

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: June 8, 2023

TO: Parks and Community Services Board

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Community Development

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SUBJECT: Wilburton Vision Implementation Policy Amendments
For discussion – no Board action required

At this study session, staff will review with the Parks and Community Services Board –

- **Draft policy amendments (see Attachment A) that focus on parks, recreation & open space policies and complementary policies within the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (Wilburton TOD) study area.**

Staff request that the Parks and Community Services Board review draft amendments to parks, recreation & open space policies within the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan, discuss, and provide comments to help ensure that the draft policies provide clear and adequate direction to inform parks, recreation & open space services and investments to support the Wilburton TOD vision.

SUMMARY

The Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative focuses on a study area in the neighborhood from NE 12th St. to SE 5th St. referred to as the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (Wilburton TOD). The initiative will amend the existing Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Map, and the Land Use Code. These amendments will consider how Wilburton's future is a key component in implementing the citywide growth strategy for housing and jobs for the next 20 years.

The study session is part of a series of Board and Commission study sessions intended to inform a set of recommendations to the City Council for the Comprehensive Plan amendment (CPA) by the end of 2023, and the Land Use Code amendment (LUCA) and legislative rezone by the end of 2024.

BACKGROUND/INFORMATION

The Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative was launched by Council on April 25, 2022. Staff introduced the overall scope of the Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative to the Parks and Community Services Board on July 12, 2022. The Wilburton Vision is based on the work of a 15-member Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), co-chaired by Jeremy Barksdale (Planning Commission) and Lei Wu (Transportation

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Commission). The CAC completed their work and published their study including a recommendation for a preferred development option (the CAC “Vision”) in 2018.

Relation to Parks & Open Space System Plan

The Parks & Open Space System Plan is the primary tool used to guide the long-term growth and development of Bellevue’s parks and open space system. The Plan contains a set of 20-year capital project objectives. The [2022 Parks and Open Space System Plan update](#) includes several objectives relevant to the Wilburton Vision Implementation based upon the 2018 CAC Vision and ongoing planning work. Capital project objectives specific to the Wilburton Vision Implementation include:

- Development of the Eastrail Corridor and multi-purpose connections to it
- Development of the Grand Connection
- Acquisition and development of additional park & open space facilities, including neighborhood parks
- Access to Lake Bellevue
- Enhancement of open space and natural systems

Boards and Commission Feedback

Staff presented the preliminary vision, goals, and policy guidance to the Parks and Community Services Board on March 14, 2023, and received guidance on developing draft Parks, Open Space & Recreation policies which included:

- Clarifying types of open space opportunities within different areas of the Wilburton TOD
- Ensuring parks, recreation & open space goals and policies apply to everyone, not just those who live and work in the area
- Considering the area east of Eastrail as a critical connection to Eastrail
- Providing policy on land acquisitions
- Emphasizing Eastrail activation

Staff requested guidance on draft parks, open space & recreation policies with Planning Commission on May 24, 2023 on whether they provided adequate direction to achieve the Wilburton TOD vision, including land use regulations and other implementation tools. Planning Commission affirmed the draft policy direction, and provided the following considerations:

- Consideration of wildlife corridors as part of future connectivity
- Support of policy that incentivizes redevelopment around Lake Bellevue and Sturtevant Creek to enhance natural features as public amenities
- Provide additional clarity on policy regarding connections across Eastrail, particularly as it relates to the planned extension of NE 6th St across I-405

POLICY UPDATE

This study session focuses on draft parks, recreation & open space policies and complementary policies in the Wilburton TOD. These draft policies support the implementation of opportunities identified by a Citizen

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Advisory Committee (CAC) in the 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Study. Attachment A includes a list of all new policies in strike-draft form that staff recommends to be added, retained and amended, or repealed.

Staff reviewed draft parks, recreation & open space policy amendments with Planning Commission on May 24, 2023. Subsequent to this meeting, staff have made minor policy modifications.

Policy amendments are intended to provide guidance on the following key policy moves:

1) Creation of an urban park system

Parks, open space, trails, and active recreation facilities are needed to serve current and future urban densities within the Wilburton TOD. An urban park system is envisioned within the Wilburton TOD that leverages Grand Connection and Eastrail investments, connects to major community parks, and offers a variety of uses attuned to the surrounding community. Policies provide guidance on open space needs to provide better linkages between and access to parks and open space areas.

2) Enhancement of natural features

There are several natural features in the Wilburton TOD today, including Lake Bellevue and Sturtevant Creek. Portions of these features are visually or physically inaccessible to the general public, or located on privately-owned land. Policies provide guidance on enhancements to improve the ecosystem function and experiential qualities of these natural resources for the community.

3) Eastrail as a defining trail and park corridor

The City is partnering with King County, Sound Transit and Eastrail Partners on a vision for the 1.2-mile portion of the Eastrail corridor between SE 5th Street and NE 12th Street, which will act as fundamental infrastructure to support a transit- and trail-oriented district within the Wilburton TOD. Eastrail is suitable for various uses and functions at different points along the trail based on terrain, development intensity, and proximity to multimodal facilities. Policies provide guidance toward establishing Eastrail as a defining trail and park corridor within the Wilburton TOD.

DISCUSSION

At the March June 13 study session, staff requests guidance from the Parks and Community Services Board on the following:

- **Do draft policies provide adequate direction to inform the development of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space services and investments to support the Wilburton TOD vision?**

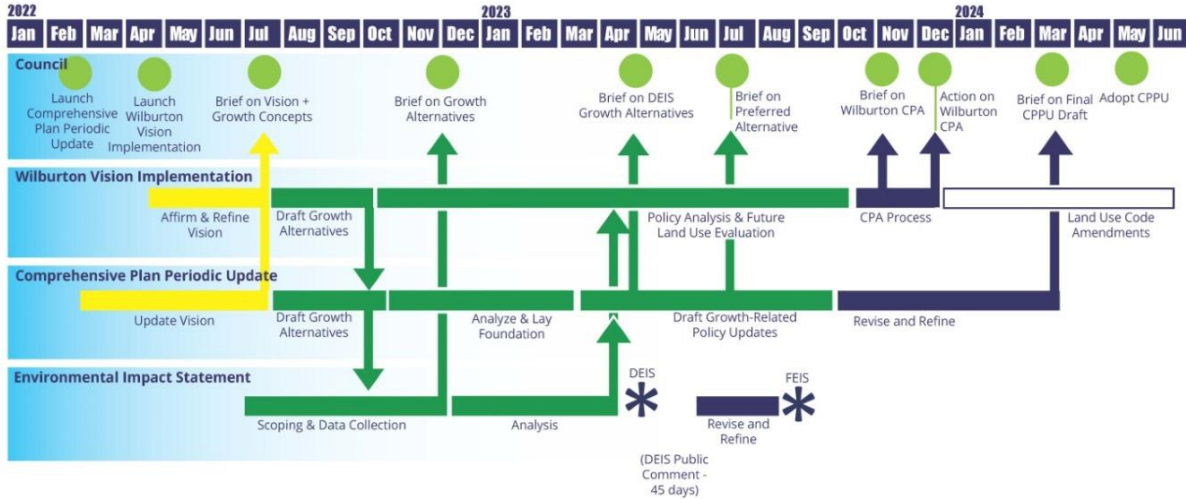
SCHEDULE AND NEXT STEPS

Staff will consider and incorporate input from the Parks and Community Services Board as part of final draft parks, open space & recreation policies that will be reviewed with Planning Commission in September. Planning Commission will also be provided with a community engagement report, which will include feedback from boards and commissions. A formal recommendation is not necessary, but input from Parks Board will be reflected in the community engagement report and will be integrated into final draft policies.

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FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS

The community may follow and participate throughout the planning, policy and code development process from the Wilburton Vision Implementation page [Wilburton Vision | City of Bellevue \(bellevuewa.gov\)](http://bellevuewa.gov/wilburton-vision). There is a separate page for the EIS process here: [Bellevue 2024 Environmental Review | City of Bellevue \(bellevuewa.gov\)](http://bellevuewa.gov/2024-environmental-review). The 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Study (CAC Vision) is available online at [Wilburton Commercial Area Study](http://bellevuewa.gov/wilburton-commercial-area-study).

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Comprehensive Plan Policy Amendments to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan – *Parks, Recreation & Open Space and complementary policies*

Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA

Attachment A: Draft Comprehensive Plan Policy Amendments to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan – *Parks, Recreation & Open Space and complementary policies*

The existing Parks, Recreation and Open Space policies listed below are being reviewed for their application to the Wilburton TOD study area and may be modified, repealed, and added to.

All policies specific to the Wilburton TOD study area will be located in a new section of the subarea plan that pertains specifically to the study area. No Parks, Recreation and Open Space policies apply in this manner.

Existing policies that apply to the entire Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea, and do not require revisions based on the Wilburton TOD study area, will be considered for potential update as part of a future Neighborhood Subarea Plan update process.

Policies to be Retained

Policy Number	Current Policy
S-WI-32	Retain the parks in the Subarea and ensure that they remain park facilities (including Wilburton Hill and Kelsey Creek Parks). Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan
S-WI-33	Retain and develop open spaces for a variety of purposes. <i>Discussion: In addition to recreation, both active and passive, parks serve to preserve views, define neighborhoods, and provide relief from pavement and development.</i>
S-WI-34	The City strongly encourages the continuation of the golf course use at the Glendale Golf Course.
S-WI-35	Prepare designs for proposed parks with the participation of the community affected and served.
S-WI-37	The City should consider acquisition of surplus school district sites which might be appropriate for park and recreation uses.
S-WI-38	Encourage development of the Highland-Glendale site, located on the northeast corner of N.E. 8th Street and 134th Avenue N.E., as a park facility.
S-WI-39	Support implementation of the Wilburton Hill Park Master Plan, including neighborhood park element

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Policies to be Updated

	Repealed Policy
	Modified Policy
	New Policy

Note: Staff reviewed draft Parks, Recreation & Open Space policy amendments with Planning Commission on May 24, 2023. Subsequent to this meeting, staff have made minor policy modifications.

Policy Number	Current Policy	Proposed Policy Update (New, Deleted, Retained)
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Policies		
Goal: To develop a network of publicly accessible parks, plazas, and open spaces that provides a variety of community recreation and gathering spaces in proximity to people and nature.		
S-WI-36	Support continuation of the Lake-to-Lake Trail through Wilburton. <i>Discussion: The trail should connect from the N.E. 4th Street interchange at I-405 to the Wilburton Hill Park to Kelsey Creek Park to the Lake Hills Greenbelt and Richards Valley.</i>	Support continuation of the Lake-to-Lake Trail and Greenway through Wilburton, with connections to multimodal infrastructure on Eastrail, 116th Avenue NE, and 120th Avenue NE. <i>Discussion: The trail should connect from the N.E. 4th Street interchange at I-405 to the Wilburton Hill Park to Kelsey Creek Park to the Lake Hills Greenbelt and Richards Valley.</i>
NEW 1		Acquire land or rights to develop a dispersed network of neighborhood parks, or smaller mini parks, to serve the needs of Wilburton TOD and complement the citywide parks and open space system.
NEW 2		Incentivize small-scale facilities, such as neighborhood parks, plazas, and active recreation facilities, as public amenities in new development to increase community access to open space opportunities.
NEW 3		Provide a system of non-motorized connections that links between park facilities and with central points of interest, including transit, employment, and medical facilities.
NEW 4		Enhance non-motorized connections with landscaping and amenities to serve as linear open spaces.

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NEW 5		Encourage and support public waterfront access to Lake Bellevue.
NEW 6		Provide for centrally located civic gathering spaces as part of the Grand Connection, with emphasis on the Grand Connection intersection with I-405 and Eastrail as signature placemaking opportunities.
NEW 7		Encourage and support public access and open space opportunities linking the Grand Connection to 120 th Avenue NE and residential neighborhoods east of 120 th Avenue NE.
NEW 8		Coordinate with King County and adjacent property owners on developing recreational and natural features within and adjacent to the Eastrail corridor complementing the regional trail.
NEW 9		Pursue strategic land acquisitions around the Eastrail, Grand Connection, north end of Wilburton Trestle, and Lake Bellevue to expand connection, public access, and activation opportunities.
<p>Environment Policies Goal: To lead innovations in environmental sustainability that enhances the area’s natural features and contributes toward the city’s climate goals. <i>Note: The following are proposed Environment policies that are complementary to Parks, Recreation & Open Space policies.</i></p>		
NEW 10		Encourage improvements that enhance the aesthetic and functional qualities of natural features within the Wilburton TOD, such as Sturtevant Creek, Lake Bellevue, and the wetland at 116 th Avenue NE and Main Street.
NEW 11		Identify existing and future streets appropriate for stormwater management features and tree plantings that provide for better environmental performance and an enhanced visual experience.
<p>Transportation Policies Goal: To create a walkable, bikeable, and transit-rich urban environment that connects neighborhoods, expands mobility options, and integrates mobility needs for all modes. <i>Note: The following are proposed Transportation policies related to Eastrail that are complementary to Parks, Recreation & Open Space policies.</i></p>		

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NEW 12		Allow for emergency, service and maintenance vehicular access to Eastrail, while restricting at-grade public street crossings to existing locations. *TBD pending the preferred alternative
NEW 13		Provide signalized at-grade crossings where Eastrail intersects with NE 4 th Street, SE 1 st Street, and SE 5 th Street.
NEW 14		Provide identifiable, safe, and frequent access onto Eastrail from Wilburton Station, Grand Connection, 120 th Avenue NE, and 116 th Avenue NE.
NEW 15		Collaborate with King County to incorporate design treatments within the Eastrail corridor that improve safety for all users.
NEW 16		Coordinate with adjacent property owners to secure dedicated pedestrian paths within and/or adjacent to the Eastrail corridor that provide local access along the regional trail.
S-WI-31	Recognize the transportation and recreation uses under consideration for the BNSF rail corridor when considering public and private improvements adjacent to the corridor and preserve the opportunity for future multimodal transportation use and access.	Recognize the transportation and recreation uses under consideration for the BNSF rail corridor when considering public and private improvements adjacent to the corridor and preserve the opportunity for future multimodal transportation use and access.
<p>Urban Design Policies Goal: To achieve an inviting, pedestrian-oriented experience reflected in future streetscapes, neighborhood blocks, diverse building forms, and unique placemaking elements along the Eastrail and Grand Connection. <i>Note: The following are proposed Urban Design policies related to Eastrail that are complementary to Parks, Recreation & Open Space policies.</i></p>		
NEW 17		Develop design guidelines and standards for development within and adjacent to the Eastrail corridor that reflect unique characteristics, topography, and adjacent uses.
NEW 18		Provide for appropriate tower and podium setbacks along Eastrail to give visual interest and solar access to the trail, especially where there is higher development intensity.
NEW 19		Allow adjacent developments to provide upper-story connections to Eastrail where there is significant elevation difference between Eastrail and adjacent properties.

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NEW 20

Maximize usable Eastrail corridor space for programmable area accessible to the public and integration with adjacent development.