



Bellevue Planning Commission

July 8, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Great Neighborhoods Program: Review of Full Draft of Eastgate Neighborhood Area Plan

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POLICY ISSUES

This study session is a review of the full draft for the 2025-2026 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for the Eastgate neighborhood area plan, which Council initiated on August 4, 2025 along with the Factoria neighborhood area plan as a continuation of the Great Neighborhoods program. Following an initial briefing and overview to the Planning Commission on the Great Neighborhoods program on October 8, 2025, staff provided an update summarizing community engagement activity during Phase 1 (Discover) and Phase 2 (Define) on March 25.

The scope centers around strengthening these neighborhood areas' unique identity and community gathering spaces as Bellevue prepares for future growth. Building off extensive community engagement over the last nine months, the full draft includes a staff recommended vision statement, background narrative, policies, and urban design framework. This meeting will also cover conformance updates to Volumes 1 and 2 of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency between the Eastgate neighborhood area plan and related subarea plans.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



At this meeting, the Planning Commission will discuss staff recommended goals and policies and provide direction to schedule a public hearing for the Eastgate neighborhood area plan.

BACKGROUND

Bellevue is a community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods. Bellevue has 16 neighborhood areas that cover the full extent of the city (**Attachment A**). Each neighborhood area contains several neighborhoods within it. Strong community connections directly enhance quality of life and strengthen neighborhoods. Council affirmed this when initiating the Great Neighborhoods program in 2018. The program's objectives are:

1. To develop neighborhood area plans that reflect citywide and neighborhood priorities and address issues and opportunities that are relevant to the local community.
2. To conduct a planning process that is based on a collaborative partnership between the city and neighborhoods; to expand community capacity for neighborhood leadership that will carry forward beyond this planning process.

The Great Neighborhoods program entails the preparation of two neighborhood area plans per cycle, targeting the end of the next calendar year for Council review and adoption to align with the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process. The first round of Council-initiated neighborhood area plan updates included Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue, which Council adopted in 2021. The Great Neighborhoods program paused during the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update from 2022-2024. The program resumed in September 2024 with the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans, which Council adopted in October 2025.

These proposed amendments are consistent with King County Countywide Planning policies (CPPs) around neighborhood planning. Additionally, Eastgate's Mixed Use Center is identified in CPPs as a Candidate Countywide Center for directing future funding and growth. Because it covers a Countywide Center, the CPPs direct the Eastgate neighborhood area plan to provide transit-supportive densities for jobs and residents, as well as support tools in the plan to provide affordable housing, assess historic and cultural assets, address risk for displacement of residents and businesses, and support transit access and active transportation.

WORK PROGRAM

Neighborhood area planning is consistent with Neighborhoods Element policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan, which directs the city to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood specific values and policies when implementing adopted citywide policies. The process allows community members to participate in equitable, informed dialogue about what makes their neighborhood unique; and identify priorities and improvements that should be reflected in future growth. Community engagement is crucial to neighborhood area planning and integrated into each phase. Phases are outlined below and in detail in **Attachment B**.

- **Discover**: Engage with the community to understand issues, identify values and priorities, and learn about qualities that make the neighborhood unique. *Timeline: August – December 2025*
- **Define**: Develop and affirm the neighborhood vision, design principles, and policy moves that are building blocks for the draft plan. *Timeline: January – April 2026*

- **Refine: This is the current phase.** Review draft plans with the community, boards, and commissions, incorporate feedback, and address any missing elements. *Timeline: May 2026 – August 2026*
- **Adopt:** The final draft plans, including any environmental analysis as required per SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act), are reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and then reviewed and adopted by City Council as an element of the Comprehensive Plan. *Timeline: September – December 2026*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PHASE 3 (REFINE)

Staff seek to bring diverse perspectives to the process so participation is representative of those who live, work, play, and study in the neighborhood area. The Great Neighborhoods program undergoes continuous improvement on outreach methods by incorporating lessons learned from previous neighborhood area plan updates. The materials from the [March 25 meeting](#) provide an overview of engagement conducted in Phase 1 (Discover) from August through December 2025 and in Phase 2 (Define) from January through April 2026 and have been omitted for brevity.

