



DATE: July 14, 2022

TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Janet Shull, AICP CUD, Strategic Planning Manager
Community Development
jshull@bellevuewa.gov, 425-452-5371

SUBJECT: Wilburton Vision Implementation

The Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative will address the vision of the Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee and will result in amendments to the existing Wilburton/8th Street Subarea Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Map, and the Land Use Code. These amendments will consider how Wilburton’s future is a key component in implementing the citywide growth strategy for housing and jobs for the next 20 years. This topic is for information only at this time and no action is requested.

What is the Wilburton Vision?

The Wilburton Vision is documented in the July 2018 [Wilburton Commercial Area Study](#). The following is the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) vision from the Executive Summary:

Our vision is that the Wilburton Commercial Area become Bellevue’s next urban mixed-use community that enhances livability, promotes healthy living, supports economic vitality, and serves the needs of a diverse and growing population. As Bellevue’s cultural and innovative hub, it serves as a regional and international destination that connects people and fosters community by leveraging its existing assets to define a distinctive sense of place and character.

Council Direction for the Wilburton Vision Implementation

At their April 25, 2022 meeting, the City Council directed staff to proceed with the Wilburton Vision Implementation work plan and to use the CAC’s preferred development option (CAC Vision) as a baseline for planning, policy and code development work that is now underway. The work will continue through 2023 with final adoption of the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) in mid-2024, following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

Council directed that the CAC Vision serve as a baseline, and this will be the starting point with a scope of work that evaluates the preferred alternative to determine whether updates need to be considered in the areas of housing policy (including affordable housing), growth targets, Grand Connection impacts and integration, sustainability, equitable access, multimodal transportation such as Eastrail, walkability, the proposed Lake Hills Connector I-405 access and universal design as considerations.

The community may follow and participate throughout the planning, policy and code development process from the Wilburton Vision Implementation page [Wilburton Vision | City of Bellevue](#)



bellevuewa.gov. The 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Study (CAC Vision) is available online at [Wilburton Commercial Area Study](#).

Context of the Project

Wilburton Study Area

The Wilburton study area (See Attachment A) is defined by I-405 to the west, NE 12th Street to the north, SE 5th Street to the south, and navigates 118th, 120th, and 124th Avenues NE to the east. The entire area is over 300 acres and is positioned between Downtown to the west and BelRed to the north.

The 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Study was prepared by a 15-member Council-appointed Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) with consultant and staff support. Transportation Commission member Lei Wu and Planning Commission member Jeremy Barksdale served as co-chairs. The work of the CAC was guided by Council direction to develop a land use, transportation, and urban design vision and policy recommendations for the Wilburton study area. The CAC included members from City boards and commissions, representatives from businesses, institutions, and civic organizations, and residents from nearby neighborhoods.

The CAC met for over a year and examined the study area in depth, developed and evaluated alternative courses of action, and produced a preferred land use, urban design, and transportation vision. The CAC vision promotes a desirable and realistic evolution in land use and urban design supported by an implementable transportation network that will create a unique and welcoming urban neighborhood.

A Preferred Urban Design Framework

The CAC study presents a “Preferred Urban Design Framework” (see p. 82 and onward in the report – link above). A visual depiction of the recommended future development shows how the most densely developed area would be located closest to I-405 between NE 8th Street, NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE. Building heights would step down from this core area to the north, south and east to the boundaries of the study area. The range of future building heights depicted is from 70 feet along the eastern perimeter to up to 450 feet tall near I-405.

The CAC’s Preferred Urban Design Framework includes the following elements:

- Land Use, with an emphasis on mixed use and transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Trail-oriented development to create a unique and accessible environment within the Eastrail corridor
- Street network with improved connectivity to support transit and trail access as well as to improve walkability
- A vision for 116th Avenue NE to serve as a grand boulevard that comfortably accommodates bicycles and pedestrians
- Extension of NE 6th Street eastward from I-405 to terminate at 116th Avenue NE



Recommended Design Principles

The Preferred Urban Design Framework also includes “Recommended Design Principles” for:

- Enhanced streets and streetscapes
- The public realm, including the Eastrail corridor, a large civic space in the core of the study area associated with the future Grand Connection crossing over I-405
- Enhanced natural systems, including wetland reconstruction and stream daylighting
- A network of small parks and plazas that may be implemented through incentivizes as part of future redevelopment

A Sustainable Development Framework

The Preferred Urban Design Framework highlights the following aspects of a sustainable community for Wilburton:

- Sustainable Transportation - transitioning Wilburton from auto-dominated to walkable. Note that the CAC considered the Transportation Commission’s Multimodal Level-of-Service Metrics, Standards and Guidelines (2017) in its analysis.
- Habitat restoration recognizing the stream and wetland network
- Green infrastructure to help increase tree canopy and manage stormwater

Affordable Housing

The CAC Study identifies general recommendations for the provision of affordable housing. It states that affordable housing should be an integrated component of the neighborhood and include a mix of rental and ownership opportunities. Affordable housing options should be targeted to the needs of many different demographic and socio-economic groups including seniors, single-parent families, ethnicities, abilities, workforce housing, first-time buyers and residents seeking to downsize. This section of the study also includes recommendations for incentivizing the provision of affordable housing through redevelopment and leveraging public resources and partnership opportunities.

