

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

2025 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments: Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**DIRECTION**

The City Council will review the 2025 proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans. Planning Commission recommendations will be presented to Council, and staff seek Council direction to prepare Ordinances for final action to adopt the proposed amendments to the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans, and the general documenting Ordinance for all proposed 2025 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs).

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to prepare Ordinances for final action to adopt the proposed amendments for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans, and the general documenting Ordinance for all proposed 2025 Annual CPAs.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process**

Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plan Updates are proposed as part of the 2025 annual CPA process. Council's last briefing on this topic occurred on April 22 at the start of Phase 3 (Refine) of the neighborhood area planning process.

The CPA review and approval process, set forth in the Land Use Code (LUC) at Part 20.30I LUC, begins with the Planning Commission reviewing the amendments, holding public hearings, and submitting recommendations to the City Council. Council reviews the recommendations and then acts to approve or deny each CPA in turn. The Final Review decision criteria for such action are listed in [LUC 20.30I.150](#).

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan is organized into two volumes. All the citywide policies in Volume 1 are divided into different elements such as land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities, and parks. Volume 2 contains goals and policies for each of the 16 neighborhood areas that cover the full extent of the City. Council initiated the Great Neighborhoods program in 2018. The program comprehensively updates neighborhood area plans through equitable engagement and defining specific values and policies to supplement or implement citywide policies contained within Volume 1 at a neighborhood scale.

Since the start of the Great Neighborhoods program, Council adopted the Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plans on December 21, 2021. The program was paused during the large-scale Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update which occurred from 2022-2024, with the intent to resume with Crossroads and Newport in fall 2024. At the initiation of the CPAs for the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plan updates on September 17, 2024, Council directed that the City proceed with the Eastgate and Factoria neighborhood area plan updates in 2025/2026, and the Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish neighborhood area plan updates in 2026/2027. At the initiation of the CPAs for the Eastgate and Factoria neighborhood area plan updates on August 4, 2025, Council provided direction to undertake the Woodridge and West Bellevue neighborhood area plan updates in 2027/2028.

To determine the sequencing, neighborhood areas were evaluated based on their growth and development, equity needs, and planning impetuses such as future high-capacity transit service, the Countywide Center and Regional Growth Center designation process, and the development of Neighborhood Centers, while accounting for neighborhood areas where long-range planning efforts were completed in recent years. The benefits of combining adjacent neighborhood areas were also taken into consideration to support efficient, coordinated outreach and increase collaboration between neighborhood areas with potentially shared issues, opportunities, and community interests.

Following the September 2024 launch, the City conducted extensive community engagement designed to equitably engage the Crossroads and Newport communities to define specific neighborhood values and policies. This included a wide variety of engagement activities to garner feedback from the community on identified needs and priorities. As outlined in more detail in subsequent sections, community-wide in-person and virtual events, online engagement through Engaging Bellevue, and meetings with neighborhood leaders and groups 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. The City provided information about the proposed CPAs to all Crossroads and Newport households, using a mailing that included a pre-paid mailed questionnaire. In support of the engagement efforts, staff utilized citywide publications and regular communications throughout the planning process to raise awareness and provide updates. The City also consulted various City of Bellevue boards and commissions to take in their feedback on draft policies, which were presented to the Planning Commission.

After thorough consideration through several study sessions, notice, and Final Review public hearings, the Planning Commission recommended approval of these two 2025 proposed plan amendments. The CPAs satisfy all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review (LUC 20.30I.150). See Attachments A and B for the formal recommendations for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans. The update to the Downtown Subarea Plan to support its redesignation as a Regional Growth Center is also part of the 2025 Annual CPA work program. This proposed CPA is being brought forward for Council review separately.

