



Bellevue Planning Commission

November 29, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Vision Update

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

The Planning Commission is reviewing and providing direction on the staff recommended updates to the first chapter in the Comprehensive Plan, Introduction and Vision and the staff recommended updates to the vision statements that appear at the beginning of each element in the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is being updated in accordance with the schedule set forth by the State (RCW 36.70A.130(5)). The update was launched February 28, 2022, and was followed by extensive public engagement (the latest summary of engagement was presented to Planning Commission on April 26, 2023). The update to the overall city vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan is based on the Council vision, additional direction from Council and feedback from the community. Updates to the vision statements for each of the elements are based on updates to the overall vision, community feedback along with the state and regional requirements.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND

Bellevue's Vision for Growth is based in large part on the Council's [Vision and Priorities](#). That vision, though focusing on similar issues, has evolved since 2015. The Periodic Update is an opportunity to realign the vision and policies with the updated Council Vision and Priorities. In addition, as the City looks forward, beyond the horizon for the last update to the 2044 horizon for this update, the shape of growth and the needs of the Bellevue Community have been redefined. The update to the vision builds on the strong foundation set through the careful planning of past Comprehensive Plans and makes amendments to reflect the new information,

direction, and priorities. Finally, the City has been engaging with the community throughout the process and the input from the community has also contributed to the updates.

The Council's Vision and Priorities have changed in a few ways from the last update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2015 and these changes are reflected in the updates to the citywide vision and element vision statements. The changes include:

- Focus on providing a range of housing types in neighborhoods and creating opportunities for connection between people and across neighborhoods.
- A broader definition of who is included in the Bellevue Community.
- Connecting small and large businesses to each other and with the world.
- Focus on cross-cultural connections.
- Increasing access to parks and open spaces.
- Defining innovation as an integral part of the community.
- Including environmental sustainability as a driver of short- and long-term city actions.

Not only has the Council updated their vision and priorities for the city; state law and regional requirements have also been updated. Some of these updates influence the framework for how the City plans. Those updates are also reflected in the amendments to the citywide vision and element vision statements. The major changes at the state and regional level include:

- Plan for 35,000 housing units and 70,000 jobs
- Updated framework of growth centers including Metropolitan Centers, Countywide Centers and Local Centers
- Address equity throughout the plan
- Plan for the causes and impacts of climate change
- Plan for housing affordable to households of all income levels throughout the City and the regional housing need
- Allow for middle housing in single family areas within the City including detached Accessory dwelling units

Community input has also contributed to the updates in the vision statements. Shortly after launching the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update in 2022, the City sent a survey to every household in Bellevue asking how the city was doing in meeting the existing vision. The response was generally positive. Most respondents thought the City was doing a good job in meeting its vision in most areas. There were two areas where the city was rated poorly by most people. Those areas were "We offer a range of housing types and people can find something that is affordable for their family to rent or own," and, "We are an equitable community where everyone has an opportunity to thrive."

The purpose of this memo is to share the staff recommended updates to the citywide vision, the element vision statements, and the revision to the Introduction and Vision chapter of the

Comprehensive Plan. As Planning Commission reviews each chapter or set of policies in an element, staff will seek Planning Commission’s direction to move that section to the “final draft” stage. This means that we will address the issues raised by the Commission and ready it for review as part of the complete draft. The Commission will have an opportunity to review the complete draft after reviewing all of the pieces individually in the second quarter of 2024.

Staff seeks direction to advance the Introduction and Vision chapter to the “final draft” stage and advance the element vision statements for inclusion in each of the element narratives. Planning Commission will have another opportunity to review the chapter as part of the complete draft review in Q2, 2024 in advance of the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

CITYWIDE VISION

The Introduction and Vision chapter (Attachment A) has been paginated for print/PDF publication. Staff is exploring options for better electronic distribution and online reading. The key changes staff recommend making to the Introduction and Vision chapter are,

- Adding the Council Vision and Priorities
- Removing the vision statements for each element (they will continue to be at the beginning of each element)
- Removing the demographics section (but retaining the demographics sidebar)
- Adding a sidebar listing functional plans
- Updating the Moments in Bellevue’s History timeline to include events related to racial exclusion (such as Japanese Internment)
- Updating the vision.

Below is the strike/underline version the update to the vision statement in the Introduction and Vision chapter.

~~BELLEVUE 2035 — WHERE YOU WANT TO BE~~

Bellevue ~~embraces~~ welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength.

We embrace the future while respecting our past.

