



Bellevue Planning Commission

May 28, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Downtown Center Redesignation – Update the Downtown Subarea Plan to redesignate Downtown as a Regional Growth Center as part of the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC's) Regional Centers Monitoring and Redesignation process

STAFF CONTACT(S)

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POLICY ISSUES

An update to the Downtown Subarea Plan is needed as part of PSRC's Regional Growth Centers monitoring and redesignation process. The redesignation of Downtown as a Regional Growth Center will allow Bellevue to continue to be eligible for federal transportation funding. The updates to the Downtown Subarea Plan are primarily updating data and growth targets as well as adding policies related to equity, displacement, and the environment.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



City Council initiated the Downtown Subarea Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) on January 14. Planning Commission is asked to consider this CPA on approximately the same schedule as the Great Neighborhoods CPAs (Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan and Newport Neighborhood Area Plan).

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

PSRC established the Regional Centers Framework in 2018 to guide regional growth. The Regional Centers are priority areas for federal transportation funding. Downtown Bellevue was originally designated a Regional Growth Center in 1995. In 2024, PSRC launched a Monitoring and Redesignation process for existing regional centers. Bellevue has the opportunity to go through this process to retain the Regional Growth Center designation.

The monitoring and redesignation process will evaluate how the region's system of centers is meeting regional objectives and determine whether updates to the framework may be needed. The City will share information with PSRC about Downtown Bellevue to demonstrate that it continues to meet the Regional Growth Center designation criteria.

PSRC is developing criteria reports to ensure alignment with applicable Regional Centers Framework requirements, with a goal of releasing the report for Downtown Bellevue before September. Bellevue will have an opportunity to review drafts of the criteria report and provide context to support the review of the redesignation for Downtown Bellevue.

Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-19 directs the city to, "Sustain Downtown's designation as a Regional

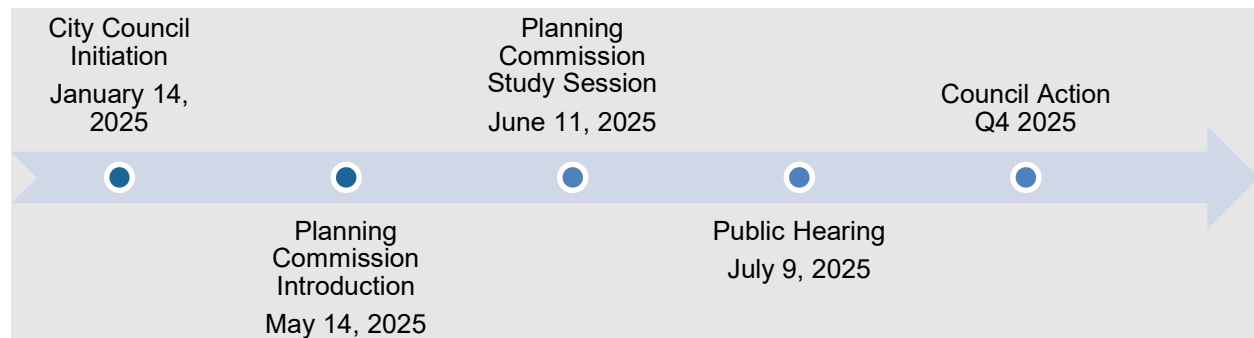
Growth Center.” The monitoring and redesignation process is a procedure carried out periodically by PSRC to ensure that the Regional Growth Centers continue to comply with PSRC’s regional Vision, recently updated to Vision 2050. The Downtown Subarea Plan will need to be updated with the most recent data and growth targets from the 2044 Comprehensive Plan as well as some additions to respond to Vision 2050.

To support the monitoring and redesignation process, Council directed the City to update the Downtown Subarea Plan to reflect the current state of Downtown Bellevue and detail the role of the growth center in contributing to the plan for growth in Bellevue in the Comprehensive Plan. The specific scope of the update includes:

- Update the growth targets to align with the updated targets in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Describe the potential for growth in Downtown and how Bellevue is planning for that growth.
- Update current measures of housing, population, and jobs in the plan specific to Downtown Bellevue.
- Describe activities to ensure equitable engagement in the plan update process.
- Update or add maps describing current environmental and transportation infrastructure.
- Add policies to mitigate residential and commercial displacement.
- Add policies related to planning for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.
- Add policies to reduce the impact on the environment through greenhouse gas emissions and other means.

The Downtown Subarea Plan is part of Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. The update to the Downtown Subarea Plan will be included as one of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendments along with the Great Neighborhoods plan updates (to Crossroads and Newport).

Project Timeline



Public Engagement

This update is relatively minor and does not involve any changes in strategic direction. The primary goal is to inform people of the process as the update is focused on meeting the Regional Growth Center requirements. Thus far the outreach has included sharing information through existing meetings and events, including through Neighborhood Enhancement Program outreach in Northwest Bellevue and through Downtown business outreach.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None