



Bellevue Planning Commission

April 8, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Study Session on the 2026 Omnibus Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA)

STAFF CONTACT(S)

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POLICY ISSUES

The scope of this LUCA includes clean-up amendments, amendments required for compliance with state law, and minor amendments which require limited policy consideration and clearly advance established priorities. Because of the nature of these recommended amendments, there are no significant policy considerations associated with the LUCA. Recommended amendments that are more substantial than clean-up items are intended to support the city's housing growth needs. Examples of Comprehensive Plan policies in support of meeting housing growth needs include:

LU-7: Accommodate adopted growth targets of 35,000 additional housing units and 70,000 additional jobs for the 2019-2044 period and plan for the additional growth anticipated by 2044.

LU-8: Encourage new residential development to achieve a substantial portion of the maximum density allowed on the net buildable acreage.

HO-15: Streamline permitting processes and create objective development regulations that encourage housing development throughout the city.

HO-18: Promote housing density, choice and affordability in areas served by the frequent transit network, businesses serving the community's day-to-day needs and significant nodes of employment.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

The goal of this study session is to provide Planning Commission with a summary of the project purpose and intent, and to present the public review draft of the recommended amendments. Staff is looking for feedback on the draft code amendments and after the study session, the Planning Commission will be asked to direct staff to schedule a public hearing on the proposed LUCA at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Background

Staff continually collect and document suggestions for potential clean-up items in the Land Use Code (LUC) and periodically process these items through clean-up LUCAs. Historically, clean-up LUCAs have

been limited to spelling corrections, outdated cross-references, scrivener's errors, and small adjustments to clarify the intent of the code. The city last conducted a clean-up LUCA in 2022.

The approach proposed for this cycle is to expand the scope to also include amendments needed to comply with state law where minimum compliance is proposed, as well as small-scale edits to the code that require limited policy direction but are not anticipated to be controversial. These edits are also limited to subjects which are not within the scope of another ongoing or upcoming project. City Council affirmed this approach when the project was initiated on February 10. Strike drafts including all clean-up amendments are provided as Attachment A, and other amendments, provided as Attachments B through E.

These proposed changes are referred to as "omnibus" amendments because Development Services packages a collection of relatively small, discrete amendments into a single amendment process for administrative efficiency. The omnibus package will include both LUCAs, which are processed by the Planning Commission, and related Bellevue City Code Amendments (BCCAs) that affect development.

The proposed approach is for the Planning Commission to review the LUCA portion of the omnibus package and provide a recommendation. That recommendation, along with the related BCCAs, will then be brought forward to City Council for review. Final action on both the LUCA and BCCA items will be scheduled together when City Council directs the omnibus amendments to return for final action.

LUCA Priorities

The overarching goal for this project is to address as many clean-up items as possible to support smooth review and application of the code by improving clarity and usability, while also taking the opportunity to incorporate minor code amendments that more clearly advance established policy but do not necessarily warrant a separate standalone workplan item. Additionally, this project will ensure that the City remains in compliance with state law.

Overview of Proposed Amendments

The proposed LUCA includes three categories of amendments: technical clean-ups and process improvements; updates to ensure compliance with state law; and low-controversy amendments intended to better implement and advance established policy direction.

Clean-up and Process Improvements

Examples of proposed amendments included in this category:

- Correcting cross-references between code sections and to other documents
- Adding or amending definitions for clarity
- Consolidating duplicate process-related code into a single location
- Resolving inconsistent formatting
- Clean-up of extended vesting language to ensure current policy and practice is clearly laid out in the code
- Other changes that improve the clarity of the code and do not require policy direction

State Law Compliance

The proposed amendments include changes necessary for minimum legal compliance with recent changes to state law. These amendments address the following legislation:

- SB 5611 – Streamlining/clarifying Land Use Permitting, due July 27, 2025
- SB 5571 – Building Cladding, due July 27, 2025
- HB 1757 – Residential Redevelopment, due June 30, 2026

- HB 1576 – Historic Preservation Reform, due July 26, 2026
- SB 5509 – Childcare Reform, due July 27, 2027
- SB 5559 – Unit Lot Subdivision, due July 27, 2027
- HB 1096 – Lot Splitting, due July 27, 2027
- HB 1183 – Building Code and Development Regulation Reform, due June 30, 2029