In ~~2035~~2044 Bellevue is a vibrant international center for innovation and commerce with safe, diverse, and attractive neighborhoods that feature some of America’s finest schools. ~~Most of Bellevue’s jobs and many of its new housing opportunities are found Downtown with its thriving arts scene, and in new business/residential centers at BelRed, Wilburton, and Eastgate, which feature their own unique cultural amenities and urban landscapes. Our~~ The city’s neighborhoods, from metropolitan Downtown to bucolic Cougar Mountain, epitomize Bellevue’s reputation as a “City in a Park” with visually breathtaking vistas, viewpoints, and recreation areas. ~~Despite the city’s growth, neighborhoods remain connected to one another,~~

~~offering~~ Downtown is an employment and residential hub. New business and residential centers are located in BelRed and Wilburton. Crossroads, Eastgate and Factoria feature their own unique cultural amenities and urban landscapes. Local-serving shopping centers are found throughout the city allowing people to easily meet daily needs close to home. Through the city's growth, residents are connected to one another. All neighborhoods have diverse housing choices, gathering spaces, and local and regional commercial services. Bellevue's people – its ultimate strength - define both the city and their neighborhood-neighborhoods.

This Comprehensive Plan Vision will be realized by the entire city organization, in concert with the Bellevue community and regional partners. The Comprehensive Plan provides city policy direction on a range of issues, from the city's growth strategy to environmental protection, to provision of utilities, parks, and other services. Further detail is found in the Vision statement for each element of the plan. These occur at the beginning of each element ~~and are set forth below in their entirety.~~

ELEMENT VISION STATEMENTS

The structure of the vision statements at the beginning of each element is to have a one-sentence overall vision followed by a paragraph describing the vision of Bellevue in 2044. In addition to changes to the vision statements, changes to the names of the elements are also included below. Staff is recommending a change to the name of the Citizen Engagement element (to Community Engagement, to reflect the broader definition of who the city should be engaging with) and the Environment element (to Climate Change, to align with future state requirements). The Shoreline Management element is not being updated. It has its own update schedule set forth in state law (RCW 90.58.080) that follows the update to the rest of the Comprehensive Plan.

CITIZENCOMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Bellevue's actively engaged ~~citizenry~~community shapes the city's future.

Bellevue has a strong social fabric, where community groups, businesses and the city organization work together to address our needs. The city makes ~~citizen~~ engagement with the people who live, work and play in Bellevue today a high priority, and residents and considers the needs of people in the future. Community members know that their local government listens and responds to them. Bellevue's residents carecommunity cares about the city and ~~work~~works collectively to address mutual needs.

LAND USE

Growth of residents and businesses in Bellevue grows in a manner that enhances the livability of the ~~community, while maintaining the elements that residents cherish~~city.

Growth in Bellevue ~~is focused in denser mixed-use centers,~~ maintains the city's natural environment. Mixed Use Centers like Downtown, BelRed and the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development Area, are the focus of growth with additional development around transit in East

Main, Crossroads, Eastgate, while maintaining the city's outstanding natural environment and the health and vitality of established Factoria and in Neighborhood Centers. Bellevue supports many types of healthy and vital residential neighborhoods to serve the needs of our diverse population.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Bellevue is a community of diverse ~~and~~, vibrant, and resilient neighborhoods.

~~Bellevue residents live in a variety of distinctive, safe and attractive~~ Bellevue's neighborhoods that provide are well-maintained and known for their distinctiveness, high-performing schools, safety, natural beauty, amenities and opportunities for a high quality of life. The Residents appreciate the strong connections among neighbors from around the corner and around the world that contribute to these qualities and the ability of neighborhoods to respond to change making Bellevue home.

HOUSING

~~The Bellevue meets the~~ community has equitable access to housing that meets the needs of its diverse population, strengthening neighborhoods all current and communities future residents.

~~Bellevue works with its partners to meet~~ meets the community's current and future housing needs ~~through a range of~~ by allowing and promoting housing types and affordabilities. that is attainable to those at all income levels. Housing is diverse in size and form to meet the needs of all households with people from many backgrounds and in different stages of life. Bellevue employs a wide range of strategies to meet its share of the regional expand access to housing need. The city has been an effective participant in the region's work that has largely eliminated and offer equitable housing opportunities in all neighborhoods. Bellevue, working with its partners, provides a range of housing options and services to prevent individuals and families from facing housing insecurity and homelessness.

CAPITAL FACILITIES

Bellevue has ~~outstanding~~ exceptional community facilities that efficiently serve the needs of a growing an evolving city while addressing greenhouse gas reductions and changing city climate resiliency.

Bellevue has adequate financial resources to build and maintain ~~the parks, streets and other streetscapes,~~ community facilities and other essential public facilities to address the ~~community's~~ city's growth and evolving needs. ~~These~~ Public buildings and municipal operations address energy efficiency and climate resiliency while allowing for a flexible, healthy, and productive environment for those who live, work, and play in Bellevue. Community facilities address multiple objectives, such as creating new open space and enhancing neighborhood character livability even as they meet basic functional requirements.

UTILITIES

Bellevue has the public and private utilities that meet the needs of a growing ~~economy~~city.

Public and private utilities are building the systems to ~~grow~~support a 21st century ~~economy~~community. These services are resilient, efficient, and ~~available~~create a safe and consistent environment for all residents and businesses to thrive. Utilities are sited, designed, and operated ~~in a manner that maintains community character~~with consideration for the visual, social and environmental impacts.

