

Attachment A. EIS Overview

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) governs the EIS process the City is following. The EIS process includes a Draft EIS (DEIS) and Final EIS (FEIS). An EIS is required when the lead SEPA agency (City of Bellevue in this instance) determines the proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact (RCW 43.21C.031). The City issued a Determination of Significance on September 29, 2022. Because the City is both the applicant and the lead SEPA agency for this proposal, the City staff conducting the environmental review for the proposal are different from the City staff working on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation. The EIS will analyze the environmental impacts resulting from growth across the City and conduct additional analysis of the environmental impacts associated with the Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative. The additional analysis and timing of the FEIS will allow the City to implement updates to the Comprehensive Plan for the Wilburton study area prior to the Periodic Update.

As the applicant, the City published the proposed scope of work for the EIS and held a 30-day public comment period. The City revised the scope of work for the EIS based on the comments received during this period. A summary of the changes to the scope were posted on the City's webpage for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. The revisions adjusted the definitions and boundaries of land use designations, expanded the scope of analysis to include Greenhouse Gas emissions, expanded provisions for affordable housing, and increased the capacity for growth being studied in the EIS land use alternatives.

The DEIS analysis is currently underway. This includes analyzing an "informed build-out" scenario under each of the alternatives. That means that the DEIS will analyze the impacts of development capacity that would occur beyond the 2044 growth targets (i.e. +70,000 additional jobs and +35,000 housing units). In the alternatives studied in the DEIS, the City assumes that all developable or redevelopable parcels are built to a range of expected densities in each of the alternatives. It is very common for cities to have more capacity for development than their growth targets. The additional development capacity beyond the 2044 job and housing targets allows the City to meet its growth targets in different ways, letting potential developers respond to the market demands relating to the type of housing and commercial space. The analysis in the DEIS will help the Planning Commission, City Council, and the full range of stakeholders understand the potential environmental impacts of development and identify mitigation measures that can be implemented to respond to those impacts when and if the development occurs.