Low-Controversy Updates

The following criteria were used to evaluate additional amendments which have been included in the draft LUCA:

- Changes are anticipated to be limited in any perceived negative impact on Bellevue stakeholders, controversy is low;
- Changes are consistent with established City priorities, such as City Council priorities, Comprehensive Plan policy, or functional plan policies;
- Changes are clear, and would not benefit from extensive outreach and/or analysis to develop alternative solutions; and
- Changes do not align well with the scope of any ongoing or upcoming code amendment projects

This category of amendments also includes adjustments to recently implemented code to confirm intended outcomes, such as those related to Wilburton and Middle Housing.

A few of the key recommended changes include:

- Tree code clean-up
 - Allow property line trees to count as ½ credit
 - Align SR-1 LUD retention requirements with other SR districts
- Process consolidation and clarification
 - Move the majority of process and requirements for Master Development Permits, Administrative Design Permits, Departures, and Process Mergers into consolidated citywide section and streamline overlay sections.
- Remove single-family as a permitted use in:
 - Highest density residential zones (10 DU/AC through 30 DU/AC), but continue to permit ADUs when developed with middle housing
 - All other mixed-use zones

The adjustments to the tree code were made based on feedback received over time since the new code was adopted. The additional credit helps to give property owners more flexibility in deciding which trees to retain, providing encouragement for retention of property line trees. Given that the lot sizes in the SR-1 district better align with the other SR districts, it was logical to bring tree retention requirements for SR-1 in-line with the other SR districts. The process changes are intended to make it easier to understand what permitting requirements apply to a given property, and also to clarify what the review process is and what submittal items are needed. The removal of single-family as a permitted use in our highest density zones that allow for residential development is intended to help better align with the future land uses for those areas and help to support meeting our zoned capacity and reach our growth targets.

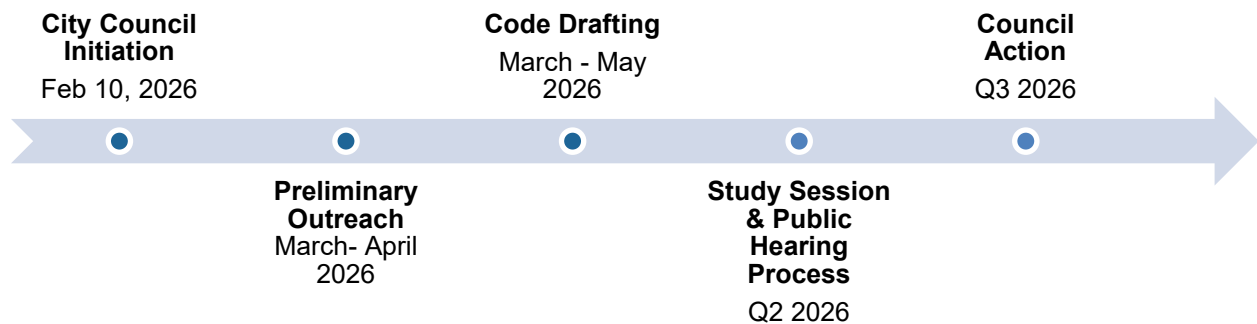
Public Engagement

Staff has developed a public engagement plan with three modes of outreach to ensure the public, stakeholders, and interested parties have the opportunity to be informed on the amendments and to provide comments.

- Process IV Requirements. Consistent with Chapter 20.35 LUC procedural requirements, public input will be solicited by a notice of application, notice of public hearing and the required public hearing.
- Direct Engagement and Feedback. Direct engagement with the development community and residents, including through Bellevue Development Committee (BDC) meetings.
- Online Presence. City webpage to provide the public information about the project, who to direct questions to, and how to submit comments.

LUCA Schedule

The Omnibus Amendments launched at Council initiation in February. We anticipate the public hearing process to take place in mid-May in order to begin the Council review process in June with the goal of Council action in July. This timeline is intended to ensure compliance with several state law changes that must be implemented by the summer 2026 statutory deadline.



ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. Clean-up Amendments Strike Draft
- B. Development Regulations Strike Draft
- C. Trees, Landscaping, and Environment Strike Draft
- D. Childcare Amendments Strike Draft
- E. Process Changes Strike Draft