TRANSPORTATION

~~Moving~~Bellevue has a complete and connected multimodal transportation network that provides for reliable and predictable travel into, around and through the city.

Bellevue is ~~reliable and predictable~~well-connected within the city and to the region, enabling. A multimodal network enables local and regional access for businesses, employees, visitors and neighborhoods, residents. Safe and reliable mobility options, including facilities for walking, biking, riding transit, and car, take driving enable people to get where they need to go. The design and operation of the city's transportation system integrates leading safety components and efficiency technology.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bellevue is a hub for global business and innovation.

Its economic strength is built on the creativity, innovation, and hard work of its people. Bellevue works to attract innovative and entrepreneurial businesses through ensuring that our neighborhoods, cultural amenities, public schools, digital infrastructure, workforce, and business climate are among the nation's best.

ENVIRONMENT

Bellevue embraces its stewardship of the environment by protecting and ~~retaining natural systems~~enhancing natural systems, accelerating decarbonization and clean energy, addressing the impacts of climate change, and building for a sustainable future.

As growth and development occurs, Bellevue is working to build a ~~healthier, greener and~~more sustainable and climate resilient future for generations to come. New buildings and infrastructure are designed to have a positive impact on the environment and to protect and even restore natural systems. The community highly values and celebrates the results, such as reduced energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, ~~increasing~~cleaner air, increased tree canopy, and more salmon in local creeks.

HUMAN SERVICES

Bellevue is an equitable and caring community where everyone can thrive and belong.

~~Bellevue is a community that cares. Every~~ in which each and every member of the community has the equitable access and opportunity to achieve ~~meet their potential and enhance their quality~~ essential physical, behavioral health, economic, and social needs, feels a sense of belonging, and has an equitable opportunity to thrive. Bellevue invests in the basic building blocks of life. A system of the community including human services assists people in times of need and invests in the to ensure the development of healthy individuals and families.

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Bellevue is a “City in a Park.”

~~Bellevue has~~ builds a healthy community through an integrated and accessible system of exceptional parks, open spaces, cultural facilities, and recreational amenities throughout the city. These provide abundant access to natural beauty areas, and extraordinary experiences to define a lifetime of recreation opportunities. In Bellevue everyone can connect to each other and learning to nature through experiences that help them to live, grow, and thrive.

URBAN DESIGN & THE ARTS

Bellevue creates extraordinary places for people, and embraces the arts as an integral part of the community.

Through keen attention to urban design, Bellevue’s ~~new buildings are~~ built environment is contributing to the memorability, livability, and character of the city and its neighborhoods. Rich expressions of arts and culture are found throughout the city; ~~they~~. They are embraced by residents and are “must see” attractions for visitors.

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

Bellevue’s stewardship of its shorelines protects water quality and habitat, enhances recreation and residential enjoyment, and provides for public access and economic benefit.

Shorelines along Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish are signature features defining Bellevue. City investments and actions by private parties are maintaining and restoring the health of these ecosystems.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO UPDATES TO VISION STATEMENTS

The updates to the vision statements incorporated the feedback from the extensive engagement that has been conducted over the past year and a half. The planning team shared the resulting updates to the vision statements with the community and engaged with over 200 people through a continuous open house at City Hall, a drop-in event at Crossroads Mall, an evening event at City Hall, and via an online questionnaire. The feedback was based on the vision statements you have in this packet. The feedback from the community is to inform Planning Commission’s deliberation and direction.

Figure 1. Overall Feelings about the Vision Statements



The full engagement report is attached to this memo (Attachment B). Overall, people liked the vision statements (figure 1). People with positive feelings about the vision statements generally liked that they emphasize equity and inclusion; focus on the environment and sustainability; and are supportive of a community where everyone can thrive.

People with mixed feelings about the vision statements cited several reasons. Some felt that they did not go far enough, particularly around housing and the environment. Others felt that the draft vision statements were conflicting, particularly around growth and the environment. Others felt that certain demographics like youth or seniors were not adequately represented in the statements. People with negative opinions most often felt that the draft vision statements were overly broad or were skeptical that these statements were truly reflective of community sentiment.

The planning team also invited people to provide feedback on any priorities that might be missing. The three main issues raised by participants were Transportation, Housing Affordability, and the Environment. In these instances, people primarily felt that the vision statements did not go far enough and wanted to see the city go further in advancing multi-modal priorities, promoting housing affordability, and addressing climate.

Public safety was another issue that many people raised. Respondents wanted to see a greater emphasis on preventing crime and supporting law enforcement. Safety is addressed throughout the plan as it applies to different aspects of the community. Policies regarding the provision of facilities for public safety (such as fire and police protection) are in the Capital Facilities element. The Bellevue Police Department Strategic Plan and the Bellevue Fire Department Strategic Plan follow the guidance in the Comprehensive Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Introduction and Vision chapter
- B. Engagement Report: Vision Open Houses – Fall 2023
- C. Glossary