

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Overall project updates and range of growth concepts to analyze for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and the Wilburton Study Area.

Emil King AICP, Assistant Director, 452-7223
Thara Johnson, Comprehensive Planning Manager, 452-4087
Janet Shull AICP, Strategic Planning Manager, 452-5371
Elizabeth Erickson AICP, Senior Planner, 452-2890
Kate Nesse, Senior Planner, 452-2042
Community Development Department

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION ONLY**

Tonight's Study Session will provide Council with overall project updates and a summary of the range of growth concepts to analyze for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and the Wilburton Study Area.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS**Comprehensive Plan and Wilburton Visioning: Background**

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan captures the vision for the future of the City, sets policy that directs actions and decisions, and guides capital investments. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update was launched by Council on February 28. The update is building on sound planning principles of the past and creating a framework for future growth.

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update is required by the state Growth Management Act (GMA) and is due no later than the end of 2024, with Bellevue's targeted completion by May 2024. The update is guided by state, regional, and county requirements as well as City goals and vision. The scope of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update includes updates to the future land use maps that reside within the Plan. These updates will be driven in part by the housing target and affordability requirements set by the state and county, which require the City to plan for an increase in housing capacity, types of housing, and affordable housing. The Comprehensive Plan land use maps provide a framework for the more detailed land use district designations that reside in the Land Use Code. All areas of the City are included in the future land use maps and may come under discussion as part of the Plan update, with some areas, such as the Wilburton Study Area, having a particular emphasis.

On April 25, Council directed staff to initiate work on the Wilburton Vision Implementation. This process focuses on the existing Wilburton commercial area and covers several phases, including initial work to amend the Comprehensive Plan future land use map and planning policies. As previously

discussed with Council, a streamlined process will be used to analyze overall Comprehensive Plan updates and those specific to the Wilburton Study Area.

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and the Wilburton Vision Implementation projects are related in that they are both considering changes in land use categories which will influence the capacity for residential and commercial development. The City will use a single EIS to address environmental review of both projects. This memo reflects the close coordination between the two projects, including the framework for growth and growth concepts to be evaluated. The timeline in Attachment B shows the relationship of the work on these two efforts.

Previous Council Direction

Upon initiating the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, Council provided direction on a number of issues to guide the work. Attachment D details the scope as approved by Council on February 28. The direction can be summarized by three major areas of focus.

Equity must be central to the project, both with regard to equitable outreach and equitable impacts on the community. Participation should reflect the community as closely as possible and raise the voices of those who have been historically marginalized and excluded from City planning processes. Staff will also consider the equitable impact of the growth concepts.

Sustainability considerations must be spread throughout each aspect of the project. The update to the Plan will work to reduce the City's impact on climate change and mitigate its impacts. The City will need to address items such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The update will also include measures to move toward a more efficient future where the City's vibrancy may be sustained without negatively impacting future generations.

Housing is an important issue and affordable or attainable housing must be possible for individuals and households across the economic spectrum. This requires a multi-pronged approach that impacts land use policy, City processes, human services, and a host of other areas. For Bellevue to remain a welcoming home to diverse residents, housing must be addressed comprehensively in this effort.

Upon initiating work on the Wilburton Vision Implementation in April, Council directed staff to use the 2018 Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Preferred Alternative as the baseline when considering future land use, growth targets, affordable housing, Grand Connection integration, sustainability, equity, and universal design.

In moving forward with the Wilburton work, Council was also attentive to the scope and timeline for Wilburton and communicated the expectation that the Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for Wilburton be adopted in advance of the overall Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, and the Wilburton Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) be completed per the milestone dates presented with the LUCA being ready for adoption as soon as possible after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update in Q2 2024.

Phase 1 Progress Update

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update has just concluded *Phase 1: Vision Update & Alignment*. As described at the project launch, this phase includes the update of the vision in the Comprehensive

Plan to align with Council's vision for the City. Residents were engaged in this process and the City has been building awareness within the community about the update.

Attachment C summarizes the engagement completed during this phase as well as the results of those efforts. The engagement events and outreach methods used during this phase, included:

- Three public events (two virtual, one in-person);
- Six presentations to community groups, 13 tabling events, and a Spanish language workshop;
- Mailed flyer and questionnaire to all 64,241 households in Bellevue (3,326 returned);
- 10 youth-focused workshops at Big Picture and Newport High Schools;
- Engaging Bellevue website with opportunities for self-guided learning and engagement; and
- At least one touch point with all boards and commissions with purview over issues considered during this phase.

