



# Bellevue Planning Commission

June 24, 2026

## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

### SUBJECT

Great Neighborhoods Program: Review of Full Draft of Factoria Neighborhood Area Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA)

### STAFF CONTACTS

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### POLICY ISSUES

This study session is a review of the full draft for the 2025-2026 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for the Factoria neighborhood area plan, which Council initiated on August 4, 2025 along with the Eastgate neighborhood area plan as a continuation of the Great Neighborhoods program. Following an initial briefing and overview to the Planning Commission on the Great Neighborhoods program on October 8, 2025, staff provided an update summarizing community engagement activity during Phase 1 (Discover) and Phase 2 (Define) on March 25.

The scope centers around strengthening these neighborhood areas' unique identity and community gathering spaces as Bellevue prepares for future growth. Building off extensive community engagement over the last nine months, the full draft includes a staff recommended vision statement, background narrative, policies, and urban design framework. This meeting will also cover conformance updates to Volumes 1 and 2 of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency between the Factoria neighborhood area plan and related subarea plans. The Eastgate neighborhood area plan draft will be covered at the July 8 study session.

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**ACTION**

**DIRECTION**

**INFORMATION ONLY**

At this meeting, the Planning Commission will discuss staff recommended goals and policies and provide direction to schedule a public hearing for the Factoria neighborhood area plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

Bellevue is a community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods. Bellevue has 16 neighborhood areas that cover the full extent of the city (Attachment A). Each neighborhood area contains several neighborhoods within it. Strong community connections directly enhance quality of life and strengthen neighborhoods. Council affirmed this when initiating the Great Neighborhoods program in 2018. The program's objectives are:

1. To develop neighborhood area plans that reflect citywide and neighborhood priorities and address issues and opportunities that are relevant to the local community.
2. To conduct a planning process that is based on a collaborative partnership between the city and neighborhoods; to expand community capacity for neighborhood leadership that will carry forward beyond this planning process.

The Great Neighborhoods program entails the preparation of two neighborhood area plans per cycle, targeting the end of the next calendar year for Council review and adoption to align with the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process. The first round of Council-initiated neighborhood area plan updates included Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue, which Council adopted in 2021. The Great Neighborhoods program paused during the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update from 2022-2024. The program resumed in September 2024 with the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans, which Council adopted in October 2025.

These proposed amendments are consistent with King County Countywide Planning policies (CPPs) around neighborhood planning. Additionally, Factoria's Mixed Use Center is identified in CPPs as a Candidate Countywide Center for directing future funding and growth. Because it covers a Countywide Center, the CPPs direct the Factoria neighborhood area plan to provide transit-supportive densities for jobs and residents, as well as support tools in the plan to provide affordable housing, assess historic and cultural assets, address risk for displacement of residents and businesses, and support transit access and active transportation.

## **WORK PROGRAM**

Neighborhood area planning is consistent with Neighborhoods Element policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan, which directs the city to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood specific values and policies when implementing adopted citywide policies. The process allows community members to participate in equitable, informed dialogue about what makes their neighborhood unique; and identify priorities and improvements that should be reflected in future growth. Community engagement is crucial to neighborhood area planning and integrated into each phase. Phases are outlined below and in detail in Attachment B.

- **Discover**: Engage with the community to understand issues, identify values and priorities, and learn about qualities that make the neighborhood unique. *Timeline: August – December 2025*
- **Define**: Develop and affirm the neighborhood vision, design principles, and policy moves that are building blocks for the draft plan. *Timeline: January – April 2026*

- **Refine: This is the current phase.** Review draft plans with the community, boards, and commissions, incorporate feedback, and address any missing elements. *Timeline: May 2026 – August 2026*
- **Adopt:** The final draft plans, including any environmental analysis as required per SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act), are reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and then reviewed and adopted by City Council as an element of the Comprehensive Plan. *Timeline: September – December 2026*

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PHASE 3 (REFINE)**

Staff seek to bring diverse perspectives to the process so participation is representative of those who live, work, play, and study in the neighborhood area. The Great Neighborhoods program undergoes continuous improvement on outreach methods by incorporating lessons learned from previous neighborhood area plan updates. The materials from the [March 25 meeting](#) provide an overview of engagement conducted in Phase 1 (Discover) from August through December 2025 and in Phase 2 (Define) from January through April 2026 and have been omitted for brevity.

At the March 25 meeting, the Planning Commission expressed appreciation for staff’s focus on inclusive and thorough engagement. They highlighted walkability as a key theme from community feedback, noting challenges with missing walking and biking infrastructure and Interstate 90 serving as a barrier to accessing future light rail. The Planning Commission also asked how community feedback will inform policies to support tangible improvements in both neighborhood areas. Staff noted the role of policies and concept maps in guiding project identification, community partnerships, and functional plan updates.