Community Engagement Approach

The Great Neighborhoods program provides a strategic, community-driven process for developing neighborhood area plans. The objective of the program is to adopt plans for each neighborhood area that are relevant to their community's distinctive identity, adaptability, social connectivity, and core needs with a high level of community ownership of the plan. The work program is organized to allow participants to share information about what is unique and distinctive in their neighborhood area, identify priorities, and consider strategic options in a logical and transparent manner. The neighborhood area planning process for Crossroads and Newport took place in four phases, following CPA initiation and relationship building. A detailed community engagement plan, with distinct phases following the overall schedule, is included as Attachment C. This plan outlines the overall engagement approach to the neighborhood area planning process in Crossroads and Newport, including engagement goals, tools and activities for each phase.

The neighborhood area planning process is rooted in extensive community engagement and seeks to equitably engage local communities to define specific neighborhood values and policies. Neighborhood residents are the heart of the neighborhood area planning process. Intentional outreach to homeowner associations, neighborhood groups, and individual households, as well as underrepresented communities, has been the core focus of outreach and engagement throughout the CPA process.

Information about the CPA proposals was sent to all Crossroads and Newport households shortly after launch in October 2024, using a mailing that included a pre-paid mailed questionnaire. In response to feedback from Northeast and Northwest Bellevue residents during the program's first iteration, the City moved the timing of the mailing up to ensure every resident would be notified early on. After a combined kickoff event, staff facilitated 22 meetings with neighborhood leaders and neighborhood groups in Crossroads, such as Upton HOA and neighbors in Rockwood and Rock Creek. In Newport, 20 meetings occurred with neighborhood leaders and neighborhood groups within the community including Lake Heights Community Club, Newport Hills Community Club, and Pembroke Meadows HOA. Regular communications were used to inform people about the progress of the neighborhood area planning process and opportunities to engage. For community members who signed up to follow the process, regular updates were provided to ensure people understood the stage of the process, who is being engaged, and how their input is being used to shape the plan. Throughout the planning process, staff also utilized citywide publications, such as It's Your City (three editions) and Neighborhood News (five monthly newsletters), to raise awareness and provide updates across the City.

Within the broad group of neighborhood residents, it is important to consider the needs and ideas of specific groups. The City conducted targeted outreach to reach members of the following communities: youth, older adults, foreign-born and non-English-speaking individuals, racial and ethnic minority groups, and renters.

The planning team took a number of steps to connect with diverse communities, which are often not organized by neighborhood geography, including meeting with Spanish language parents' groups; initiating a collaboration with King County Housing Authority's property managers; presenting to two Chinese seniors' groups; posting flyers at apartment buildings; presenting to residents at Silver Glen, a 55 and older community; and connecting with 8th graders at Odle Middle school. Bellevue's Cultural

Outreach team provided critical support by leading presentations in other languages and promoting engagement opportunities via different channels.

Like other recent long-range planning efforts – such as the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and neighborhood area planning for Northeast and Northwest Bellevue – and accounting for population size, engagement efforts during the neighborhood area planning process have generally been broad and robust in terms of participation for both Crossroads and Newport. It is important to note that Crossroads and Newport are part of the City's first iteration of Great Neighborhoods following the Covid-19 pandemic, creating the advantage of being able to conduct in-person engagement activities in the community.

Considering community participation in recent long-range planning efforts, the City developed engagement targets and metrics for key engagement activities such as relationship building and the community's participation in in-person events during different phases. The City satisfied the metrics for the number of relationship-building efforts with community leaders and attendance at virtual and in-person engagement activities, which included the following:

- Hold 15 relationship-building conversations with community leaders and organizations in each neighborhood area.
- Build a list of at least 200 individuals signed up for the CPA email list.
- At least 150 people attend at least one in-person or virtual event during Phase 1 (Discover)
- A minimum of 100 community members participate in in-person events per neighborhood area during Phase 2 (Define).

However, the response rate to the mailed questionnaire – which was also made available online on Engaging Bellevue – was below the City's targeted 10 percent response rate. To improve response rates and meet set targets moving forward, the mailed questionnaire for Eastgate and Factoria was enhanced by assigning a unique code to each household address to better understand the distribution of households responding so additional action can be taken to close gaps in participation.