The following summary is based on the engagement events, conversations that staff had directly with community members, and the results of the questionnaire.

Community Values

- People value access to parks and open space in Bellevue. Many people resonated with the "City in a Park" motto and like that Bellevue is full of natural areas and trees as well as identifying trees as a key part of Bellevue's civic identity and to the desire to preserve older trees and grow the overall tree canopy.
- Residents feel that Bellevue is a safe and clean city overall.

Community Concerns

- Community members are most concerned about housing and its affordability. They are concerned about the ability of their children, their parents and others to find the type of housing that fits their lifestyle at a modest price.
- While housing was a concern overall, there were noteworthy differences of opinion with some respondents calling for more density and more housing options and others who do not want to see additional growth.
- Residents are also concerned about homelessness and safety. There are many opinions about the best way to address homelessness but there is an overall desire to reduce it in Bellevue.
- Traffic was another major concern raised by residents. People are concerned about the amount of traffic but also the hazards that cars present for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- There is concern about the need to preserve trees, especially very old and large ones. Trees are seen as one of the City's most prized assets and there is concern about loss of tree canopy.

The themes revealed through engagement in Phase 1, while in line with many of the goals as stated at the project launch, emphasize nuances of community sentiment. Staff will rely on this input to inform amendments to the vision in the Comprehensive Plan. The project team will focus efforts during Phase 2 on deeper dives into the intersecting topics brought forward during Phase 1, which will allow participants to understand the relationship between values and areas of concern and to prioritize competing desires.

The Wilburton Vision Implementation is in the “Re-Engagement” phase where the 2018 CAC Vision is being presented to City boards and commissions, stakeholder organizations, and interested community members. Staff have attended three study sessions with the Planning Commission reviewing the overall workplan, the Wilburton Vision, approaches to modeling and analyzing future development, and community input to date. The overall goal of this initial phase of engagement is to build awareness and understanding of the Wilburton Vision and how it was developed with community leaders and the broader community, while recognizing the updated framework for future growth over the next 20 years. Staff are using Engaging Bellevue to inform the community of the Wilburton Vision and the CPA and LUCA work and to invite input on the key principles of the Vision to affirm, refine, and update the Vision in order to align it with the Citywide vision for equity, sustainability, affordability, and economic opportunity.

Growth Framework

An essential part of updating the Comprehensive Plan is amending the land use map. This is needed to ensure there is capacity to meet the job and housing targets set in the Countywide Planning Policies. It is also a key tool for guiding growth to meet the City’s vision. Updates to the map could have either positive or negative impacts on the environment by changing the location, type or amount of growth. An EIS will be used to analyze growth alternatives and how they compare against a scenario where no additional action is taken. The analysis includes impacts on natural lands, wildlife, traffic, and other areas. A Citywide EIS will analyze between one and three action alternatives in order to inform the choice of a preferred alternative that will be incorporated into the recommended Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update package.

