

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Council initiation of the High-Density Residential and Planned Unit Development Land Use Code Amendment and Associated Rezones

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**DIRECTION**

This Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) and associated rezones will implement updates to the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan to align with new land use designations. The LUCA will create a high-density residential district that exceeds the city's current highest multifamily district, Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR-2), which allows about 30 dwelling units per acre, and the new district will apply in designated areas within Crossroads and Factoria. It will also update the planned unit development (PUD) provisions to allow greater flexibility on large sites and on sites redeveloped with affordable housing.

Following discussion, staff requests that Council initiate work on the High Density Residential and Planned Unit Development LUCA and direct the Planning Commission to review and process it.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider directing staff to initiate work on the High Density Residential and Planned Unit Development LUCA and direct the Planning Commission to review and process the LUCA.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Background**

This LUCA and associated rezones implement updates to the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map to align with new land use designations. The LUCA has three primary components: creation of a new high density residential district for designated areas in Crossroads and Factoria; updates to PUD provisions to provide greater flexibility on large sites and sites redeveloped with affordable housing; and legislative rezones of property to the new high density residential district and of Overlake Farms property within Bridle Trails neighborhood to the low density residential 3 district.

High-Density Residential Land Use District

The proposed LUCA implements recent updates to the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map, which introduced a high-density residential land use designation. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the recent update to the Comprehensive Plan studied densities up to 60 dwelling units per acre in the high-density residential land use designations. Establishing a corresponding Land Use

District and associated dimensional standards is necessary to implement this policy change. The current Land Use Code lacks a standalone zone to accommodate this level of residential intensity outside of mixed-use areas. A new zoning tier is therefore needed to align zoning with the Future Land Use Map, expand housing capacity, and provide a predictable pathway for high-density residential development. The Future Land Use Map with locations for these high-density residential districts highlighted is included as Attachment A.

The new land use district will build on the structure of the existing medium-density framework and introduce updated dimensional standards to support broader housing typologies and increased development capacity. The LUCA will also consider transition standards and compatibility with adjacent lower-density areas.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Code Update

Bellevue's PUD regulations have remained largely unchanged since the mid-1990s and have been used infrequently, with fewer than ten PUDs processed over the past two decades. This limited utilization indicates that the current framework does not adequately support contemporary development patterns or provide sufficient flexibility to be a practical tool for applicants.

In Washington State, PUDs are an established land use mechanism that can enable more flexible and efficient site planning than conventional zoning. They allow for clustering of development, modification of dimensional standards, and coordinated design across a site, which can result in better environmental outcomes, preservation of open space and tree canopy, and a wider range of housing types while maintaining overall density targets.

The proposed update is supported by multiple policy directives in the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan. Policy HO-24 encourages regulatory approaches that maximize housing variety and achievable density. Policy LU-41 directs the City to provide opportunities for increased density and height on larger sites to support clustering, efficient site planning, and preservation of trees and open space. Additionally, the Affordable Housing Strategy (Action AH.4.3) calls for amendments to the PUD code to allow greater flexibility to facilitate affordable housing development.

These updates are intended to make the PUD framework a more effective implementation tool that aligns with current policy direction, expands housing opportunities, and enables more integrated and site-responsive development outcomes.

Legislative Rezones

The legislative rezones accompanying this LUCA will rezone lots designated in the Future Land Use Map as high-density residential to the new high density residential district created through this LUCA.

The legislative rezones accompanying this LUCA will also include a rezone of the Overlake Farms property within the Bridle Trails neighborhood. The Future Land Use Map designates a portion of the property as Low Density Residential, which supports multifamily development. To align with the Future Land Use Map, the property will be rezoned to a multifamily land use district. In addition, proposed PUD code amendments are intended to facilitate redevelopment of the site while requiring the retention of a substantial number of existing trees and the provision of meaningful open space.

Proposed Scope of Code Amendments

1. High Density Residential LUCA
 - a. Establish a new high density residential district consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation.
 - b. Amend LUC 20.20.010 (dimensional requirements) to establish:
 - i. Increased height limits
 - ii. Reduced setbacks
 - iii. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to support up to 60 units per acre.
 - c. Develop transition and compatibility standards to address adjacency to lower-density land use districts.
 - d. Conduct a comprehensive review of cross-referenced code sections to ensure consistency and alignment amongst code provisions.
2. Planned Unit Development LUCA
 - a. Expand applicability thresholds and criteria to increase flexibility on larger parcels over 10 acres.
 - b. Replace subjective "compatibility" criteria with clear and objective standards.
 - c. Expand flexibility in development standards, including modifications to setbacks, lot coverage, and building placement; and clarify increased height and density limits allowed through the PUD process.
 - d. Strengthen provisions for clustering to concentrate development on portions of a site, and preserve significant trees, open space, and natural features.
 - e. Incorporate incentives to support affordable housing development.
 - f. Clarify and streamline the review and permitting process to reduce procedural complexity and improve predictability
 - g. Align PUD provisions with current environmental regulations, including critical areas and tree retention standards.
 - h. Review and reconcile cross-references throughout the Land Use Code to ensure internal consistency and eliminate conflicts
3. Legislative Rezones
 - a. Rezone Overlake Farms from Large Lot Residential (LL-1) to Low Density Residential 3 (LDR-3).
 - b. Rezone lots designated as high-density residential in the Future Land Use Map to the new high-density residential district created through this LUCA.

Public Engagement

Staff have developed a public engagement plan with five modes of outreach to ensure the public, stakeholders, and interested parties have the opportunity to be informed and to provide comments.

- Process IV Requirements. Consistent with Chapter 20.35 LUC procedural requirements, public input will be solicited by a notice of application, notice of public hearing and the required public hearing.
- Public Notice. Staff will provide public notice within a 1,000-foot radius of any site proposed for a rezone. The typical citywide legislative rezone notice process does not require mailed public notice to nearby properties, but this proposal would include such notice to ensure

nearby residents are informed of any rezone proposal to high-density residential.

- Public Information Sessions. At least two public information sessions will be held either in person, virtually, or both.
- Direct Engagement and Feedback. Direct engagement with residents, neighborhood associations, and the development community, including through Bellevue Development Committee (BDC) meetings.
- Online Presence. The city webpage will provide the public information about the project, who to direct questions to, and how to submit comments.



POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

These code amendments and associated rezones are proposed to increase the consistency of the Land Use Code and the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan by implementing the Future Land Use Map and advancing policies that promote housing diversity, flexibility, and density (HO-24), as well as increased density and height on larger sites to support clustering and the preservation of open space and trees (LU-41). In addition, the LUCA advances the Affordable Housing Strategy (Action AH.4.3) by introducing greater flexibility in the PUD code to facilitate affordable housing development.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with implementing these changes.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to initiate work on the High Density Residential and Planned Unit Development LUCA and direct the Planning Commission to review and process the LUCA.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff regarding scope or timing

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Future Land Use Map Showing New High-Density Residential Designation in Factoria and Crossroads and Low Density Residential applied to Overlake Farms

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A