Phase 3 (Refine) began in May of this year. The city published draft policies for the Factoria neighborhood area plan on May 4 for public review, with opportunities to provide feedback at an in-person open house on May 7 and through an online survey that ran from May 4 through May 25. Draft policies build from engagement around identifying key values, priorities, and qualities that community members enjoy about their neighborhood today and want to see in the future. Draft urban design concept maps were also shared, which visualize opportunities for improving gathering spaces in both neighborhoods, building from what the community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using these spaces today.

#### **Community Feedback**

When sharing these policies with the public for review at the open house, participants generally agreed that policies support the stated vision and goals for Factoria. Similar support was expressed through the online survey. Policies were generally seen as supporting the stated vision and goals for Factoria. Policies seen as strongly supporting Factoria’s goals and vision were focused on neighborhood beautification, provision of lighting and pedestrian amenities, and coordination on future high-capacity transit. Policies seen as less supportive of Factoria’s goals and vision were focused on affordable housing, multilingual wayfinding, and expansion of

electric vehicle (EV) charging. For wayfinding and EV charging, there were no survey comments indicating how these opportunities conflicted with the goals and vision for the neighborhood.

### Board and Commission Feedback

Staff also consulted various City boards and commissions for their feedback on draft policies relating to their areas of expertise: the Parks and Community Services Board on May 20, the Arts Commission on June 3, and the Transportation Commission on June 11. A formal recommendation was neither required nor requested from these bodies.

At the Parks and Community Services Board meeting, board members appreciated the breadth of opportunities for the community to participate, with one board member noting their attendance at the May 7 open house and seeing participants meaningfully engaged with draft policies. Board members appreciated seeing walkability and threshold enhancements as an emphasis in both Eastgate and Factoria to support parks and open spaces, and they encouraged staff to consider incorporating stronger references to neighborhood history and public safety.

At the Arts Commission, commissioners appreciated the concept maps as a way of providing clearer guidance on implementing policies around arts and culture. They felt community gathering space priorities were accurately captured in the policies and appreciated the specific callout to Factoria Mall as having greater potential for cultural programming. Commissioners encouraged staff to consider where space and programming priorities could be better targeted to support community partnerships.

At the Transportation Commission meeting, commissioners noted ongoing congestion in both neighborhoods as not adequately prioritized in draft policies, and they had specific interest in how staff engaged communities around this issue. Staff shared input received on transportation issues throughout the engagement process, including specific outreach tools used to collect feedback on neighborhood connectivity opportunities and challenges.

### Community Engagement Report

A full summary of community input gathered during Phase 2 (Discover) and Phase 3 (Refine) is provided in the engagement report, included as **Attachment C**. The report provides a detailed overview of past community engagement activities, who the City engaged with during each phase, and the City's efforts to equitably engage the community.

Specific comments on draft policies and how staff considered these comments when addressing policy refinements are discussed later in this memo.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN STRUCTURE**

A neighborhood area plan articulates a vision consistent with the citywide vision, sets priorities, and identifies future actions to realize the community's vision at the neighborhood level. Neighborhood area plans are adopted to guide future actions by the City and others working in the neighborhood areas. The policies in the plan are implemented through different tools, such as regulations, programs, partnerships, and functional plans such as the Parks and Open Space System Plan. The draft plans include the following sections:

1. A *vision statement* that articulates the desired future state of the neighborhood area.
2. Background narrative and imagery that describes the *community context* for the neighborhood area plan, including its history, demographics, existing conditions, and challenges and opportunities.
3. An *urban design framework* that describes opportunities and supports policies for improving public spaces, illustrated through concept maps
4. A *neighborhood policy summary* for each of the plan sections
5. *Goals and policies* for each of the plan sections that, when implemented, will help achieve the neighborhood area's vision

### **FACTORIA NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN POLICIES**

The full draft plan for the Factoria neighborhood area plan is included as **Attachment D** and includes both policies and narrative sections. The narrative and policies from the Factoria subarea plan, last significantly updated in 2015 to implement the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Study, were reviewed to determine policies still relevant to the vision and goals of the Factoria neighborhood area plan. These existing policies were the foundation for updated policy direction based on identified needs and priorities.

Several existing policies were determined to be outdated due to completed code updates or capital projects, were no longer consistent with other adopted plans, or were duplicative with citywide policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan.

New policies were also developed based on changed conditions within the neighborhood area. Since the last time the Factoria subarea plan was updated, the Bellevue 2044 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, several functional plans were updated and/or implemented (including the Economic Development Plan, Sustainable Bellevue Plan, Parks and Open Space System Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, and Mobility Implementation Plan), and new land use code regulations were put into place to guide new development.