At the March 25 meeting, the Planning Commission expressed appreciation for staff’s focus on inclusive and thorough engagement. They highlighted walkability as a key theme from community feedback, noting challenges with missing walking and biking infrastructure and Interstate 90 serving as a barrier to accessing future light rail. The Planning Commission also asked how community feedback will inform policies to support tangible improvements in both neighborhood areas. Staff noted the role of policies and concept maps in guiding project identification, community partnerships, and functional plan updates.

Phase 3 (Refine) began in May of this year. The city published draft policies for the Eastgate neighborhood area plan on May 4 for public review, with opportunities to provide feedback at an in-person open house on May 7 and through an online survey that ran from May 4 through May 25. Draft policies build from engagement around identifying key values, priorities, and qualities that community members enjoy about their neighborhood today and want to see in the future. Draft urban design concept maps were also shared, which visualize opportunities for improving gathering spaces in both neighborhoods, building from what the community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using these spaces today.

Community Feedback

When sharing these policies with the public for review at the open house, participants generally agreed that policies support the stated vision and goals for Eastgate. Several comments stressed the importance of coordinating with transit agencies on bus service due to loss of several local bus routes and lack of bus stops near community destinations. There were mixed opinions regarding policies on affordable housing and Bellevue Airfield Park achieving the neighborhood area vision, with comments on the latter emphasizing maintaining greenspace in that area.

Overall support was also expressed through the online survey. Policies seen as strongly supporting Eastgate's goals and vision were focused on neighborhood beautification, coordination with WSDOT on relieving congestion and minimizing traffic impacts during construction, provision of access to the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail, and expansion of the active transportation network and pedestrian crossing opportunities. Policies seen as less supportive of Eastgate's goals and vision were focused on cultural and sports tourism, affordable housing, expansion of City-owned capital facilities, and regional aquatic facility development. Several comments pointed out these opportunities as having traffic, safety, and/or livability impacts on existing residential areas, and a desire for policies to support amenities that serve the needs of people who live in the neighborhood.

Board and Commission Feedback

Staff also consulted various City boards and commissions for their feedback on draft policies relating to their areas of expertise: the Parks and Community Services Board on May 20, the Arts Commission on June 3, and the Transportation Commission on June 11. A formal recommendation was neither required nor requested from these bodies.

At the Parks and Community Services Board meeting, board members appreciated the breadth of opportunities for the community to participate, with one board member noting their attendance at the May 7 open house and seeing participants meaningfully engaged with draft policies. Board members appreciated seeing walkability and threshold enhancements as an emphasis in both Eastgate and Factoria to support parks and open spaces, and they encouraged staff to consider incorporating stronger references to neighborhood history and public safety.

At the Arts Commission, commissioners appreciated the concept maps as a way of providing clearer guidance on implementing policies around arts and culture. They felt community gathering space priorities were accurately captured in the policies and appreciated the specific callout to Bellevue College as having greater potential for cultural programming. Commissioners encouraged staff to consider where space and programming priorities could be better targeted to support community partnerships.

At the Transportation Commission meeting, commissioners noted ongoing congestion in both neighborhoods as not adequately prioritized in draft policies, and they had specific interest in how staff engaged communities around this issue. Staff shared input received on transportation issues throughout the engagement process, including specific outreach tools used to collect feedback on neighborhood connectivity opportunities and challenges.

Community Engagement Report

A full summary of community input gathered during Phase 2 (Discover) and Phase 3 (Refine) is provided in the engagement report, included as **Attachment C**. The report provides 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.

Specific comments on draft policies and how staff considered these comments when addressing policy refinements are discussed later in this memo.

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN STRUCTURE

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. The policies in the plan are implemented through different tools, such as regulations, programs, partnerships, and functional plans such as the Parks and Open Space System Plan. The draft plans include the following sections:

1. A *vision statement* that articulates the desired future state of the neighborhood area.
2. Background narrative and imagery that describes the *community context* for the neighborhood area plan, including its history, demographics, existing conditions, and challenges and opportunities.
3. An *urban design framework* that describes opportunities and supports policies for improving public spaces, illustrated through concept maps
4. A *neighborhood policy summary* for each of the plan sections
5. *Goals and policies* for each of the plan sections that, when implemented, will help achieve the neighborhood area's vision

EASTGATE NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN POLICIES

The full draft plan for the Eastgate neighborhood area plan is included as **Attachment D** and includes both policies and narrative sections. The narrative and policies from the Eastgate subarea plan, last significantly updated in 2015 to implement the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Study, were reviewed to determine policies still relevant to the vision and goals of the Eastgate neighborhood area plan. These existing policies were the foundation for updated policy direction based on identified needs and priorities.