The City continuously strives for improvement and continues to evaluate engagement efforts, making intentional efforts to have representative engagement across the community. Based on community feedback on the previous iteration of the Great Neighborhoods program, the City specifically provided additional review time and feedback opportunities for the community to weigh in on draft plan policies as well as changes to the scope for the update. This iteration's scope was also expanded with the inclusion of urban design and land use map changes. When building on and implementing a consistent engagement approach across neighborhood area planning efforts, the City continues to refine the approach where necessary to respond to the needs of specific communities. For example, as highlighted during the Council initiation of neighborhood area plan updates for Eastgate and Factoria on August 4, staff are looking to more closely collaborate with the City's Economic Development team to help connect with the many businesses there.

Neighborhood Area Plans: Role and Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document, focusing on broad policies meant to guide planning efforts for the next twenty years. Implementation, for example, through Land Use Code

changes, is separate from and follows the adoption of citywide policies (Volume 1) or neighborhood area plans (Volume 2) contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

An example of an ongoing citywide initiative to implement the recently updated Comprehensive Plan is the Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas (HOMA) Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA), which focuses on expanding housing opportunities in mixed-use areas to boost housing production and affordable housing in addition to implementing the changes made as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update. This LUCA seeks to implement citywide policies emphasizing the creation of new housing opportunities throughout the City, increasing walkability and multimodal transportation options, and creating vibrant Neighborhood Centers.

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. They work together and inform other City plans and initiatives, such as functional or implementation plans like the Parks & Open Space System Plan and Vision Zero.

Neighborhood area plans define broad priorities and emphasize the priorities of the community through a series of narratives and associated goals and policies. These goals and policies are supported by narrative, shaping the overall vision for the community, defining the area's important themes, and discussing the opportunities and challenges targeted by the policies. The neighborhood area plans include the following sections:

1. A *vision statement* that articulates the desired future state of the neighborhood area.
2. A narrative that describes the *background* and *community context* for the neighborhood area plan, including its history and a demographic profile. Challenges and opportunities listed in this section were identified by the community during the neighborhood area planning process.
3. A *neighborhood policy summary* for each of the plan elements.
4. *Concept maps* to illustrate the urban design framework for enhancing neighborhood gathering spaces and neighborhood connectivity. The maps are supported by the neighborhood area plan policies.
5. A *goal and policies* for each of the plan elements that through subsequent implementation will help achieve the neighborhood area's vision.

The Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans center around strengthening a neighborhood area's unique identity and community gathering places as Bellevue prepares and plans for its well-managed future growth. Both plans are organized into five elements:

1. *Neighborhood Identity*: A neighborhood's identity is reflected in the unique aspects of both its built and natural environment.
2. *Neighborhood Centers and Mixed Use Center¹*: Bellevue's neighborhood-serving commercial and mixed-use areas support the health and vitality of residential areas, and its five major

¹ Neighborhood Centers are commercial and mixed use development located in areas that are otherwise primarily residential. These centers provide goods and services to local residents and serve as important focal points and gathering spaces for the community. Existing Neighborhood Centers are located in both Crossroads and Newport,

commercial centers and centers for substantial future residential growth served by high-capacity transit are central to Bellevue's land use strategy.

3. *Community Gathering Spaces*: Community gathering spaces are indoor and outdoor public spaces that foster a sense of belonging and serve as the heart of the neighborhood.
4. *Mobility and Access*: Focuses on convenient connections between active transportation modes, such as walking and bicycling, and improved transit access.
5. *Environment*: Centers around enhancing a neighborhood area's built and natural environment to increase resiliency and sustainability.

As part of the neighborhood area planning process, property owners had the opportunity to initiate proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map for privately-owned sites that would meet established criteria and public property. No applications were submitted during the planning process.

Creating the Recommended Plan: Crossroads

The proposed CPA for Crossroads can be found in Attachments D through H. The Crossroads neighborhood area covers most of the old Crossroads subarea, part of the Wilburton/NE 8th Street subarea, and a small portion of the BelRed subarea. 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.