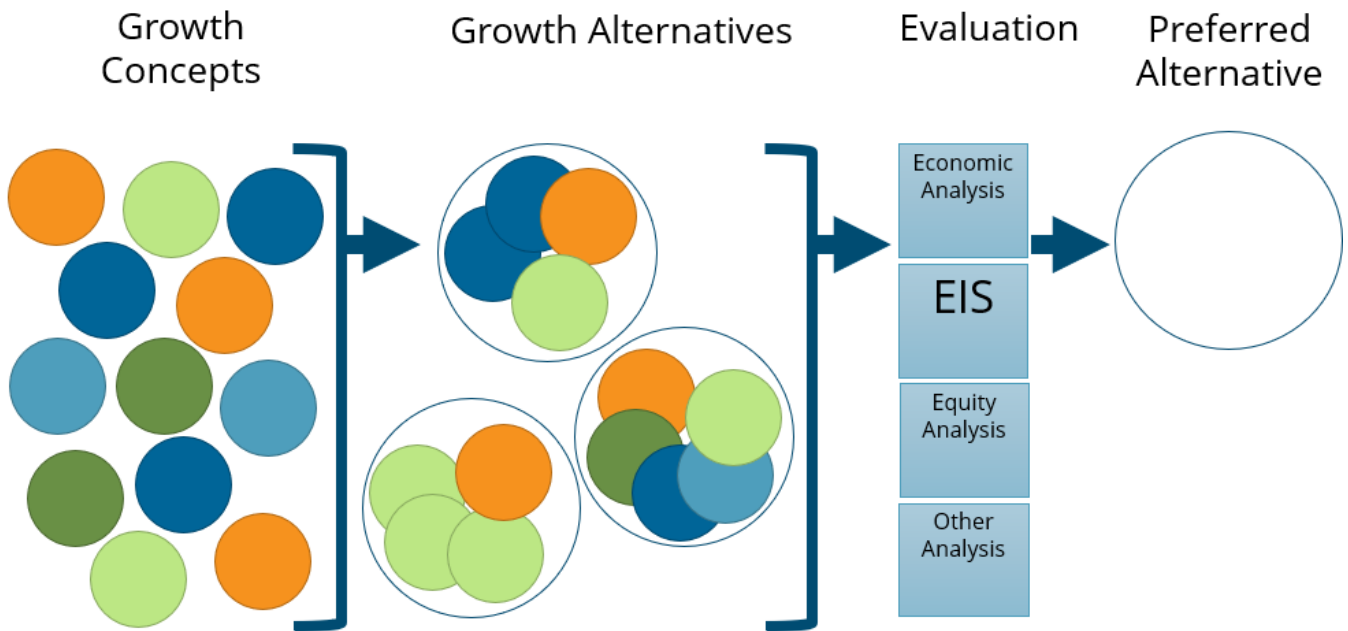
The Citywide EIS will cover necessary environmental review for the Wilburton Vision Implementation. It will allow the previous Wilburton environmental analysis to be updated to conform to current circumstances and will consider growth beyond the CAC Preferred Alternative to meet the City vision. The City will be analyzing impacts to both the overall City and the Wilburton area in one EIS, with additional detail analyzed in the Wilburton Study Area. The overall EIS analysis will take place this fall through next spring (see Attachment B).

The EIS requires a “no action” alternative for analysis as a baseline for understanding any potential impacts of other alternatives considered under the EIS. This no action alternative does not address recent state, regional, and City goals and requirements, so staff anticipates the EIS will analyze three action alternatives for growth that will each represent a different approach to distributing growth and addressing these needs.

Each “growth alternative” under consideration and subject to environmental analysis this year will be comprised of different “growth concepts”. Some of these concepts will be present in all alternatives

while other concepts may be exclusive to one growth alternative. At this point in the process, the City is considering the broad range of growth concepts to consider. The growth alternatives will include a selection of the growth concepts that are grouped within an overall approach. The growth alternatives will be finalized in the fall so that they can be analyzed in the EIS. A Preferred Alternative will ultimately be identified that may be one of the growth alternatives in the Draft EIS (DEIS) or a hybrid of alternatives analyzed. The overall growth framework process is shown in the diagram below.

Growth Framework Diagram



Tonight, staff are providing Council a summary of the growth concepts framework as outlined in Attachment A. These concepts fall into the following areas:

- **Focus of Growth: *Where should growth be located geographically across the City?*** The concepts could be combined with one another or taken individually. They include increasing density in Bellevue’s growth corridor, adding density in the Countywide Centers, establishing a network of neighborhood centers with smaller scale growth, adding density along arterials, or more gently increasing density across the City as a whole. These approaches intersect with the concepts below and would likely have differing impacts on sustainability (such as any potential transportation-related impacts related to City growth), housing options (such as how development in some areas may encourage certain unit sizes, types, or affordability), and equitable access (some areas of the City may have better transit access or may impact displacement of low-income residents more if made the focus of growth).
- **Amount of Growth: *Taking into account Bellevue’s minimum growth targets, how much new capacity for jobs and housing units should be added to the existing capacity, both across the City and within Wilburton specifically?*** While the City already has enough capacity for its planned jobs target, this question focuses on how much housing growth should

be planned. The concepts include a number of options that range from planning for the minimum 35,000 housing units target (requiring an additional 8,000 units on top of the existing 27,000-unit capacity) to analyzing options that plan for up to 70,000 housing units. This range of options for housing growth will be analyzed to see the relationship between increased housing production and housing options, jobs-housing balance, and affordability across all income brackets as defined by state, regional and county policies. Within Wilburton, concepts are based off the CAC vision of approximately 20,000 jobs and 5,000 housing units, which had a 4:1 jobs to housing ratio. The concepts range from this 4:1 ratio up to a 2:1 jobs to housing ratio to provide for additional housing in the area. Additional concepts around how to distribute that growth within Wilburton range from defining a single core of density, identifying additional development nodes within the area, or distributing additional growth evenly across the study area.