Several existing policies were determined to be outdated due to completed code updates or capital projects, were no longer consistent with other adopted plans, or were duplicative with citywide policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan.

New policies were also developed based on changed conditions within the neighborhood area. Since the last time the Eastgate subarea plan was updated, the Bellevue 2044 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, several functional plans were updated and/or implemented (including the Economic Development Plan, Sustainable Bellevue Plan, Parks and Open Space System Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, and Mobility Implementation Plan), and new land use code regulations were put into place to guide new development.

An overview of each section of the plan is provided below, including key priorities reflected in the policies and community feedback that shaped staff recommended policies. Changes that involved minor text edits, clarifications, or grammatical changes to policies are not included.

Neighborhood Identity

Neighborhood identity evolves over time, reflecting the history of the area and incorporating the cultures and needs of new residents and businesses. The policies in this section identify and strengthen a neighborhood’s unique elements in the built and natural environment that define the neighborhood.

Policies reinforce Eastgate’s identity as a convenient, green, and welcome neighborhood, as reflected in its diverse community, excellent access to recreation and wilderness, mature trees, and proximity to the Interstate 90 corridor and Mountains to Sound Greenway.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	Public Review Draft (May 2026)	Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)	Staff Analysis
S-EG-N1	Facilitate Eastgate as a year-round recreation and tourism destination by increasing opportunities for cultural and sports facilities and entertainment.	Facilitate the development of cultural and sports facilities <u>in Eastgate’s mixed-use areas</u> to support year-round <u>activities</u> .	Several survey comments expressed concern for neighborhood impacts, as well as a desire to focus on neighborhood-serving facilities. Arts Commission additionally noted that there were many different uses prioritized in this policy that could be conflated. Policy updated to clarify geographic applicability, and to focus the policy intent to better align with community feedback.
S-EG-N5	Use distinctive features at entry points into Eastgate that create a sense of arrival from freeways, the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail, and major arterials in the neighborhood area.	Use <u>art and other creative elements at thresholds</u> into Eastgate that create a sense of arrival from freeways, the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail, and major arterials in the neighborhood area.	Policy updated to clarify “distinctive features” as “art and other creative elements”.
S-EG-N8	Increase affordable housing opportunities through maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing stock and creation of new affordable housing.	<i>No change proposed.</i>	Several survey comments expressed concern regarding affordable housing impacts on neighborhood scale and safety. This policy affirms regional direction in King County Countywide Planning

			policies, as well as citywide direction in the Comprehensive Plan and Affordable Housing Strategy, on addressing the entire spectrum of housing needs in the city.
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Mixed Use Centers and Neighborhood Centers

Eastgate’s Mixed Use Center is identified in the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) as a Candidate Countywide Center for directing future funding and growth. The CPPs direct plans covering a Countywide Center to provide transit-supportive densities for jobs and residents, as well as support tools in the plan to provide affordable housing, assess historic and cultural assets, address risk for displacement of residents and businesses, and support transit access and active transportation. Eastgate also has a Neighborhood Center south of Interstate 90 at Eastgate Plaza; Neighborhood Centers are planned as commercial and mixed-use developments that provide goods, services, and amenities for nearby residents.

Policies strengthen key assets within the Eastgate Mixed Use Center, including the Eastgate Park-and-Ride, Bellevue College, Eastgate Housing Campus (Plymouth Crossing, Eastside Men’s Shelter, and Polaris at Eastgate), and local retailers, by supporting their continued growth and integration into the community as Bellevue plans for high-capacity transit.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	Public Review Draft (May 2026)	Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)	Staff Analysis
S-EG-N9	Work to site and expand City-owned capital facilities to meet increased housing and job growth in the area.	Work to site and expand City-owned capital facilities to meet increased housing and job growth <u>and demand for public services</u> in the area.	Policy updated to clarify “City-owned capital facilities” as necessary to meet demand for public services in a growing neighborhood, such as fire, police, and utilities.

Community Gathering Spaces

Gathering spaces strengthen social connections by providing opportunities for recreation, celebration, pursuing hobbies, and meeting friends. They range from outdoor public spaces like parks and trails to indoor communal spaces like community centers. Policies in this section support how the City develops, enhances, and connects people to these spaces.