In addition to the introduction of the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan (see Attachment D), this CPA includes amending the previous Crossroads subarea plan to ensure relevant policies remain in effect where they won't be superseded by the Crossroads neighborhood area plan and several conformance changes to plan figures in the existing BelRed and Wilburton/NE 8th subarea plans to align with the boundaries of the new Crossroads neighborhood area plan and ensure consistency across Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachments E through H). A comprehensive update of each of the subarea plans will happen periodically through the neighborhood area planning process including extensive engagement with the local community.

The engagement report for Phase 1 (Discover), see Attachment I, provides a full summary of inputs gathered through community engagement for Crossroads. A second engagement report, which is combined for Crossroads and Newport, for subsequent Phases 2 (Define) and 3 (Refine) is included as Attachment J. The attached reports also provide 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. Public comments received outside of engagement events and activities are available on the CPA webpage and have also been posted to the Great Neighborhoods webpage.

see [Map LU-2](#). Bellevue's Mixed Use Centers include Downtown, BelRed, Wilburton/East Main, as well as the commercial and mixed-use parts of Crossroads, Factoria and Eastgate. Although these areas share names with the neighborhood areas, the Mixed Use Center does not extend across the primarily residential parts of the neighborhood areas, see [Map LU-3](#).

The key topics for Crossroads community members were discussed in detail during the Planning Commission review, particularly at the June 11 Study Session, where the policies that relate to each of the topics listed below were highlighted and discussed. They include:

- Appreciation for the neighborhood's convenience and diversity. People value the proximity to services and amenities like the mall and the community center, and the ability to access Downtown and other neighborhoods.
- Support for expanding the off-street pedestrian network to provide safe access to natural areas, transit options, and local businesses.
- Support for expanded and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, also to provide access to transit options such as nearby light rail service.
- Desire for more indoor and outdoor gathering places to support play and creativity.
- Support for increased coordination with Bellevue School District to increase access to neighborhood schools and expand their function as community gathering spaces.

The Planning Commission reviewed the full draft Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan on June 11. The Planning Commission review culminated with a public hearing on July 9. The Planning Commission made changes to a few policies included in the Public Hearing draft of the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan, mainly to clarify and strengthen policy language as well as to emphasize the importance of improving both bicycle and pedestrian network facilities in providing frequent transit access. These changes are outlined in more detail in Attachment K. After closing the public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan for approval unanimously with 7-0 votes on July 9.

Creating the Recommended Plan: Newport

The proposed CPA for Newport can be found in Attachments L and M. The Newport neighborhood area covers almost the full extent of the old Newport Hills subarea and that portion of the Factoria subarea located west of I-405. In addition to the introduction of the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan (see Attachment L), this CPA includes repealing the previous Newport Hills subarea plan and a conformance change to the plan figure in the existing Factoria subarea plan to align with the boundaries of the new Newport neighborhood area plan and ensure consistency across Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment M).

The engagement report for Phase 1 (Discover), see Attachment N, provides a full summary of inputs gathered through community engagement for Newport. A second engagement report, which is combined for Crossroads and Newport, for subsequent Phases 2 (Define) and 3 (Refine) is included as Attachment J. The attached reports also provide 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. Public comments received outside of engagement events and activities are available on the CPA webpage and have also been posted to the Great Neighborhoods webpage.

The key topics for Newport community members were discussed in detail during the Planning Commission review, particularly at the June 11 Study Session, where the policies that relate to each of the topics listed below were highlighted and discussed. They include:

- Appreciation of the community's friendliness, safety, and convenience as well as the many trails and natural areas that give the neighborhood area a sense of beauty and quiet.
- Concerns about changes in the neighborhood area putting stress on some of these values.
- Support for improved ease of access and orientation to natural areas and other green spaces.
- Desire for additional (indoor) community gathering spaces to build social connection.
- Desire for dedicated arts and cultural facilities and culturally diverse murals and artwork that could offer increased opportunities to celebrate cultural events, history, and celebrate diversity.
- A desire for better walking connections, bike lanes, and sidewalks across and alongside busy streets or arterials roads and for addressing traffic congestion.