Building Design

Building design principles are presented in the study to guide development of city code and policy related to building design. These principles include recommendations for building setbacks and stepbacks, creating a street-level experience and accommodating views.

Implementation

Implementation strategies are focused on recommended improvements to 1) Streets and Streetscapes, and 2) Parks, Open Space and Natural Systems. Some of the recommended strategies are underway, most notably the Eastrail Framework Plan that is nearing completion in collaboration with King County Parks and Sound Transit.

Examples of the implementation recommendations that will be considered in the Wilburton Vision policy and code development work include:

- Requirements for green infrastructure in new development
- Requirements for additional trees and landscaping with new development



- Requirements and/or incentives to create new streets, bicycle and pedestrian network connections
- Design guidelines for vibrant streetscapes and active frontages on the Eastrail corridor
- Incentives for the provision of publicly accessible open spaces
- Multi-modal approach to be applied to assess transportation impacts.

Project Scope

In the years following the completion of the 2018 CAC study, Bellevue has continued to grow and transform into a major urban center. Office development, primarily in Downtown and BelRed, is on pace to exceed the City's 2035 growth targets and housing growth is behind pace to meet the City's 2035 housing growth targets. In February 2022, Council provided direction to ratify the King County Countywide Planning Policies, which include new housing and job growth targets to be accommodated within the 2044 planning horizon. The City is underway with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update which provides the opportunity to consider how Wilburton will play a key role in meeting the City's new growth targets. Wilburton will contribute towards balancing jobs and housing growth while realizing Bellevue's vision for an innovative, diverse, equitable and sustainable community.

The Wilburton Vision Implementation work plan (See Attachment B) is aligned with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update timeline and presents the opportunity to better communicate, analyze, and plan for how the future of Wilburton relates to the future of the City as a whole. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update launched in February will include environmental review in the form of an EIS. Since the Wilburton EIS was not completed and some of the existing conditions and analysis content needs to be updated, staff will be including environmental review for Wilburton in the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update EIS. By coordinating environmental review in this way, the City can better assess how Wilburton's future complements and/or impacts the future of the City as a whole.

The following elements will be incorporated in the Wilburton Vision Implementation:

- The Eastrail Framework Plan is nearing completion and will help inform the development of design guidelines, particularly for areas adjacent to the Eastrail corridor.
- Important considerations, such as the eastern terminus of the NE 6th Street extension (either 116th Avenue NE or 120th Avenue NE) will be resolved in the Wilburton process. Note, the TFP includes a description for NE 6th Street that terminates at 120th Avenue NE.
- The Grand Connection Sequence One Design Guidelines and Standards covering Downtown will inform design guidelines for development in Wilburton as appropriate.
- There is an opportunity to plan for additional residential development in Wilburton to help meet the need for housing proximate to jobs, regional transit, and amenities such as the Eastrail.



Community Engagement Strategy

The engagement strategy for the Wilburton Vision Implementation considers that significant stakeholder engagement was undertaken in 2017- 2018 to develop a vision for Wilburton, identifying key land use, housing, transportation, open space, and urban design principles. More recently, community outreach events for the Wilburton Eastrail Framework Plan during the Summer of 2021 have engaged a broader cross-section of the community in sharing ideas and preferences for Wilburton’s future. The following are the overall objectives for community engagement:

- Inform the community about the previous planning work and vision for Wilburton, and the interface of Wilburton with the Citywide Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.
- Keep interested parties (residents, business owners, property owners, and developers) informed of the status of the Wilburton Vision Implementation and how they can engage.
- Seek feedback on an ongoing basis from interested parties on the full range of topics influenced by proposed Comprehensive Plan policy amendments, zoning changes, development standards and design guidelines.
- Ensure that information is well-documented and available to interested parties.
- Set consistent expectations among interested parties, City staff, and decision-makers.

Schedule

The Wilburton work plan schedule is represented by three major phases of work: Phase 1. Re-Engagement and alignment of the Wilburton Vision with the future state of the City overall; Phase 2. Future land use and policy development; and Phase 3. Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA). The following are the focus areas and the milestones within each phase:

- Phase 1: Now – Sept 2022
 - Community Re-Engagement (including board and commission briefings)
 - EIS Scoping completed
 - Initial draft land use alternatives developed
- Phase 2: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Q2 2022 – Q3 2023
 - Draft EIS Q1 2023
 - Final EIS Q2 2023 for Preferred land use alternative finalized
 - Planning Commission review and recommendation on CPA
- Phase 3: Land Use Code Amendment Q2 2023 – Q2 2024
 - Draft LUCA is developed
 - Wilburton CPA is adopted by City Council
 - Planning Commission review and recommendation on proposed LUC



NEXT STEPS

We are currently in the Re-Engagement phase, meeting with Boards and Commissions and communicating the Wilburton Vision to the broader public through our project webpage and Engaging Bellevue. As we move into Phase 2, we will return to Boards and Commissions to update you on the status of Wilburton land use alternatives development and draft policy.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Wilburton Study Area
- B. Scope of Work Summary