Policies support improved connections to nearby trails and community parks such as Eastgate Park and Robinswood Park, and the development of new neighborhood parks and gathering spaces. The completion of the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail and Bellevue Airfield Park is a priority for serving local and regional recreation and open space needs.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	Public Review Draft (May 2026)	Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)	Staff Analysis
S-EG-N23	Collaborate with Bellevue College to strengthen the campus as a cultural hub with amenities that enhance the student and employee experience.	Collaborate with Bellevue College to strengthen the campus as a cultural hub <u>through community partnerships</u> and amenities that enhance the student and employee experience.	Parks and Community Services Board noted that Bellevue College benefits the entire community, not just students and employees. Arts Commission additionally noted opportunities within this policy to advocate for greater public access to arts and cultural spaces within the college. Policy updated to include community partnerships as a component of fostering Bellevue College as a cultural hub.
S-EG-N26	Work to acquire property or secure easements on private property to provide additional entry points into local trails and parks.	Work to acquire property or secure easements on private property to provide additional entry points into <u>and connections</u> between local trails and parks.	Parks and Community Services Board desired more connecting paths between trails and parks. Policy updated to support parks and trail connectivity through property acquisitions and easements.
S-EG-N29	Support the development of a regional aquatic facility that is connected to its surroundings and serves a full range of recreation, health, and wellness needs.	Support the development of a <u>planned</u> regional aquatic facility that is connected to its surroundings and serves a full range of recreation, health, and wellness needs.	Several survey comments expressed concern for the facility’s impact on traffic and the natural setting. The regional aquatic center is clarified as part of the adopted Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan. This policy, combined with other plan policies, provides guidance so that the future regional aquatic facility is integrated

			into the neighborhood’s land use, transportation, and environmental context as it proceeds through design and construction.
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Mobility and Access

The transportation network in Eastgate serves many different travel modes. Policies in this section inform future capital improvements around streets, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit facilities, and trails.

Policies contribute to a safe, complete, and convenient transportation network where Interstate 90, Mountains to Sound Greenway, and Eastgate Park-and-Ride connect people to destinations across the region; while local streets and arterials connect people to destinations within their neighborhoods.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	Public Review Draft (May 2026)	Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)	Staff Analysis
S-EG-N35	Design and implement wayfinding within the neighborhood with directions to transit and active transportation facilities.	Design and implement wayfinding within the neighborhood with directions to transit and active transportation facilities, <u>including at thresholds into the neighborhood area.</u>	Parks and Community Services Board noted that the thresholds described in S-EG-N5 are also wayfinding opportunities. Policy updated to emphasize this point.

Additionally, while not attributed to a specific draft policy, the Transportation Commission noted that congestion was not fully addressed in neighborhood area plan policies. Such policies are addressed citywide through Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan, with the Mobility Implementation Plan establishing arterial performance target gaps and recommended project concepts to address congestion. These aforementioned documents provide the appropriate mechanism for guiding these types of improvements; therefore, staff do not recommend any changes to mobility and access policies.

Environment

Bellevue prides itself as being a “City in a Park” due to its relationship to the natural environment. Policies in this section improve the aesthetic and functional qualities of natural features within the neighborhood.

Policies promote the health of Eastgate’s natural systems, including its streams, while identifying opportunities to incorporate recreational elements so these features can be more easily experienced by the community.

Community feedback informed staff’s approach to addressing the following policies, with substantive changes underlined:

	Public Review Draft (May 2026)	Planning Commission Review Draft (June 2026)	Staff Analysis
S-EG-N42	Explore opportunities to integrate nature trails and viewing areas into streams and greenbelts.	Explore opportunities to integrate nature trails and viewing areas into stream <u>corridors</u> and greenbelts.	Several comments expressed concern for impacts on local wildlife. Policy builds upon existing nature trail opportunities within the neighborhood today. Public stewardship of natural areas is a City priority, and trail opportunities can also support habitat restoration and enhancement.

EASTGATE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The draft plan also includes an urban design framework that visualizes opportunities and supports policies for improving public spaces within Eastgate, building from what the community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using these spaces today. Rather than a detailed set of actions and projects, this framework guides project identification and development opportunities when implementing plan policies. They are also a tool to support collaboration amongst city departments and community partners.

