and many comments were received.

In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Panganiban said staff prepared a community engagement report that reflects interactions with more than 350 people through a number of outreach events. One major event was a community open house in August 2023 where residents provided input regarding CPA policies and the impacts on neighborhoods.

Following up on Deputy Mayor Malakoutian's comments regarding medical office and life sciences zoning, Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he sees the two types of uses a bit differently. He noted that medical offices are sprinkled throughout the community and he expressed support for mixed use development. He said he sees life sciences more from an economic development standpoint and wondered whether specific zoning would help cultivate or incubate that industry in Bellevue.

Mr. King said that establishing specific districts demonstrates that the City values those land use types as part of its vision. However, it does mean that certain development cannot occur in specific districts. Mr. King said there has been medical office zoning in the BelRed subarea for 15 years but it has not produced many medical office uses except for Seattle Children's Hospital. He said hospitals in Washington state require special zoning. He said attracting life sciences uses is part of the City's future vision and he noted that they often need larger parcels. Mr. King said he did not believe that life sciences facilities all need to be located in one area. However, he acknowledged that it is important to understand how to attract those entities and how to have the right plan and code provisions in place to accommodate them.

In further response to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. King said staff followed the Planning Commission's direction to not designate a medical office zone in the Wilburton area. Chair Bhargava said the commission discussed the issue because the zone was included in the original plan. The commission ultimately favored retaining flexibility for locating medical offices and life sciences facilities. Mr. Bhargava said there was also discussion about the rationale for designating only the one parcel identified in the previous plan.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked about planning for transportation infrastructure to support the planned density. Mr. King said that part of the final EIS review involved the use of a citywide model to better understand the transportation impacts. The Transportation Department

will update its 12-year Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) later this year and will consider transportation needs in the Wilburton area as part of that effort.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff and the Planning Commission for all of their hard work. He expressed support for focusing on the three guiding principles of equity, environmental sustainability and housing. He thanked the public for engaging in this effort. He highlighted key concepts reflected in the Wilburton CPA and expressed support for the land use map. He said he believes the new land use designations are comprehensive and cover the community's needs. Mr. Hamilton said it is critical to continue to support a mix of uses in the Wilburton area.

Mr. Hamilton expressed support for directing staff to return with an ordinance for Council action to adopt the proposed 2024 Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA without any modifications. He said the plan helps the City meet its state, regional and county requirements.

Councilmember Stokes said he appreciated the discussion about medical office zoning. He said it is important to maintain flexibility. He encouraged further exploration regarding potential locations for medical offices, including the Eastgate area. He praised the community's involvement throughout the process and support for the CPA. He expressed support for the CPA as recommended.

Councilmember Lee complimented Chair Bhargava and the Planning Commission for their work. He said the CPA is intentional and focused on future growth, including to meet housing needs. He said business parks work well for technology and other companies.

Mr. Lee noted that the southeast corner of the Wilburton area is designated as midrise rather than highrise. He suggested taller buildings and increased density as long as it would not have negative impacts on the nearby neighborhood.

Ms. Shull said that neighbors east of the midrise residential mixed use district expressed concerns during the EIS process and in later forums about the potential for taller buildings next to existing neighborhoods and the Bellevue Botanical Garden. She said many residents were opposed to highrise buildings. She said midrise buildings can be 7-10 stories high. Ms. Shull said taller buildings would cause shade and shadow impacts on the garden and adjacent residential areas.

In further response to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Shull said the recommended land use designation around Lake Bellevue is midrise residential mixed use. She said the lake is a designated wetland and any future development will need to comply with environmental regulations. Ms. Shull said the midrise designation allows greater intensity than currently exists.

Councilmember Lee said he shared Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's interest in whether transportation infrastructure will be adequate to support the land uses. Mr. Lee said it would be helpful to have a specific transportation plan for the area. Mr. King said the EIS included a buildout analysis for transportation needs. He said more work will be completed to update the TFP and to work with the Transportation Commission to develop ideas.

Councilmember Zahn thanked everyone for their thoughtful, inclusive and thorough work. She expressed support for directing staff to return with an ordinance approving the Wilburton CPA. She expressed support for the concept of an eco-district and for creating a community with strong transit access.

Ms. Zahn referred to slide 15 of the presentation and the major policy areas of cultural and community connections, future land use, and open space and natural systems. In addition to housing, she wants to also focus on affordable commercial space for small businesses. Referring to her colleagues' comments about medical offices and life sciences facilities, she said she has heard suggestions from medical and dental offices to locate them on lower floors with residential units on higher floors. She said a number of medical and dental offices find it challenging to hire staff due to the lack of affordable housing in Bellevue.

Ms. Zahn said she believes the Eastgate area could be good for medical and life sciences offices, noting that Sound Transit 3 is planned to provide light rail service along I-90 to Issaquah. She said the proximity to Bellevue College might attract life sciences entities as well.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Ms. Shull confirmed that the recommended land use map does not split parcels into different zoning or density levels.

Mayor Robinson commented on the importance of encouraging a walkable and affordable community. She said in the downtown, Kemper Development Company oriented many of the buildings to be narrow in the north-south direction, to provide more views between buildings. She wondered whether that can be done in the Wilburton area as well to avoid creating a big wall of buildings. She said the Wilburton area is a view corridor between the Cascade Mountains and the Olympic Mountains. Ms. Robinson noted the Amazon Spheres development in downtown Seattle, which benefited from flexibility for developers to produce mixed building heights.

Mayor Robinson said there has been discussion in Bellevue for a long time about attracting life sciences entities to diversify the economy. She said when Alexandria Real Estate Equities bought property on 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, it seemed like a great opportunity. She said they have sold a number of their properties worldwide and she wondered whether changing the zoning to the south of their Bellevue property might affect their plans. She said there has been discussions in the community about creating affordable housing for healthcare workers. She expressed an interest in potentially trying to attract life sciences to the Eastgate area and concurred with Councilmember Zahn that it could be a good fit with Bellevue College nearby.

Mayor Robinson cautioned against anything that could delay the development of housing in the Wilburton area. She said it should be easy for developers to quickly build affordable housing and asked what the City can do to facilitate that.

Ms. Robinson expressed support for sustainable infrastructure and questioned whether a pilot project might be possible. Mayor Robinson recalled visiting Sweden where a city held a contest for architects to develop sustainable affordable housing. She suggested trying something like that in the Wilburton area.

Mr. King said the recommended CPA adequately encompasses the concepts she mentions to set development on the right course. He agreed it would be valuable to discuss sustainable infrastructure and housing and the potential for medical offices and life sciences in the Eastgate area and I-90 corridor.

Mayor Robinson asked whether the CPA should include language about encouraging a pilot project for sustainable infrastructure. Ms. Shull said the policy recommendations provide good support for sustainability innovations for affordable housing and other development.

Ms. Robinson asked whether the Council wanted to take a separate vote regarding the area designated for medical offices in the original subarea plan.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt the Planning Commission's current recommendation for highrise mixed use zoning in the area originally designated as medical office (east of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE). Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

Mr. Malakoutian said he would support the motion but he wanted to make a statement. He said there is no current medical or life sciences office zoning in plans for the Eastgate area and I-90 corridor.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. King said staff could study the potential for medical and life sciences uses in the Eastgate area within the next couple of years.

Continuing, Mr. Malakoutian said he believes there is a need to accommodate life sciences organizations because 20 percent of venture capital is currently in technologies that benefit from life sciences. He cautioned against missing the opportunity to zone for life sciences facilities that could come to Bellevue within the next 20 years. He spoke in favor of designating life sciences zoning near the existing hospitals on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Mayor Robinson said that if life sciences zoning is not included in the CPA, she wants to have a discussion in the future about where that zoning could be applied elsewhere in Bellevue. Mr. King said there are code provisions that allow for medical offices and life sciences uses in a number of mixed-use areas in Wilburton.

Councilmember Lee thanked Deputy Mayor Malakoutian for his comments. He said he is pleased to see that the mixed-use districts provide flexibility for medical offices and life sciences.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to return with an ordinance adopting the 2024 Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) as recommended by the Planning Commission. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 8:28 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:46 p.m.

(b) Progress on the Overall Wilburton Vision Implementation Initiative

City Manager Carlson said the discussion would continue to provide an overview of the progress on the overall Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative. The policy guidance from the CPA approved above provides the framework for the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA), affordable housing approach, sustainable district framework, and multimodal access and walkability.

Ms. Shull said the priorities to be implemented through the LUCA process address land uses, site organization, density and dimensional standards, design standards and guidelines, landscaping and trees, and incentives. Policy implementation tools outside of the Land Use Code include public-private partnerships, City Code, capital improvements, interagency coordination, financing mechanisms, and other plans and programs.

Kristina Gallant, Code and Policy Planning Manager, Development Services Department, said staff is developing the draft LUCA to establish development regulations for the Wilburton TOD area regarding allowed land uses, density and dimensional standards, amenity incentives, and streets and access. The public draft was released on May 31 and includes options regarding affordable housing, parking requirements and other factors. Ms. Gallant said stakeholder engagement will continue through the summer.

Community engagement efforts include notifications to individuals on the project mailing list, staff conversations with individual stakeholders, and four stakeholder discussions: June 5, Wilburton Property Owners Group; June 12, Bellevue Development Committee; June 18, Bellevue Downtown Association and June 28, affordable housing groups. A community information session is planned for later this summer. Ms. Gallant said that comments to date express appreciation for the collaborative approach of staff in presenting different options. Stakeholders value the emphasis on flexibility and have expressed concerns regarding the current economic climate and the high cost of proposed development regulations.

