



Bellevue Planning Commission

July 22, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING ITEM

SUBJECT

Public Hearing 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 passed, and the governor signed into law, 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 Parking Reform LUCA will implement these changes to state law as well as implement Comprehensive Plan policies supporting parking reform and transit-oriented development, including Policies LU-32, LU-25, HO-16, and HO-18, which encourage reduced parking requirements, shared parking, and housing affordability and density in transit-served areas.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



Following discussion on the proposed LUCA on June 24, the Planning Commission directed staff to schedule a public hearing. At tonight's meeting, the Commission will be asked to hold the public hearing on the proposed LUCA, included as Attachment A. After the public hearing, the Commission will be asked to make a recommendation on the proposed LUCA. The Planning Commission may also direct staff to schedule a subsequent meeting to make its recommendation. However, doing so would likely delay the project and jeopardize the city's ability to meet the January 27, 2027 compliance deadline established by SB 5184.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

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. The proposed LUCA, which implements all minimum legal requirements, is provided as Attachment A.

Overview of Proposed LUCA

The proposed LUCA primarily implements the requirements of SB 5184, SB 6015, and HB 1491. While additional parking reforms have been adopted by other jurisdictions, the proposal is limited to state-required changes to allow time to evaluate implementation outcomes before considering future local amendments.

The LUCA also reorganizes and clarifies parking regulations to improve usability, consistency, and compliance with state law. The proposed amendments include:

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

Code Consolidation and Development Standards

The LUCA consolidates parking, circulation, and walkway standards into a single section of the Land Use Code (LUC 20.20.590) and establishes consistent citywide standards. Changes include:

- Consolidated regulations: Parking standards are centralized within LUC 20.20.590.
- Standardized parking ratios: Minimum parking requirements are established at one space per single-family dwelling, 0.5 spaces per middle housing and multifamily dwelling, and two spaces per 1,000 gross square feet for commercial uses, consistent with state law.
- Removal of parking maximums: Existing maximum parking limits are removed, reflecting current market conditions and reduced state parking requirements.
- Tandem parking: Definitions and minimum dimensional standards are incorporated into the code.
- Parking structures: General standards are established while allowing overlay districts to apply more specific requirements where applicable.

State Law Compliance

The LUCA incorporates state-required exemptions from minimum parking requirements, including:

- Residential and mixed-use development within designated transit station areas.
- Uses exempted by state law, including affordable housing, senior housing, child care centers, and qualifying small commercial and residential developments.
- Existing exemptions for accessory dwelling units, middle housing, and co-living housing located within one-half mile walking distance of a major transit stop, consistent with state law.

June 24 Study Session

At the June 24 study session, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed Parking Reform LUCA and generally supported implementing the baseline requirements established by recent state legislation (SB 5184, SB 6015, and HB 1491) rather than pursuing further parking deregulation at this time.

The Commission discussed the significant changes required by state law and recognized that Bellevue's parking regulations will change substantially to comply with state law. The state legislation substantially reduces minimum parking requirements throughout Bellevue. For example, commercial uses will now largely be treated equally, requiring 2 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet and replacing previous requirements that ranged from 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet for office uses, 5 spaces for retail, and up to 16 spaces for restaurants. Residential requirements are similarly reduced from 2 spaces per single-family dwelling to 1 space, and from 1 space per multifamily dwelling to 0.5 spaces per dwelling. In addition, state law prohibits minimum parking requirements for residential and mixed-use development within designated light rail and bus rapid transit station areas, affecting much of Bellevue's mixed-use growth areas, including Downtown, BelRed, Wilburton, Crossroads, and East Main.

Allowing time to observe how development responds before considering additional parking reforms will provide an opportunity to evaluate implementation using Bellevue-specific data. Because new development occurs over several years, it is anticipated that approximately three to five years of implementation will be needed to meaningfully assess parking utilization, development feasibility, travel behavior, and the effectiveness of the new standards.

The Commission also requested additional information on two potential incentives to better manage parking supply and encourage more useable parking stalls:

1. Expanding opportunities for shared parking between developments with complementary parking demand.
2. Encouraging larger parking stall dimensions than the maximum size cities can require under state law.

Shared Parking

The proposed LUCA allows developments with complementary parking demands to enter into shared parking agreements and reduce required parking by up to 20 percent. Shared parking allows multiple uses to efficiently utilize the same parking supply during different peak demand periods. This concept has been implemented successfully in the city and is anticipated to become more attractive going forward given the reduced parking requirements and the elimination of minimum parking requirements in designated transit station areas proposed in this LUCA. For this reason, no further changes to the proposed shared parking provisions are recommended at this time.

Parking Stall Size Incentive

State law limits the maximum parking stall dimensions cities can require to 8 feet by 20 feet. While Bellevue cannot require larger stalls, the proposed LUCA has been updated to create an incentive for developers to voluntarily provide stalls at least nine feet wide. This larger width is consistent with Bellevue's current stall width requirements. Projects that stripe parking stalls at least nine feet wide may reduce required parking by up to 10 percent. Small sites (40,000 square feet or less) in mixed-use districts may receive up to a 15 percent reduction. This approach encourages more functional parking without conflicting with state law.

Decision Criteria

LUC 20.30J.135 establishes the decision criteria for amendments to the Land Use Code. The proposed Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) satisfies these criteria as follows:

A. The amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Finding: The proposed LUCA is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The LUCA implements Comprehensive Plan policies that support parking reform, transit-oriented development, housing affordability, and efficient land use. Specifically, the proposal advances Policies LU-25, LU-32, HO-16, and HO-18 by reducing minimum parking requirements, expanding opportunities for shared parking, and supporting additional housing and mixed-use development in areas served by high-capacity transit.

B. The amendment enhances the public health, safety, or welfare.

Finding: The proposed LUCA enhances the public health, safety, and welfare by implementing state parking requirements intended to increase housing opportunities, improve access to transit, and reduce barriers to development. The amendments encourage more efficient use of land, support walkable and transit-oriented communities, reduce unnecessary development costs associated with excess parking, and provide flexibility for projects to better align parking supply with actual demand. The proposal also maintains parking requirements where appropriate while preserving the city's ability to monitor outcomes and consider future refinements as additional data becomes available.

C. The amendment is not contrary to the best interests of the citizens and property owners of the City of Bellevue.

Finding: The proposed LUCA is not contrary to the best interests of Bellevue residents or property owners. The LUCA implements state law, provides a consistent and predictable regulatory framework, and reduces unnecessary development constraints while maintaining appropriate parking standards. By aligning local regulations with state requirements and supporting housing production, economic vitality, and transportation choice, the proposal advances the community's long-term interests.

Public Engagement

A public engagement plan was implemented to inform the public, stakeholders, and interested parties throughout the Parking Reform LUCA process and provide opportunities for input on the proposed code amendments.

- **Process IV Requirements.** Consistent with Chapter 20.35 LUC procedural requirements, public input opportunities included a notice of application, notice of public hearing, and a public hearing.
- **Virtual Introductory Information Session.** A virtual information session was held on February 9 to introduce the project, applicable state requirements, and the scope of the proposed code amendments. Questions and comments helped identify areas where additional clarification was needed, including the distinction between on-street and off-street parking.

- **Public Open Houses.** Two in-person open houses were held to provide information and gather community feedback: a City Hall open house on April 20 and a Community Data Walk at the Crossroads Community Center on May 6.
- **Virtual Data Walkthrough.** A virtual data walkthrough was held on May 8 to present parking data and analysis prior to release of the draft code amendments for Planning Commission review.

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. Planning Commission Resolution