

## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA MEMORANDUM

### **SUBJECT**

Ordinance No. 6251 adopting the updated Bellevue Comprehensive Plan (12-127970-AC).

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Comprehensive Plan has no direct fiscal impact to the City. The plan, however, does provide policy direction to a wide range of City initiatives that may occur over the next twenty years. Funding impacts for these initiatives would be discussed during the City's budget process.

### **STAFF CONTACTS**

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### **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

#### **Comprehensive Plan**

The *Bellevue Comprehensive Plan* is the foundational policy document that sets overall City policy direction on a wide range of topics, from growth and development to transportation, parks, utilities, economic development, human services, and other topics. With initiation of the update, Council directed the update of the plan according to the following project principles:

- Remain relevant to our community
- Advance the community Vision
- Address the needs of a more diverse community
- Engage the entire community in the update process
- Use the current plan as the foundation for the update
- Address emerging issues
- Increase the plan's accessibility, usability
- Meet our state and regional requirements
- Connect to implementation strategies
- Measure progress and success

#### **Growth Management Act**

The update responds to the state Growth Management Act requirement to periodically update the plan, and addresses local needs to ensure that the plan remains relevant and responsive to community values.

The update also responds to the regional policy guidance found in the Regional Growth Strategy, VISION 2040, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

### **BACKGROUND**

On March 25, 2015, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the adoption of update amendments to the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Growth Management Act. This updated Comprehensive Plan includes:

- **Volume 1** – The Community Vision and general elements of Volume 1 were reviewed and will be replaced by this update. The update also replaces the Land Use Map of the existing Comprehensive Plan. The Shoreline Element remains unchanged at this time, which will be replaced in concert with the Shoreline Master Program update project.
- **Volume 2** - Limited changes are made to Volume 2, including updates to the Downtown Bellevue subarea plan to adjust the southern boundary; removal of policy S-SW-27 from the Southwest Bellevue subarea; changes to the Eastgate, Richards Valley, and Factoria subarea plans to implement the Eastgate/I-90 project; and replacement of the transportation facilities plans with a single consolidated Comprehensive Transportation Project List.

The Comprehensive Plan is the City’s foundational policy document that captures the community’s vision for the future of Bellevue, directs City actions and decisions, and helps guide capital investments. The recommended update to the plan does not “start over.” Rather the update builds off of the current plan and continues to support many of its existing strategies, including investing in a strong Downtown neighborhood, revitalizing commercial areas, protecting neighborhoods, and enhancing the character of the city, as a “City in a Park.” Significant changes to the plan address new and evolving conditions or bring components up-to-date.

**Vision** – The plan fully captures the community vision for the future. This new Vision, which directly connects with the Council vision, looks to what the City will be like in 2035 and serves as a framework for the entire Comprehensive Plan. The Vision furthers the community interest in a strong, growing Downtown and healthy mixed use and neighborhood centers, while preserving and enhancing natural areas and open spaces that make Bellevue a “City in a Park.” The Vision recognizes the value of Bellevue’s neighborhoods and the strength of its diverse population.

**Growth Strategy** – The plan extends the planning horizon and anticipates growth of 15,800 housing units and 51,800 jobs by 2035. With few areas left to annex or available for raw land development, the vast majority of growth will be accommodated through redevelopment in Downtown Bellevue or in other mixed use centers, including BelRed, Eastgate/Factoria and Wilburton.

**Diversity** – In the decade since the last major plan update, Bellevue has become one of the most diverse cities in the state. The population is increasingly more ethnic and is also growing older. The Comprehensive Plan considers this change to the community in terms of its economy, neighborhoods, housing, community services and human services, and is how the community engages with the City. The plan seeks to make public engagement open and accessible for all.

**New Neighborhoods Element** – The updated plan includes a new Neighborhoods Element that creates a “home” for neighborhood issues. It also frames the neighborhood/subarea area plan update process, planned to occur following conclusion of the Comprehensive Plan update.

