



Bellevue Planning Commission

July 7, 2020

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Final Review on the privately initiated DASH Glendale & Evergreen Court Site Specific Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan (20-114270 AC): Study Session #2

STAFF CONTACT(S)

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POLICY ISSUES

The Comprehensive Plan is Bellevue’s foundational policy document which guides the nature and intensity of development in the City and sets out the community’s vision for the future, provides policies to guide city actions, and provides a framework to allow the city and community organizations to work towards common goals.

- Introduction and Vision, Comprehensive Plan

An amendment to the Plan is a mechanism by which the City may modify its land use, development or growth policies.

- Land Use Code (LUC) 20.30I.120 - Purpose

Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments are reviewed by the Planning Commission and acted upon by the City Council through the Final Review process set forth in the Land Use Code at [LUC 20.30I](#). Final Review evaluation and decision includes staff review, a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation by resolution, and City Council action by ordinance. Under Final Review, the merits of proposed amendments included in the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program are evaluated using decision criteria found in [LUC 20.30I.150](#) to determine if the proposal should be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. (See Attachment A).

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

Tonight’s special meeting has been scheduled to allow the Commission time to hear the staff recommendation for the DASH Glendale and Evergreen Court CPA, and to discuss the proposal based on the five decision criteria. The Staff Report and SEPA documents are available [online](#). Staff is not seeking direction tonight due to the upcoming public hearing scheduled for July 28.

PROPOSAL

This proposed plan amendment would amend the land use designation of two parcels totaling 7.6 acres in the Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea from Multifamily Medium (MF-M) to Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU).

The parcels are located at 900 124th Avenue NE and 12600 NE 8th Street. See Attachment B for a site map of the proposal. Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH), a non-profit affordable housing developer, is the applicant proposing the site specific amendment.

OVERVIEW OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment as it satisfies all [Final Review decision criteria](#) for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment as follows:

- √ *The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other goals and policies of the city, the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), the Growth Management Act and other applicable law because it furthers Bellevue's vision of meeting the housing needs of Bellevue's diverse population.*

King County's Countywide Planning Policy H-9 provides one example of how this proposal is consistent planning policies. It reads:

H-9. Plan for housing that is accessible to major employment centers and affordable to the workforce in them so people of all incomes can live near or within reasonable commuting distance of their places of work. Encourage housing production at a level that improves the balance of housing to employment throughout the county.

This proposal would increase the number of affordable housing units accessible to major employment centers and thereby improve the balance of housing to employment within Bellevue and the county.

- √ *The proposed amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city because it addresses the increased need for housing in the city, especially the increased need for housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households and that is in proximity to frequent transit service such as bus rapid transit and light rail.*

In 1980, Bellevue had enough housing units to house every person with a job in Bellevue. Over the decades as Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond have become key employment centers, housing development has failed to keep pace with job growth resulting in an increasing deficit of housing on the eastside.

This proposal would allow for at least twice as many housing units on the existing site, thereby helping the city meet its increased need for housing citywide. Additionally, the Neighborhood Mixed Use designation includes an incentive for affordable housing, which would allow for four times as many housing units on the site provided a portion of those units are affordable to households within incomes less than 80 percent of the area median income (AMI).

- √ *The proposed amendment addresses significantly changed conditions (since the last time the pertinent map or text was amended) including a significantly changed housing market that limits opportunities for low to moderate income households to be able to afford to live in Bellevue; significant investment in nearby public transit service including bus rapid transit and light rail; and significant changes to surrounding zoning classifications to the north in the BelRed subarea.*

Housing market, transportation and climate conditions have changed significantly since the Wilburton/ NE 8th Street Subarea Plan was fully updated. This proposal would address these conditions by:

- increasing the supply of housing affordable to low and moderate income households in Bellevue, thereby furthering income integration, opportunity for upward mobility, and reducing the number of historically marginalized people being displaced; and
 - reducing the distance workers must travel to get to work and increasing the number of households living near frequent transit, thereby minimizing traffic and greenhouse gas emission impacts.
- √ *The subject properties **could be suitably developed** under the potential zoning classifications because the site is surrounded by existing commercial and multifamily uses, no transportation impacts would be expected from projected trips, and any future project or development related impacts to water, wastewater and drainage would be mitigated at the time of development. The Multifamily transition zone would also apply to this property ensuring a graceful transition between residential and mixed use zones.*
- √ *The proposed amendment **demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety and welfare** because it increases opportunities to expand Bellevue’s supply of housing, especially housing that is affordable to low and moderate incomes. Housing in-turn will serve to increase the number of households who have convenient access to jobs, excellent schools and frequent public transportation service resulting in triple bottom line benefits – benefits to equity, the economy and the environment.*

Summary of Public Comment as of June 28

Six of eight comment letters received voiced support for the proposed amendment. (See Attachment C). In general, these comments emphasized how the proposal would “add urgently-needed affordable homes” for “people who help Bellevue thrive and for long-time city residents seeking to age in place.”

Joe Woolford, CEO of Sustainable Housing for Ageless Generations (SHAG) wrote, “With Bellevue’s growing housing crisis, it is critical the city take advantage of opportunities to significantly address these needs.”

Linda Woodall, Executive Director of Eastside for Seniors, wrote, “the need is at an all-time high...people who keep Bellevue safe, healthy, educated ... they deserve access to affordable housing.” The applicant’s architect, Matthew Roewe, a Principal with Via Architecture, wrote, “With NMU zoning we calculate that the DASH sites capacity could be increased by approximately 500 to 600 units over current capacity (depending on the approved development plan). The new development can also be done sensitively with significant tree preservation and be built in phases without displacing current residents off site.”

Laura Balent, a resident of Wilburton, voiced concern over potential loss of tree canopy and maintenance of air quality with redevelopment that could occur on the site.

Hannah Kimball wrote asking whether the proposal would result in any loss of senior housing, stating, “Affordable housing for all incomes falls short of needed levels in Bellevue. Seniors are especially at risk

because many exist on fixed incomes and are ill-prepared to deal with continuously rising housing prices.”

Summary of Planning Commission Comment

At the June 9 Study Session, Commissioners inquired about the following:

- Outline significantly changed conditions for the site,
- What elements of the proposal would make the units more affordable
- Would a new owner be prohibited from renting out units at market rate, including any bonus units?
- Are there estimates for what the units would rent for?

Outline of significantly changed conditions for the site

- **Housing market conditions.** Job growth has outpaced housing growth on the eastside resulting in a housing deficit. Lack of supply has led to greater competition for housing and subsequent price escalation followed by displacement of lower income households.
- **Access to frequent transit.** Anticipating the need for additional housing capacity the city updated the subarea plan for BelRed in 2009, seizing an opportunity to leverage future investments in light rail. Two light rail stations are now under construction within a 10 minute walk of the DASH Glendale and Evergreen Court sites. Additionally, King County Metro added their RapidRide B Line in 2011 offering frequent and fast transit service along NE 8th Street traveling between the Bellevue Transit Center and the downtown Redmond Transit Center via Crossroads and Overlake.
- **Growing inequity.** The gap between Bellevue’s highest household income quintile and Bellevue’s lowest household income quintile has been [increasing](#), and when the [zip code where you live](#) can tell you your life expectancy, equitable outcomes call for communities to be more integrated economically. Recognizing the risk of displacement from transit investments, regional planning for [growing transit communities](#) calls for development of affordable housing near frequent transit to achieve equity goals. In the Puget Sound Regional Council’s, [The Growing Communities Strategy Executive Summary](#), published in 2013, they write:
 - *Analysis of indicators across the region reveals that too many people do not have access to education, employment, mobility, health, and neighborhood services and amenities. These community resources are the building blocks that create the opportunity to succeed and thrive in life. Transit communities, with their access to the region’s jobs, institutions, and services are critical focal points for achieving greater equity for the region’s diverse residents. As these communities grow through public and private investment, equitable development will require targeted community improvements and strategies to connect existing and future residents to greater regional resources.*

This proposal would provide more low income households the opportunity to live in an area with excellent access to good schools, living wage jobs, frequent transit, health

facilities, and neighborhood services and amenities allowing them the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

- **Climate change.** With an increasingly hotter climate, a variety of transportation and housing solutions are needed to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging development of mixed-use multifamily development near frequent transit service will help to minimize impacts of population growth on our climate.
- **Traffic congestion.** As the number of jobs within Bellevue has increased over the decades, Bellevue has evolved several strategies to reduce traffic congestion including investments in public transit and non-motorized facilities, commute trip reduction programs, smart traffic signaling and land use plans that allow residential development near job centers. With job growth projected to continue over the next 20 years, housing located near job centers will continue to help minimize impacts to transportation facilities.

Elements of the proposal that would make units more affordable

- To clarify, the proposal has the potential to create more housing units on the site that are affordable to households with incomes less than 80 percent of area median income, not to create units that are more affordable than what they are today.
- The Neighborhood Mixed Use land use designation would result in zoning that would allow a developer to [double the floor area ratio](#) from 1 to 2 if a portion of the housing units are affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of area median income.

Would a new owner be prohibited from renting out units at market rate, including any bonus units?

- Yes, any developer that has received funding to develop affordable housing from the state is required to maintain that affordability for the life of the project. Additionally, if a developer were to receive a bonus FAR for affordable housing from the city, an agreement requiring the affordable housing to remain for the life of the project must be filed with the King County Record's Office, which shall be a covenant running with the land, binding on assigns, heirs and successors of the applicant. (See [LUC 20.20.010](#) note 49).

Are there estimates for what the units would rent for?

- The following table from ARCH shows maximum affordable rents for households with incomes ranging from 30 percent to 100 percent area median income by size of household. (See Attachment D). Affordable units are defined as units affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 area median income. Note, rent guidelines have not increased since 2019 because of COVID-19 policies. Rents will be adjusted once COVID policies no longer apply and when estimates of Area Median Income are updated.

King County Area Median Income (AMI) 4-person household: \$108,600

	Studio (1 Person)	1-Bedroom (2 People)	2-Bedroom (3 People)	3-Bedroom (4 People)
30% AMI [VERY LOW INCOME]				
Household Income	\$22,806	\$26,064	\$29,322	\$32,580
Max. Affordable Rent**	\$570	\$611	\$733	\$847
50% AMI [LOW INCOME]				
Household Income	\$38,010	\$43,440	\$48,870	\$54,300
Max. Affordable Rent**	\$950	\$1,018	\$1,222	\$1,412
80% AMI [MODERATE INCOME]				
Household Income	\$60,816	\$69,504	\$78,192	\$86,880
Max. Affordable Rent**	\$1,520	\$1,629	\$1,955	\$2,259
100% AMI [MEDIAN INCOME]				
Household Income	\$76,020	\$86,880	\$97,740	\$108,600
Max. Affordable Rent**	\$1,901	\$2,036	\$2,444	\$2,824

* Rent guidelines have not increased since 2019 because of Covid-19 policies.

** Rental estimate includes utilities allowance including electricity/gas, water/sewer, garbage.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A: Final Review Decision Criteria

Attachment B: DASH Glendale Site Map

Attachment C: Public Comments

Attachment D: Household Income and Housing Need by Cost Burden