An overview of each section of the plan is provided below, including key priorities reflected in the policies and community feedback that shaped staff recommended policies. Changes that involved minor text edits, clarifications, or grammatical changes to policies are not included.

#### **Neighborhood Identity**

Neighborhood identity evolves over time, reflecting the history of the area and incorporating the cultures and needs of new residents and businesses. The policies in this section identify and strengthen a neighborhood's unique elements in the built and natural environment that define the neighborhood.

Policies reinforce Factoria's identity as an accessible, convenient, and inclusive neighborhood and employment center, reflected in its diverse community, strong small businesses, walkability, and continued investment in beautification and affordable housing.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	<b>Public Review Draft (May 2026)</b>	<b>Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)</b>	<b>Staff Analysis</b>
<b>S-F-N3</b>	Increase affordable housing opportunities for neighborhood residents and workers through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development.	<i>No change proposed.</i>	Several survey comments expressed concern regarding affordable housing impacts. This policy affirms regional direction in King County Countywide Planning policies, as well as citywide direction in the Comprehensive Plan and Affordable Housing Strategy, on addressing the entire spectrum of housing needs in the city.
<b>S-F-N5</b>	Provide lighting and other amenities to create a more inviting pedestrian environment.	<u>Design public spaces with high-quality amenities and landscaping to create an inviting and safe user environment.</u>	Policy Open House attendees noted that public safety measures should be called out more explicitly. Also noted by Parks and Community Services Board. In addition to this policy, there are several policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan that address community safety citywide and are applied at the neighborhood scale.

Mixed Use Centers

Factoria’s Mixed Use Center is identified in the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) as a Candidate Countywide Center for directing future funding and growth. The CPPs direct plans covering a Countywide Center to provide transit-supportive densities for jobs and residents, as well as support tools in the plan to provide affordable housing, assess historic and cultural assets, address risk for displacement of residents and businesses, and support transit access and active transportation.

Policies support the growth of Factoria’s Mixed Use Center into a vibrant, connected, and walkable district by providing accessible public spaces, job opportunities, services, and affordable housing as Bellevue plans for high-capacity transit.

Community feedback was generally supportive of these policies, and therefore staff have not made any revisions to *Mixed Use Center* policies.

Community Gathering Spaces

Gathering spaces strengthen social connections by providing opportunities for recreation, celebration, pursuing hobbies, and meeting friends. They range from outdoor public spaces like parks and trails to indoor communal spaces like community centers. Policies in this section support how the City develops, enhances, and connects people to these spaces.

Policies support the development of accessible indoor and outdoor community spaces for recreation, social connection, and community programming through partnerships, redevelopment, and strategic property acquisition.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	<b>Public Review Draft (May 2026)</b>	<b>Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)</b>	<b>Staff Analysis</b>
<b>S-F- N17</b>	Collaborate with community, faith-based, and private partners to provide accessible, affordable, and welcoming community spaces.	Collaborate with <u>schools</u> , community, faith-based, and private partners to provide accessible, affordable, and welcoming community spaces.	Arts Commission noted that Newport High School hosted community events before COVID and expressed the desire to add this to the policy to provide this opportunity again in the future.

Mobility and Access

The transportation network in Factoria serves many different travel modes. Policies in this section inform future capital improvements around streets, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit facilities, and trails.

Policies support a safe, connected, and multimodal transportation network that makes walking, biking, and transit convenient within and beyond the neighborhood through improved pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding, and transit connections.

While not attributed to a specific draft policy, the Transportation Commission noted that congestion was not fully addressed in neighborhood area plan policies. Such policies are addressed citywide through Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan, with the Mobility Implementation Plan establishing arterial performance target gaps and recommended project concepts to address congestion. These aforementioned documents provide the appropriate mechanism for guiding these types of improvements; therefore, staff do not recommend any changes to mobility and access policies.

## Environment

Bellevue prides itself as being a “City in a Park” due to its relationship to the natural environment. Policies in this section improve the aesthetic and functional qualities of natural features within the neighborhood.

Policies support a resilient and healthy neighborhood by enhancing natural systems, expanding tree canopy, improving access to parks and trails, and promoting sustainable design and infrastructure.

Community feedback was generally supportive of these policies, and therefore staff have not made any revisions to *Environment* policies.

### **FACTORIA URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

The draft plan also includes an urban design framework that visualizes opportunities and supports policies for improving public spaces within Factoria, building from what the community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using these spaces today. Rather than a detailed set of actions and projects, this framework guides project identification and development opportunities when implementing plan policies. They are also a tool to support collaboration amongst city departments and community partners.

The *Enhancing Neighborhood Connectivity* concept provides guidance on: 1) opportunities to enhance walking and biking connections to neighborhood destinations; 2) connections within larger blocks and development sites; 3) improved pedestrian safety at intersection and midblock crossings; and 4) arterial streetscape enhancements to make them more attractive, safe, and comfortable corridors for all modes of travel.

In the concept map for Factoria, arterials and local streets are illustrated as safe, connected active transportation corridors that provide access to community gathering spaces, employment opportunities, transit and other neighborhood destinations.

Policies that support improvement opportunities include: S-F-N5, S-F-N12, S-F-N20, S-F-N22, and S-F-N23.

The *Enhancing Neighborhood Gathering Spaces* concept provides guidance on: 1) programming and activation of “third places” with community partners; 2) potential new neighborhood parks in areas that are not well-served by parks and open space today; 3) enhancement to natural features such as streams and wetlands; and 4) visual markers reflecting the unique identity of the neighborhood.

In Factoria, the concept map illustrates having walkable access to a variety of indoor and outdoor gathering spaces within the neighborhood, as well as nearby parks and trails.

Policies that support improvement opportunities include: S-F-N1, S-F-N2, S-F-N11, S-F-N15, S-F-N16, S-F-N17, S-F-N18, S-F-N19, and S-F-N31.

## **CONFORMANCE UPDATES TO VOLUMES 1 AND 2 OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A revised neighborhood areas map (previously referred to as subareas) was adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in 2015, as subarea boundaries had not been updated in many years. The Factoria neighborhood area is a smaller geography contained within the Factoria subarea, as shown in **Attachment E**. The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on how to address previous boundaries and policies through the neighborhood area planning process:

**Policy NH-18.** Periodically update neighborhood area plans consistent with the planning boundaries shown in Map N-1. For any given site, the 2014 subarea plan policies remain in effect until and unless they have been superseded by new planning area boundaries and policies.

Consistent with Policy NH-18, in addition to the Factoria neighborhood area plan, this CPA includes amending the previous Factoria subarea plan in Volume 2 to ensure relevant policies remain in effect where they won't be superseded by the Factoria and Eastgate neighborhood area plans. These proposed conformance updates include the following:

- Repeal policies in the Factoria subarea plan that are specific only to portions of that subarea that would now be covered and addressed through the Factoria or Eastgate neighborhood area plans. This includes Planning District 2, which is considered Factoria's commercial core and now entirely resides in the Factoria neighborhood area.
- Update S-FA.1 Factoria Planning Districts to show areas superseded by the Factoria neighborhood area plan and Eastgate neighborhood area plan.

The amended policies and figures are included in **Attachment F**. Policies that would remain in the Factoria subarea plan will be addressed as part of the future Somerset neighborhood area plan update. Upon the completion of the Somerset neighborhood area plan, the Factoria subarea plan will be repealed in full.

This CPA also includes amending the Glossary in Volume 1 to define terminology used frequently within the scope of neighborhood area planning, as included in **Attachment G**. While these terms are already used in the Comprehensive Plan or other functional plans, the proposed conformance updates define these terms in the Glossary to ensure a consistent definition of how these terms are referenced and applied within the policies. While the Glossary amendment is covered under the Factoria Neighborhood Area Plan CPA, they are also relevant to the Eastgate Neighborhood Area Plan CPA.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW**

The adoption of a neighborhood plan follows the annual CPA process, set forth in the Land Use Code (LUC). Proposals to amend the Comprehensive Plan, including Volume 2 (Neighborhood Area Plans), are Process IV actions conducted pursuant to LUC 20.35.400 through 20.35.450. The Planning Commission will review the updates against the Final Review Criteria and make a recommendation to City Council. The final Review criteria, set forth at LUC 20.30I, are:

1. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
2. Addresses the interests and needs of the entire city
3. Significantly changed conditions since the last time that portion of the text or map was considered
4. For site-specific amendments, the property is suitable for development (not relevant for Neighborhood Area Plans)
5. Demonstrates public benefit.

In a Process IV process, the Planning Commission holds Final Review public hearings and makes a recommendation to City Council. The City Council will review the Commission's recommendation and take action on it, together with any other proposed Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Council will be presented with the Planning Commission's recommendations for the Eastgate and Factoria neighborhood area plans during the fall.

At tonight's meeting, staff will request direction from the Planning Commission to set the public hearing for the Factoria Neighborhood Area Plan CPA.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Neighborhood Area Boundaries (Map NH-1)
- B. Project Timeline
- C. Factoria Community Engagement Report – Phases 2 and 3
- D. Draft Factoria Neighborhood Area Plan
- E. Factoria Neighborhood Area and Subarea Boundaries
- F. Subarea Plan Updates associated with Factoria Neighborhood Area Plan CPA
- G. Glossary Updates associated with Factoria Neighborhood Area Plan CPA