**New Neighborhood Areas** – Related to the Neighborhood Element, the plan includes a comprehensive update of neighborhood area (subarea) boundaries. The older boundaries had not been updated in many years. These new boundaries better match with the areas that people self-identify with and will create a stronger base for neighborhood area planning. In addition to the citywide review of the boundaries, the plan includes a shift of the Downtown boundary in three

specific areas that will help to regularize the current boundary without impacting the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**Housing** – Housing received more comments than any other topic during review of the draft plan and at the public hearing. While the current Housing Element includes a robust set of housing policies, this update increases emphasis on housing affordability, housing for seniors and addressing homelessness.

**Utilities** – This update adds new policies supporting widespread access to high-speed internet service to support the City’s ideal of being a connected community. The plan also includes a combination of new and established policies to address the need to mitigate the impacts of new electrical facilities, to supporting undergrounding of power lines, and to support identifying new funding opportunities to support undergrounding and mitigation.

**Multimodal transportation** – Strong support for non-motorized transportation came early in the process during the “Best Ideas” campaign in 2013 and recently from the online open house for the draft plan review. The update continues to support a comprehensive transportation system that addresses the mobility needs of all people. The update places an increased emphasis on addressing all modes of travel, whether by car, bus, train, bicycle or walking.

**Economic development** – The plan works to preserve and strengthen the City’s economic position through a combination of supporting business development, becoming increasingly connected globally, supporting economic opportunity for all citizens, and by creating a quality environment where people want to live, work and shop.

**Environmental preservation** – Over the last decade there has been increased community interest in environmental preservation even as the City continues to become more urban in some neighborhoods. To support the City’s image as a “City in a Park” and to respond to the threat to trees and open space from development and infrastructure projects, the new Environment policy supports working towards a tree canopy target of 40% coverage and initiating an action plan for achieving it. The Environment Element also directs development of a community-level goal for greenhouse gas emissions and supports low impact development techniques that address stormwater impacts holistically.

Overall, the update of the plan maintains its relevance to the community even as the community and the City continues to evolve. The plan looks out to 2035 and serves to guide City decisions to enable coordinated effort toward a consistent community Vision. The update provides a strong policy foundation for City decisions and actions, especially related to infrastructure investments, neighborhoods, land use, environment and economic development. The update also addresses consistency with state law and regional plans.

### **Integration of Amendments**

In addition to the review and update of the overall Comprehensive Plan, the update incorporates the plan amendments that resulted from the Eastgate/I-90 project and two proposed annual amendments. Under the state Growth Management Act cities are limited to amending plans no more than once per year, with few exceptions. Therefore these other amendments are integrated with the overall update to

allow for a single annual amendment process and presented this evening for approval under three separate actions.

### **Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project**

This project amends the Eastgate, Factoria and Richards Valley subarea plans to promote the vision for the Eastgate/I-90 corridor as a thriving employment area and welcoming gateway into Bellevue that is walkable, bikable, and with a variety of retail uses to support and serve the nearby office and residential uses; a corridor that reflects the natural character of the Mountains to Sound Greenway; and of a transit-oriented development area that provides a focal point for corridor activity.

### **Annual CPAs**

#### **St. Luke's Lutheran Church (15-103696 AC)**

This amendment changes the designation of the property located at 3030 Bellevue Way NE from Single Family-Medium (SF-M) to Multifamily-Medium (MF-M) on the North Bellevue Subarea Plan map.

#### **Public Storage (15-103770 AC)**

This amendment changes the designation of the property located at 1111 118th Ave SE from Office (O) to Light Industrial (LI) on the Richards Valley Subarea Plan map.

### **Actions to Implement the Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan sets the long-range policy direction for the City. While implementation of the plan may occur over many years, some of the key near-term actions that are anticipated to follow adoption of the plan include the following. These are new initiatives in addition to ongoing work, such as implementation of the Economic Development strategy.