- **Placemaking: *What kind of experience is desired in each area of the City as it grows? What is the scale and character of residential and mixed-use development in the Wilburton area?*** These concepts could apply differently to each area of the City and range from quiet residential-only areas all the way to mixed-use areas with offices, retail, housing, and the resulting activity throughout the day and night. Other concepts include retail centers that cater to a broad diversity of visitors or neighborhood nodes that allow for the surrounding residential areas to visit small locally-owned businesses. These placemaking concepts will be key to consider in defining the appropriate vision for the City, and its unique parts, before defining the other concepts to support that vision. These also must be considered for Wilburton, as they define the mix of uses to target.
- **Housing Typologies: *What kind of housing should be added to various areas of the City and to Wilburton in particular?*** These concepts are key to providing housing options for a diversity of residents. Some typologies are also important for providing opportunities across the economic spectrum. These concepts range from expanding higher density typologies such as studios and one bedrooms to introducing low-density options such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Detached ADUs (DADUs), duplexes, or triplexes. Other concepts include mid-scale typologies such as cottage housing or small apartment buildings. Another concept would be to emphasize larger unit sizes in certain construction types. Many of these middle-scale typologies would fill a missing gap in Bellevue's housing options today and provide a more attainable option for some families.
- **Affordable Housing: *What approach should the City take in attaining income-restricted housing to meet the community's needs? Where should these approaches be taken within the City?*** Recent state and county planning changes require the City to plan for housing based on need, defining specific targets across the income spectrum. Creative approaches will be required to plan for these targets. These concepts include continuing the existing incentive system, expanding that type of system or increasing the requirements, or implementing a mandatory inclusionary system to require a certain percentage of new units to be made affordable. For any of these concepts, the geographic applicability could range from only areas with existing incentives to areas across the whole City.

Some of the growth concepts relate directly to the Wilburton Study Area. Specifically, the Wilburton area's growth framework builds off the 2018 Wilburton CAC's Preferred Alternative, which projected 12.6 million square feet of new development in the study area by 2035 and 15.4 million square feet of new development at ultimate buildout post-2035. Working from this baseline, growth options for Wilburton will examine increased housing beyond the 2018 work to focus on jobs-housing balance as a crucial component toward achieving the "mixed-use urban community" vision for the Wilburton area and addressing City housing targets.

The growth concepts are the key input to developing growth alternatives and the focus of the beginning of Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. These growth concepts have been discussed with the Planning Commission and will be part of the community dialogue through four Community Deep Dives, which are workshops focused on specific aspects of the growth concepts including Environment, Connection, Access, and Housing.

The City has also assembled a Strategy Team comprised of just over 50 people with specialized knowledge or lived experience who can provide insight into the range of possible outcomes associated with the different growth concepts. Finally, the City will continue to engage with the related boards and commissions around the growth concepts as growth alternatives are formed.

Schedule and Next Steps

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update is moving on to Phase 2a as staff begin forming the growth alternatives from the growth concepts identified in Attachment A. The concepts considered for the Wilburton Study Area will relate to the overarching Citywide concepts to define alternatives that complement one another and support a defined vision for growth across the City. Staff will provide Council information after the conclusion of Phase 2a to update the Council on the growth alternatives and the next project phase.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

This project will update the existing Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, both across the City and within the Wilburton Study Area. The last Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update occurred in 2015. This update will detail a growth strategy for the next 20 years and align the Plan with the Council Vision and state, regional, and county requirements. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan future land use map will add housing capacity to meet Bellevue's adopted 2044 housing unit target.

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal impacts of the Comprehensive Plan update are unknown at this time. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's guiding policy document, with functional plans developed or updated as future steps.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Growth Framework - Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Implementation
- B. Project Timelines
- C. Phase 1 Community Engagement Report
- D. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Scope of Work Summary

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A