



# Bellevue Planning Commission

June 24, 2026

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

### SUBJECT

Study Session on the Parking Reform Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) to implement Senate Bill (SB) 5184, SB 6015, and parking provisions of House Bill (HB) 1491

### STAFF CONTACT(S)

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### POLICY ISSUES

In 2024 and 2025, the Washington State Legislature adopted SB 6015, SB 5184, and HB 1491, which collectively:

- Standardize parking stall dimensions and certain other development standards for parking lots and structures;
- Establish minimum parking requirement caps for certain residential and nonresidential uses citywide; and
- Limit circumstances when minimum parking can be required within light rail and bus rapid transit station areas.

The LUCA also advances Comprehensive Plan policies related to parking and transit-oriented development. Examples of Comprehensive Plan policies in support of these efforts include:

- **Policy LU-32:** Encourage reducing parking requirements in areas with good access to transit and active transportation facilities and prioritize parking options to serve the community with special needs.
- **Policy HO-16:** Evaluate the housing cost and supply implications of proposed regulations, policies and procedures and ensure that new regulations, policies and procedures promote affordability and housing diversity within the city.
- **Policy LU-25:** Encourage private developers of adjacent or nearby properties to execute agreements to provide joint use and funding of shared parking facilities.
- **Policy 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 purpose of this study session is to provide Planning Commission with a summary of the project’s legislative requirements and present the public review draft of the proposed amendments. Staff will seek feedback on the LUCA draft 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**

**Legislative Background**

The proposed LUCA includes provisions required for compliance with SB 5184, SB 6015, and select parking provisions of HB 1491. Compliant code must be adopted by January 27, 2027. Specific legal requirements proposed to be implemented through this LUCA are summarized below. The proposed LUCA, which implements all minimum legal requirements, is provided as **Attachment A**.

**SB 5184**

Signed into law on May 7, 2025, with compliance required by January 27, 2027, [SB 5184](#) aims to limit minimum parking requirements to lower development costs, promote walking and transit use, and reduce excessive reliance on automobiles. In response, the City must update its Land Use Code (LUC) by modifying both general parking standards and parking provisions specific to certain special and overlay land use districts. The legislation defines new upper limits for residential and commercial minimum parking standards citywide, as well as circumstances where no parking may be required at all.

Cities cannot require minimum parking for the following uses:

- Residential units smaller than 1,200 sf
- Commercial spaces 3,000 sf or smaller
- Affordable housing
- Senior housing
- Childcare centers
- Ground-floor commercial uses in mixed-use buildings
- Conversions (nonresidential to residential)
- Changes of use between commercial uses

When parking can be required, requirements cannot exceed the following:

- Multifamily residential: 0.5 spaces per unit
- Single-family residential: 1 space per unit
- All commercial uses: 2 spaces per 1,000 sf

**SB 6015**

Signed into law on March 26, 2024, [SB 6015](#) took effect on June 6, 2024. The legislation establishes new limits on parking space dimensional requirements statewide, requiring cities to revise their local codes accordingly. Bellevue’s current Land Use Code (LUC) includes parking space standards that exceed the allowable size and must be updated to comply.

The bill mandates that minimum required dimensions for individual parking spaces may not exceed eight feet in width by 20 feet in length. The state-mandated minimum dimension does not apply to ADA parking spaces. Projects may choose to provide larger parking spaces but cannot be required to do so.

The bill also limits restrictions on the use of tandem parking spaces and certain parking surface materials.

### HB 1491

Signed into law on May 13, 2025, [HB 1491](#) aims to maximize support for transit-oriented development through land use policies and practices. While compliance with most provisions of the bill is not required until December 31, 2029, specific provisions related to parking requirements have already taken effect.

Cities may not require minimum parking for residential or mixed-use development located within rail or bus station areas. RCW 36.70A.030 defines station areas as follows:

- Bus station area: All lots located within one-quarter mile walking distance of a bus rapid transit stop
- Rail station area: All lots located within one-half mile walking distance of a light rail station

A map of Bellevue’s station areas is provided as **Attachment B**.

### **City Council Direction**

On January 13, City Council initiated the Parking Reform LUCA, directing staff to conduct a comprehensive analysis and lead public engagement to evaluate potential options to expand amendments beyond state-mandated requirements. This initiation prompted a detailed evaluation of the proposed amendments and a strategic decision to prioritize compliance with state law.

Following this direction, the Planning Commission held a study session on February 25 for an initial briefing on the project’s scope and approach. During this session, commissioners provided high-level feedback, suggesting that staff consider centralized parking areas with an emphasis on shared parking opportunities. Specifically, the Commission expressed interest in exploring how commercial parking spaces could be utilized by nearby residents during non-operational hours. The February 25 briefing established a five-part scope for the LUCA consisting of Location-Based Requirements, Use-Based Requirements, Parking Development Standards, Exceptions, and Consolidation.