- Continued planning for the City's primary employment centers, including new direction for the Wilburton commercial area.
- Update of the City's subarea/neighborhood area plans to respond to changing conditions in the city's neighborhoods.
- Launching work on a Housing Strategy Plan to address opportunities to increase access to affordable housing, and development of a homeless shelter.
- Development of the methodology to support a multi-modal transportation level of service.
- Pedestrian and bicycle implementation initiative (underway).
- Follow through on new environmental policies, including development of an action plan to enhance the City's tree canopy and work towards identifying Bellevue-specific goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Implementation of the plan will also occur through application of the policy framework it establishes for a wide range of City actions.

### **Planning Commission Recommendation**

The Planning Commission's recommendations follow from numerous study sessions to review background information, hearing from guest speakers, exhaustively reviewing the current plan, and

detailed policy-by-policy reviews of the staff recommendation. The Planning Commission's draft was substantially informed by the recommendations of the Arts Commission, Environmental Services Commission, Human Services Commission, Parks and Community Services Board, and Transportation Commission, which reviewed those sections and policies related to their individual area of expertise. The work of the boards and commission was also informed by an extensive, multi-prong public engagement effort that ranged from formal venues, such as a public hearing, to new, innovative techniques, such as an online contest to generate the "best ideas" for Bellevue. In total, the update consisted of about 60 meetings of the city's boards and commissions and extensive public input.

### **Council Review Process**

Following the presentation of the Planning Commission's recommendation for updating the Comprehensive Plan on April 6, 2015, the City Council reviewed each element of the plan and considered changes to a number of individual policies. Council conducted a series of nine Study Sessions to review the Planning Commission's recommendation in detail, to raise specific policy questions, and to provide direction on individual policy topics. This review also allowed for responses to state and Puget Sound Regional Council comments to be incorporated into the draft. A table tracking the changes directed by Council is provided in Attachment 1.

City Councilmembers identified a handful of additional items to confirm prior to adoption, including:

- **Electrical Lines** - Councilmember Robertson suggested a new Utility policy to encourage the location of new electrical lines within street rights-of-way. Some Councilmembers suggested that the current decision process in the Land Use Code addresses siting sufficiently and expressed concern that this policy may have unintended consequences. The consensus of the Council was to continue to discuss whether such a new policy should be added:
  - *UT-X28 Encourage new transmission facilities to be located in street rights-of-way.*
- **Greenhouse Gas Targets** – Councilmember Wallace's suggestion to include the wording "achievable" was added to the Environment Element draft policy EN-X1. Councilmember Robinson asked whether the draft policies of the Environment Element would be consistent with the City's work regionally. Draft policy EN-X1, which calls for establishing a citywide target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is in alignment with regional efforts, including the work of K4C. Countywide Planning Policy EN-17 establishes a countywide reduction target of 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050. CPP EN-17 applies countywide and does not require Bellevue to meet this target individually. The countywide policy and the proposed Comprehensive Plan policy both enable Bellevue to establish its own targets and work plan. The EN-X1 reference to corrective actions that can be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is also reflective of regional actions and objectives as outlined more specifically in the K4C work plan.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Approve the Ordinance adopting the updated Bellevue Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission and including those changes directed by Council, consistent with the state Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW).
2. Direct staff to modify the proposed amendment(s) pursuant to Council direction and either adopt the amended Ordinance or return for action at a subsequent Council meeting.
3. Deny the proposed amendment(s).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends Option 1.

## **MOTION**

Move to approve Ordinance No. 6251 adopting the updated Bellevue Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission and including those changes directed by Council, consistent with the state Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW).

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

If approved, this Ordinance becomes effective on August 11, 2015.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Summary of Council Direction
2. Proposed Ordinance No. 6251

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

1. Draft Comprehensive Plan – Planning Commission Recommendation
2. Planning Commission Transmittal dated March 25, 2015
3. Letters and memos from the individual boards and commissions are attached to the Planning Commission transmittal.
4. Project Public Engagement Report
5. Public Review Draft Comments
6. Policy review tables
7. Annotated Transportation Project List
8. Comprehensive Plan: Volume I