The *Enhancing Neighborhood Connectivity* concept provides guidance on: 1) opportunities to enhance walking and biking connections to neighborhood destinations; 2) connections within larger blocks and development sites; 3) improved pedestrian safety at intersection and midblock crossings; and 4) arterial streetscape enhancements.

In the concept map for Eastgate, arterials and local streets alike are illustrated as safe, convenient, and attractive corridors to walk and bike to access nearby parks, retail, regional transit connections, and community facilities.

Policies that support improvement opportunities include: S-EG-N7, S-EG-N25, S-EG-N32, S-EG-N34, S-EG-N36, and S-EG-N37.

The *Enhancing Neighborhood Gathering Spaces* concept provides guidance on: 1) programming and activation of “third places” with community partners; 2) potential new neighborhood parks in areas that are not well-served by parks and open space today; 3) enhancement to natural

features such as streams and wetlands; and 4) visual markers reflecting the unique identity of the neighborhood.

In Eastgate, the concept map illustrates community having walkable access to a variety of indoor and outdoor gathering spaces and trails on both sides of Interstate 90.

Policies that support improvement opportunities include: S-EG-N5, S-EG-N21, S-EG-N22, S-EG-N23, S-EG-N24, S-EG-N27, S-EG-N41, S-EG-N42, and S-EG-N43

CONFORMANCE UPDATES TO VOLUMES 1 AND 2 OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A revised neighborhood areas map (previously referred to as subareas) was adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in 2015, as subarea boundaries had not been updated in many years. The Eastgate neighborhood area covers parts of the Eastgate, Richards Valley, and Newcastle subareas, as shown in **Attachment E**. 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.

Consistent with Policy NH-18, in addition to the Eastgate neighborhood area plan, this CPA includes amending several subarea plans in Volume 2 to ensure relevant policies remain in effect where they won't be superseded by the Eastgate neighborhood area plan. These proposed conformance updates include the following:

- Repeal policies in the Eastgate and Newcastle subarea plans that are specific only to portions of that subarea that would now be covered and addressed through the Eastgate neighborhood area plan.
 - Within the Eastgate subarea, this includes the Eastgate Housing Campus, Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and office areas north of Interstate 90 and residential areas south of Interstate 90.
 - Within the Newcastle subarea, this includes residential areas south of Interstate 90 approximately between SE 40th St to the north and SE 46th St to the south
- Update S-EG.1 Eastgate Planning Districts to show areas superseded by the Eastgate neighborhood area plan
- Repeal the Richards Valley Land Use Plan in the Richards Valley subarea plan, as they no longer reflect the Future Land Use Map or neighborhood area planning boundaries

The amended policies and figures are included in **Attachment F**. Policies that would remain in the Eastgate subarea plan will be addressed as part of the Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish neighborhood area plan updates, anticipated to be initiated by Council on July 28. Upon the completion of these neighborhood area plans, the Eastgate subarea plan will be repealed in full.

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

The adoption of a neighborhood plan follows the annual CPA process, set forth in the Land Use Code (LUC). Proposals to amend the Comprehensive Plan, including Volume 2 (Neighborhood Area Plans), are Process IV actions conducted pursuant to LUC 20.35.400 through 20.35.450. The Planning Commission will review the updates against the Final Review Criteria and make a recommendation to City Council. The final Review criteria, set forth at LUC 20.30I, are:

1. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
2. Addresses the interests and needs of the entire city
3. Significantly changed conditions since the last time that portion of the text or map was considered
4. For site-specific amendments, the property is suitable for development (not relevant for Neighborhood Area Plans)
5. Demonstrates public benefit.

In a Process IV process, the Planning Commission holds Final Review public hearings and makes a recommendation to City Council. The City Council will review the Commission's recommendation and take action on it, together with any other proposed Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Council will be presented with the Planning Commission's recommendations for the Eastgate and Factoria neighborhood area plans during the fall.

At tonight's meeting, staff will request direction from the Planning Commission to set the public hearing for the Eastgate Neighborhood Area Plan CPA.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Neighborhood Area Boundaries (Map NH-1)
- B. Project Timeline
- C. Eastgate Community Engagement Report - Phases 2 and 3
- D. Draft Eastgate Neighborhood Area Plan
- E. Eastgate Neighborhood Area and Subarea Boundaries
- F. Subarea Plan Updates associated with Eastgate Neighborhood Area Plan CPA