Council directed staff to engage the community and conduct analysis of several scope options extending beyond the minimum state requirements:

- Expanding parking reform near transit, including expanding the bus station area definition to one-half mile from bus rapid transit, and eliminating parking requirements near standard bus stops with frequent service.
  - Analysis: Further analysis revealed that the station areas serve more complex functions than initially expected, making it inappropriate to combine them into a single, collective transit zone.
  - Recommendation: Deference at this time. Staff will analyze at a later date, possibly creating a local definition for ‘walking distance’ and ‘major transit stop’.
- Citywide Elimination of Minimum Parking:
  - Analysis: Bellevue’s infrastructure varies significantly; while Downtown, BelRed, and Wilburton are transit-ready, many neighborhoods remain auto-oriented.

- Recommendation: Staff recommends monitoring outcomes from the state-mandated minimum parking reductions first, as a citywide repeal would operationally require a separate, comprehensive process for enhanced curb management and Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) capacity.
- Improve parking flexibility for tenant changes and changes-of-use
  - Analysis: Staff was requested to consider opportunities to remove surplus parking in the event of a change-of-use or tenant change. Language was developed in the draft code providing this opportunity.
  - Recommendation: Staff recommends adding language that ensures that changes-of-use can remove parking to a degree that is compliant with the state-mandated minimum, but only after the fact, as a change of use cannot be required to provide minimum parking at time of analysis for the change of use itself.

### **Overview of Proposed LUCA**

The project’s top priority is fulfilling statutory requirements for SB 5184, SB 6015, and HB 1491. While broader parking deregulation is becoming more common within the region, staff recommend focusing on implementing these state mandates at this time. This targeted approach allows the city to gather implementation data to better understand impacts before exploring wider local reforms.

The proposed LUCA also supports smooth review and application of the code by improving clarity and usability, while also ensuring that the city remains in strict compliance with state law. The proposed LUCA restructures city parking regulations into two functional areas:

- Technical code consolidation and standardized ratios
- Updates to ensure compliance with state law exemptions

### **Code Consolidation and Development Standards**

The proposed draft streamlines standards for parking, circulation, and walkways while replacing fragmented standards currently found throughout the Land Use Code. Key improvements include:

- Consolidated Code Location: Requirements are centralized to LUC 20.20.590 to establish a unified regulatory framework.
- Standardized Parking Ratios: A generalized framework replaces previous district-by-district requirements, setting minimums at 1 space per unit for single-family, 0.5 spaces per unit for middle housing and multifamily dwellings, and 2 spaces per 1,000 gross square feet for commercial uses.
- Removed Parking Maximums: Legacy maximum caps on uses like office, retail, and financial institutions are removed. This simplifies development standards by pivoting from a rigid floor-and-ceiling model to a flexible parking floor. Given high construction costs and recent state preemption mandates that lower parking requirements near transit, market forces naturally prevent over-parking, rendering these caps obsolete.
- Tandem Parking: Tandem parking standards are codified by introducing its definition and state-guided minimum dimensional requirements directly into the LUC.

- **Parking Structures:** A general parking structure requirement is established, with the stipulation that overlay zone requirements may overrule where localized, area-specific needs dictate.

### **State Law Compliance**

The draft integrates updates necessary for compliance with the state legislation previously noted. This includes exemptions from all minimum required parking for the following uses:

- **Transit-Oriented Development:** Residential or mixed-use developments located within a designated 'station area' are exempt from minimum parking requirements.
- **Compliance with Parking Exemptions:** Direct exemptions are integrated from state law outlining specific land uses and scenarios where municipalities cannot require minimum parking, including but not limited to affordable housing, senior housing, child care centers, and small commercial and residential spaces.
- **Maintaining Established Exemptions:** Bellevue has already implemented specific parking standards for certain types of housing in response to state law. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.696, RCW 36.70A.030, and RCW 36.70A.535, the draft maintains standards that minimum parking cannot be required for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), middle housing, and co-living housing when located within one-half mile walking distance of a 'major transit stop'.

### **Public Engagement**

Staff developed a public engagement plan with multiple modes of outreach to ensure the public, stakeholders, and interested parties remained informed throughout the Parking Reform LUCA process. This strategy allowed the community to review mandates while providing input on potential additional options.

- **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.
- **Virtual Introductory Information Session.** Held on February 9, this session introduced the project to the public at large, with feedback from the Q&A helping inform the staff's approach to explaining the functional differences between on-street and off-street parking.
- **Public Open Houses.** Staff hosted two in-person engagement sessions to facilitate direct dialogue with the community: an open house at City Hall on April 20 and a Community Data Walk on May 6 at the Crossroads Community Center.
- **Virtual Data Walkthrough.** Conducted on May 8, this virtual session served as the final engagement milestone, providing a technical review of parking data prior to the release of the draft code for this study session.

### **LUCA Schedule**

The Parking Reform LUCA launched at Council initiation in January and was followed by a focused period of public engagement and code drafting. The Planning Commission schedule has been structured to accommodate Council review process, with the goal of Council action by the end of 2026. This timeline is intended to ensure compliance in advance of the January 27, 2027, state deadline.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- A. Strike Draft
- B. Station Area Map