The Planning Commission reviewed the full draft Newport Neighborhood Area Plan on June 11. The Planning Commission review culminated with a public hearing on July 23, providing the Newport community with additional time to review the draft plan ahead of the public hearing following the June 11 meeting. The Planning Commission made changes to a few policies included in the Public Hearing draft of the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan. These changes were made to clarify their intent or to include more directive policy language. After closing the public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan for approval unanimously with 5-0 votes on July 23. After the recommendation of the Planning Commission, City staff developed and now proposes an amendment to policy S-NP-27 for Council consideration. Both the amendments made by the Planning Commission and the staff proposed amendment are outlined in more detail in Attachment K.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Growth Management Act and Comprehensive Plan

The Growth Management Act states that comprehensive plans may be amended no more frequently than once per year (with limited exceptions) so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be considered.

The Comprehensive Plan's Neighborhoods element provides policies to update the neighborhood area (subarea) plans as conditions warrant, specifically:

Policy NH-18: Periodically updated 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.

Policy NH-19: Use the neighborhood area planning process to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood area specific values and policies.

State Environmental Policy Act

The Environmental Coordinator for the City of Bellevue determined that the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans will not result in any probable, significant adverse environmental impacts. A

final threshold Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans on June 18, 2025, and July 3, 2025, respectively.

Final Review Decision Criteria for Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The Planning Commission may recommend, and the City Council may approve or approve with modifications an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan if all the Final Review Decision Criteria from Section 20.30I.150 of the Land Use Code are met:

- A.1 There exists obvious technical error in the pertinent Comprehensive Plan provision; or
- B.1 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; and
- B.2 The proposed amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire City as identified in its long-range planning and policy documents; and
- B.3 The proposed amendment addresses significantly changed conditions since the last time the pertinent Comprehensive Plan map or text was amended (See LUC 20.50.046, included below, for the definition of “significantly changed conditions”); and

Significantly changed conditions are defined as: Demonstrating evidence of change such as unanticipated consequences of an adopted policy or changed conditions on the subject property or its surrounding area, or changes related to the pertinent Plan map or text; where such change has implications of a magnitude that need to be addressed for the Comprehensive Plan to function as an integrated whole. This definition applies only to Part 20.30I Amendment and Review of the Comprehensive Plan (LUC 20.50.046).

- B.4 If a site-specific proposed amendment, the subject property is suitable for development in general conformance with adjacent land use and the surrounding development pattern, and with zoning standards under the potential zoning classifications; and
- B.5 The proposed amendment demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety, and welfare of the City.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact of updating the neighborhood area plans at this time. However, as plans are developed and updated, future steps may lead to new investments, such as new housing opportunities and economic development with related capital investments in parks, open space and transportation facilities, and increases in public services. Any additional fiscal impacts will be presented at a later date, either through the budget process or other Council actions.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to prepare Ordinances for final action to adopt the proposed amendments to the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans, and the general documenting Ordinance for all proposed 2025 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Resolution of the Planning Commission: Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan
- B. Resolution of the Planning Commission: Newport Neighborhood Area Plan
- C. Community Engagement Plan Summary
- D. Proposed Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan
- E. Proposed Strike-draft of Crossroads Subarea Plan
- F. Proposed Crossroads Subarea Plan
- G. Proposed Updated BelRed Subarea Plan Figures
- H. Proposed Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan
- I. Crossroads - Engagement Report Phase 1 (Discover)
- J. Crossroads and Newport - Combined Engagement Report Phase 2 (Define) and Phase 3 (Refine)
- K. Planning Commission Amendments to Public Hearing Drafts
- L. Proposed Newport Neighborhood Area Plan
- M. Proposed Updated Factoria Subarea Plan Map
- N. Newport - Engagement Report Phase 1 (Discover)

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A