Ms. Gallant said the LUCA will be processed through the Planning Commission late summer/early fall and discussed with the Council later in the year.

Ms. Gallant said the Wilburton area provides the opportunity to advance a number of housing priorities. Staff is involved in technical analysis and stakeholder discussions regarding options for a mandatory approach or incentive-based approach to produce affordable housing. Next steps include testing approaches with stakeholders, the Planning Commission's review of the LUCA and the commission's submittal of a recommendation to the Council.

Mr. Panganiban said staff continues to work on the assessment of a sustainable district framework for integrating green building, critical area enhancements and open space. There have been two stakeholder workshops (December 2023 and February 2024) with City staff and the

NBBJ consultant team. Mr. Panganiban said the timing of the LUCA provides an early opportunity to begin integrating sustainability policies into the code update.

Mr. Panganiban presented a map depicting the multimodal access and walkability concept for the Wilburton area. He said staff is considering a more flexible approach to implementing access in a way that builds from the lessons learned in other parts of Bellevue, including the Downtown and BelRed subareas. The conceptual framework was shared with commissions and stakeholders. Staff is working with a consultant to update the City's Transportation Design Manual regarding project-specific access needs, accommodations for walking and cycling, streetscape enhancements and Eastrail connections.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the information.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Ms. Gallant said the mandatory and incentive options for affordable housing productions are still being finalized. The maximum FAR (floor area ratio) is the same for both approaches. However, under the mandatory option there is a slightly higher base FAR if the developer provides affordable housing or potentially pays a fee in lieu. Beyond that base, if a developer wants to achieve additional density, they may choose from a number of options including providing additional affordable housing or other amenities (e.g., open space, affordable commercial space, etc.). Ms. Gallant said affordable housing space does not count toward the base FAR.

Ms. Gallant said that in the incentive approach, there is a lower base FAR but no specific requirements for a public benefit at that level. If the developer wants to increase density, they must start with a certain amount of affordable housing and can then consider other amenities. She said there is strong support among affordable housing advocates for the mandatory approach. She said the City's market consultant provides ongoing analyses to help staff understand the impact of different approaches on projects.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff for the presentation. She encouraged flexibility and partnerships. She said it is important to ensure that the City does not discourage development and can achieve the desired affordability in housing. She reiterated her ongoing advocacy for affordable commercial space, including for child care businesses. She expressed support for the sustainable district concept.

Ms. Zahn said she did not see any reference to the arts in the implementation planning. She encouraged the consideration of innovations, including in waste management approaches. She recommended that staff hold more than one community information session this summer. Ms. Zahn suggested looking at ways to build in policies and tools to accommodate fluctuations in the economic climate that affect development.

Councilmember Lee suggested exploring the practice in Scandinavia of generating heating from wastewater.

Mr. Lee said he prefers an affordable housing incentive-based approach over a mandatory approach. He asked about planning efforts related to providing middle housing types. Ms. Shull

said the Wilburton land use map plans for greater density and intensity than traditional middle housing. However, she said it will allow for housing opportunities that hopefully will be of interest to younger people and to people who want to age in place within the community.

Councilmember Stokes said he likes the combination of using the LUCA and other tools outside of the LUCA process to implement the Wilburton CPA priorities. He said he appreciated the collaborative approach with stakeholders and residents. He thanked staff for their work and said he looks forward to the development of more housing.

Councilmember Hamilton acknowledged the challenge of considering mandatory versus incentive approaches to produce affordable housing. He asked whether it is possible to calibrate the code to achieve the desired housing production. He said he looks forward to the creation of a new neighborhood in the Wilburton TOD area. He said it is important to understand the economic realities that affect development.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed an interest in the framework for determining whether to recommend mandatory or incentive-based approaches for affordable housing development. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Gallant said the mailing list includes stakeholder groups mentioned earlier in the presentation, previous commenters, and others who sign up for the email list. Ms. Shull said she would check on whether neighborhood associations are on the list.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis concurred with Councilmember Zahn's interest in the arts and child care facilities. He expressed support for the planned pedestrian and bike access. He noted, however, that vehicular access has not been mentioned. He said it is important to ensure convenient vehicle access as part of the multimodal transportation system.

Mayor Robinson recalled that when development was allowed across the street from the Bellevue Botanical Garden, the extensive impervious surface caused significant flooding. She encouraged the City to consider permeable surface requirements for Wilburton development. She expressed an interest in hearing from developers about the types of incentives they would want to produce affordable housing.

## 6. Adjournment

Mayor Robinson announced that the July 2 meeting had been canceled.

At 9:30 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw