



Bellevue Planning Commission

July 23, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Final Review Public Hearing on the Neighborhood Area Plan for Newport

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

Staff recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to adopt a Newport Neighborhood Area Plan within Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan brings the city's vision to life in a local way, responding to changing needs across the city that impact Newport. The policies found within this plan provide guidance to City Council and other policy decision makers, City staff, consultants, those working on projects in the community, and others helping to shape our neighborhoods' futures. This plan provides a broad framework for the future of Newport.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION ONLY <input type="checkbox"/>
Request	Summary Guidance	
1. Conduct a Final Review public hearing for the proposed amendment	Direct staff to first review and present the staff recommendation, then open the public hearing and accept public testimony. Close the public hearing.	
2. Conduct a study session following the public hearing to make a recommendation	Review the staff recommendation, public record, and consider the public testimony. Ask questions of staff; review the proposed resolution.	
3. Take action on a recommendation	The Commission uses a resolution to the City Council for the recommendation action. Take action to provide Planning Commission recommendation by resolution.	

City Council-initiated amendments address broader Comprehensive Plan policy implementation. The Great Neighborhoods program, initiated by Council in 2018, aims to update two neighborhood plans per year to reflect today's neighborhoods and their unique needs and desires. The update to the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan was initiated by Council as part of this program on September 17, 2024.

Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment proposals 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 evaluates the merits of proposed amendments included in the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program. Final Review evaluation and decision includes staff review, a Planning

Commission public hearing and recommendation by resolution, and City Council action by ordinance. The Planning Commission holds Final Review public hearings and makes recommendations. The City Council's subsequent action on Planning Commission recommendations is the final City action to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Final Review Decision Criteria for a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment are set forth in the Land Use Code in Section [20.30I.150](#). Based on a review and application of the criteria, Community Development staff developed Final Review recommendations.

Staff recommendation for the proposed amendment is included in the Recommendation Summary (below). The full staff report is [available online](#) (also included as **Attachment A**) and included in the report materials provided to the Planning Commission along with the [July 3, 2025](#), Notice of Final Review public hearing. The draft Newport neighborhood area plan is included as an attachment to the Staff Report (**Attachment A**). The changes to the narrative and policies made based on feedback from the Planning Commission at the June 11 meeting can be seen in **Attachment B** and **Attachment C**, respectively.

Summary of Recommendation

The proposed plan amendment would adopt a Newport Neighborhood Area Plan within Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan, replacing the existing Newport Hills and Factoria subarea plans to the extent that these plans cover the Newport neighborhood area. This amendment would repeal the existing Newport Hills Subarea Plan. **Attachment D** shows the boundaries of both the neighborhood areas and old subareas.

Additionally, this amendment would amend the boundaries of the Factoria Subarea Plan to align with the boundaries of the Newport neighborhood area. These boundary changes are proposed to ensure consistency across Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. No subarea plan policies would be removed with this amendment. The proposed amendment only entails amending the map (Figure S-FA.1 Factoria Planning Districts) included at the end of the Factoria Subarea Plan to align with the boundaries of the Newport neighborhood area plan, as outlined in **Attachment E**.

Staff recommend approving this proposed amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150). Also see the Staff Report which is [available online](#) and included as **Attachment A**.

Public Comment on the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan

The neighborhood area planning process takes place in four phases, following project initiation and relationship building, and is rooted in extensive community engagement. Comments received through community engagement activities conducted as part of the Newport neighborhood area planning process were discussed in previous Planning Commission study sessions and summarized below.

Engagement in Phase 1 (Discover), which took place between October and December of 2024, focused on learning and discovery. In Newport, community members value the community's friendliness, safety, and convenience. Community members especially appreciate the many trails and natural areas that give the neighborhood a sense of beauty and quiet. Changes in the neighborhood have put stress on some of these values. Participants would like to see more support for community gatherings and social

connection. People also want to see more support for connectivity both in terms of safer options for walking and biking and addressing traffic congestion. A full summary of community inputs gathered through community engagement in Phase 1 (Discover) was covered in the [April 9 Planning Commission meeting materials](#).

Unique elements contributing to a neighborhood's identity and top values identified by the community during Phase 1 (Discover) informed the neighborhood vision statement drafted during the start of Phase 2 (Define). Phase 2 (Define) began in January 2025 and went through early April. The primary purpose of this second phase is to draft the neighborhood vision, key policy moves, and urban design framework based on the initial feedback from the first phase. Through their participation in a variety of engagement activities, community members identified key assets, opportunities, and challenges.

- A desire for better walking connections, bike lanes, and sidewalks across and alongside busy streets or arterials roads.
- Dedicated arts and cultural facilities and culturally diverse murals and artwork that could offer increased opportunities to celebrate cultural events, history, and celebrate diversity.
- Ease of access and orientation to natural areas and other green spaces.
- Indoor spaces for community gathering were vital to the conversation with neighborhood participants.

Phase 3 (Refine) began in April and went through June of 2025. Engagement during this phase provided a second opportunity for community review and feedback on completed drafts of neighborhood plan elements. The focus of engagement for this phase is to ensure that (prior) community feedback has been incorporated and addressing any missing elements. A full summary of community inputs gathered during Phase 2 (Define) and Phase 3 (Refine), informing the full draft neighborhood area plan for Newport, was included in the [June 11 Planning Commission meeting materials](#).

Public comments received throughout the engagement process have highlighted the importance of each of the five elements addressed in the proposed plan and its policies:

- Neighborhood Identity (related to unique physical qualities of the neighborhood area),
- Neighborhood Center (related to supporting the growth of compact, livable and walkable mixed use areas),
- Community Gathering Spaces (related to creating a variety of welcoming gathering spaces throughout Newport),
- Mobility and Access (related to improving active transportation access and expanding mobility options), and
- Environment (related to building a healthy and resilient community).

Public comments received outside of engagement events and activities have been posted to the [Great Neighborhoods webpage](#).

Summary of Planning Commission Input

The neighborhood area planning process for Newport, as part of the Great Neighborhoods program, was introduced to the Planning Commission on October 9, 2024, following the official launch of the initiative

with the City Council on September 17, 2024. The Planning Commission held study sessions on the following topics:

- **October 9, 2024:** Initial briefing and overview of the neighborhood area planning process for Newport, as part of the broader Great Neighborhoods program.
- **April 9, 2025:** Update on the neighborhood area planning process for Newport, focusing on community engagement activities and community feedback gathered during the first two phases, which took place in late 2024 and early 2025.
- **June 11, 2025:** Review of the full draft of the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan, including both proposed policies and narrative sections.

In the June 11 meeting, the Planning Commission provided comments on the full draft to staff for their consideration ahead of tonight’s public hearing, as outlined below and in the Staff Report. Staff have provided the following responses to these comments, including modifications to the full draft and are reflected in Attachment C.

Commission Comment	Staff Recommendation
S-NP-2. Focus on the local community. This policy should do more than just identify the places.	Proposed S-NP-2. Enhance Identify locations and thresholds that are significant to <u>the local</u> community and contribute to the neighborhood’s identity.
S-NP-5. & S-NP-6. Use stronger language.	No change. The language is in line with volume 1 policies on tree retention and public views and open space.
S-NP-8. Use stronger language than “encourage” and include landscaping requirements.	<p>Proposed S-NP-8. LocateEncourage new buildings to be located adjacent to the sidewalk to create an engaging street life for pedestrians in the Neighborhood Center.</p> <p>Note: Volume 1 has policy promoting quality landscaping in Neighborhood Centers (UD-30. UD-30. Enhance Neighborhood Centers with exceptional landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and neighborhood specific design elements.) In addition, landscaping requirements are part of the Land Use Code and vary based on the specific land use designation and context.</p>
S-NP-9. and S-NP-10. Use stronger language than “encourage” and include actions like finding businesses other locations in Bellevue if returning is not feasible.	<p>Proposed S-NP-9. Encourage the inclusion of <u>space appropriate to grow and retain small and independent businesses</u> small commercial spaces to accommodate new and displaced businesses in new commercial development.</p>
	<p>Proposed S-NP-10. <u>Encourage the retention of businesses impacted by redevelopment in the new development. Work with developers to retain businesses impacted by redevelopment to the extent possible.</u></p>

S-NP-15. & S-NP-16. The city needs to be a proactive partner with the School District. Change to have more directive language.	No change. The City strives to increase collaboration with the School District on many issues including the use of land and facilities. However, as a separate entity, the city has limited capacity to require specific actions of the school district. Together, these two policies focus on the use of the school district property and more broadly on collaboration between the two entities.
S-NP-20. Use more directive language and include the Pipeline trail specifically.	No change. The use of the word “improve” directs the city to make the experience of walking and biking better while leaving the means to do this open to the context. The pipeline trail is addressed specifically in S-NP-25.
S-NP-22. Use more directive language.	Proposed S-NP-22. Support the expansion of transit service in the neighborhood <u>and work with transit agencies to</u> , connecting with Downtown Bellevue, light rail service and the region. Note: While the city has limited capacity to require another agency to carry out certain functions, this policy can direct the city to work with the transit agency to the desired ends.
S-NP-25. This policy should focus on the improvement of the pipeline trail.	Proposed S-NP-25. Support the continued use <u>and enhancement</u> of easements, such as the Pipeline Trail, for active transportation such as walking and biking. Note: The pipeline trail is not within the Bellevue Parks System and therefore it is not within the City’s control. However, the City can support the enhancement of the trail, not just the use of the easement as a trail.
S-NP-30. This should focus on increasing the number of protected bike lanes.	Proposed S-NP-30. Enhance Expand on <u>and off-street</u> pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect people to Eastrail safely from nearby destinations. Note: Pedestrian facilities are also an important part of the circulation system and connection to Eastrail. There may be limited ability to expand the facilities since the connections across I-405 are limited, however, the connections can be improved.
S-NP-35. Stormwater mitigation and low impact development are important issues and the city should be doing more than just encouraging the use.	Proposed S-NP-35. Encourage the Use <u>Use</u> of low impact development techniques in new developments and public spaces , especially in areas with significant impervious surface coverage, to minimize flooding and contamination of Coal

	<p>Creek and other neighborhood streams <u>and</u> to support human, fish and wildlife health.</p> <p>Note: Directing the use of low impact development is in line with policies in Volume 1. If the policy directs the use, there does not need to be a call out to use it in specific contexts.</p>
Add a policy on energy resilience.	<p>No change. Recommend not having neighborhood-specific policies on citywide issues such as energy. Volume 1 has strong policies about undergrounding electrical facilities at the time of development or redevelopment or during major street projects (UT-51. When implementing street projects, determine whether the relocation of distribution facilities underground is required and the means of financing the relocation. UT-68. Require the undergrounding of new permanent electrical distribution lines in coordination with the city and other utilities.)</p>

AMENDMENT NOTICE

Notice of the application was published in the [Weekly Permit Bulletin](#) on January 9, 2025, and mailed and posted as required by [LUC 20.35.420](#). Notice of Intent to adopt amendments as required by RCW 36.70A.106 will be submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce 60 days prior to the anticipated adoption date. Notice of the Final Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the [Weekly Permit Bulletin](#) on July 3, 2025 and the Seattle Times and included notice sent to parties of record.

Effective community engagement, outreach and public comments at Final Review

The Newport Neighborhood Area Plan was drafted through a robust community engagement and planning process provided by the Great Neighborhoods program. Since September 2024, staff have engaged in a wide variety of engagement activities to garner feedback from the community on identified needs and priorities. Nine community-wide in-person and virtual events have taken place to understand how the community sees itself, identify neighborhood assets and opportunities, articulate urban design priorities to improve public spaces, and get community feedback on draft policies. Twenty meetings have occurred with neighborhood leaders and neighborhood groups within the community, in addition to staff participating in pop-up tabling at two community events.

Information about the project was sent to all Newport households in October 2024, using a mailing that included a pre-paid mailed questionnaire that received nearly 290 responses from residents of Newport. The project received nearly 1,500 site visits on the project website, with over 670 informed participants viewing materials and providing comments or feedback through this platform.

Reports providing a summary of the community engagement conducted in the different phases of the planning process for the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan were included in the meeting packet for the [April 9, 2025](#) and [June 11, 2025](#) Planning Commission meetings.

Public comments received outside of engagement events and activities have been posted to the [Great Neighborhoods webpage](#).

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Staff Report
- B. Newport Narrative Changes
- C. Newport Policy Changes
- D. Neighborhood Area and Subarea Boundaries Map
- E. Factoria Subarea Plan
- F. Planning Commission Resolution for the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan