



Bellevue Planning Commission

May 24, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Study Session on Wilburton Vision Implementation draft Comprehensive Plan amendments

STAFF CONTACTS

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Community Development

*The City is using the EIS process to review and evaluate the environmental impacts of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and the Wilburton Vision Implementation. The City’s Development Services Department is the lead agency with respect to this SEPA review, with the City’s Environmental Planning Manager, Reilly Pittman, and the City’s Environmental Coordinator, Elizabeth Stead, acting as the specific City staff conducting the environmental review under SEPA. Comments on the DEIS should be addressed to them. **The Planning Commission meeting is not the proper forum to provide public comments on the DEIS.** In order to be considered in the Final EIS, all public comments must be submitted, by June 12, as follows:*

- *By submitting written online at <https://comment-tracker.esassoc.com/bellevue/index.html> or via email to CompPlan2044EIS@bellevuewa.gov*
- *By submitting written or oral comments at any of the 3 DEIS public meetings the DEIS public meetings, which are scheduled to take place virtually on Thursday, May 18, and in-person on Tuesday, May 23 at Crossroads Community Center and Thursday, June 1 at Bellevue City Hall*
- *By mailing written comments to the City of Bellevue Development Services Department, Attn: Reilly Pittman, at City Hall, 450 110th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA 98004.*

POLICY ISSUES

The Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative will amend the existing Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use 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.

In this study session, staff will share draft Comprehensive Plan amendments (see Attachment A), focusing on a discussion and guidance on draft policies related to *Open Space & Natural Systems* within the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (Wilburton TOD).

The study session is part of a series of Planning Commission study sessions intended to lead to a set of recommendations to the City Council for the Comprehensive Plan amendment (CPA) by the end of 2023, and the Land Use Code amendment (LUCA) and legislative rezone by the end of 2024.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Staff presented the preliminary vision, goals, and policy guidance to the Planning Commission on March 22, 2023, and received direction to proceed with developing draft policies considering the following feedback, which includes:

- Need for flexibility in the framing of policies and land uses to anticipate future changes;
- Need for evaluation of tradeoffs when prioritizing policy guidance with competing policy goals;
- Emphasis on multimodal accessibility and safety; and
- Balance between development and open space goals; focusing on providing more open space opportunities within the Wilburton TOD

Staff also presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update on May 10, 2023 on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) No Action and Action Alternatives. The draft EIS was published on April 27, 2023.

POLICY UPDATE PROGRESS

This study session focuses on draft policies for *Open Space & Natural Systems* that would be in a new section of the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan about the Wilburton TOD. As discussed during the March 22 study session, staff are considering revising the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea boundaries so that policies applicable to the Wilburton study area in the BelRed Subarea Plan would be moved into the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan.

As shown in Attachment A, draft Comprehensive Plan Amendments include policy changes in support of Environment; Parks, Recreation & Open Space; Transportation; and Urban Design goals. These draft policies also help enable City-identified opportunities for open space and natural system improvements, including those identified in the 2022 Parks and Open Space Plan, 2020 Environmental Stewardship Plan, and ongoing Watershed Management Plan.

Policy updates are intended to provide guidance on the following key policy moves:

1) Creation of an urban park system

Parks, open space, trails, and active recreation facilities are needed to serve current and future urban densities within the Wilburton TOD. An urban park system is envisioned within the Wilburton TOD that leverages Grand Connection and Eastrail investments, connects to major community parks, and offers a variety of uses attuned to the surrounding community. Policies provide guidance on open space needs to provide better linkages between and access to parks and open space areas.

2) Enhancement of natural features

There are several natural features in the Wilburton TOD today, including Lake Bellevue and Sturtevant Creek. Portions of these features are visually or physically inaccessible to the general public, or located on privately-owned land. Policies provide guidance on enhancements to improve the ecosystem function and experiential qualities of these natural resources for the community.

3) Creation of a sustainable district

Several sustainable district models have been implemented in different cities, and have been used to advance neighborhood-scale sustainability through district-wide environmental goals and public-private partnerships between property owners, tenants, local government, and other organizations. The

Wilburton TOD has been identified as a potential sustainable district. Policies provide guidance on sustainable district components to help advance City efforts in the Wilburton TOD.

4) Eastrail as a defining trail and park corridor

The City is partnering with King County, Sound Transit and Eastrail Partners on a vision for the 1.2-mile portion of the Eastrail corridor between SE 5th Street and NE 12th Street, which will act as fundamental infrastructure toward a transit- and trail-oriented district within the Wilburton TOD. Eastrail is suitable for various uses and functions at different points along the trail based on terrain, development intensity, and proximity to multimodal facilities. Policies provide guidance toward establishing Eastrail as a defining trail and park corridor within the Wilburton TOD.

Staff will highlight several key policies for Planning Commission input, and reference potential implementation tools that could be considered during the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) process and through other future city efforts. A full set of draft policies related to *Open Space & Natural Systems* is included in Attachment A.

DISCUSSION

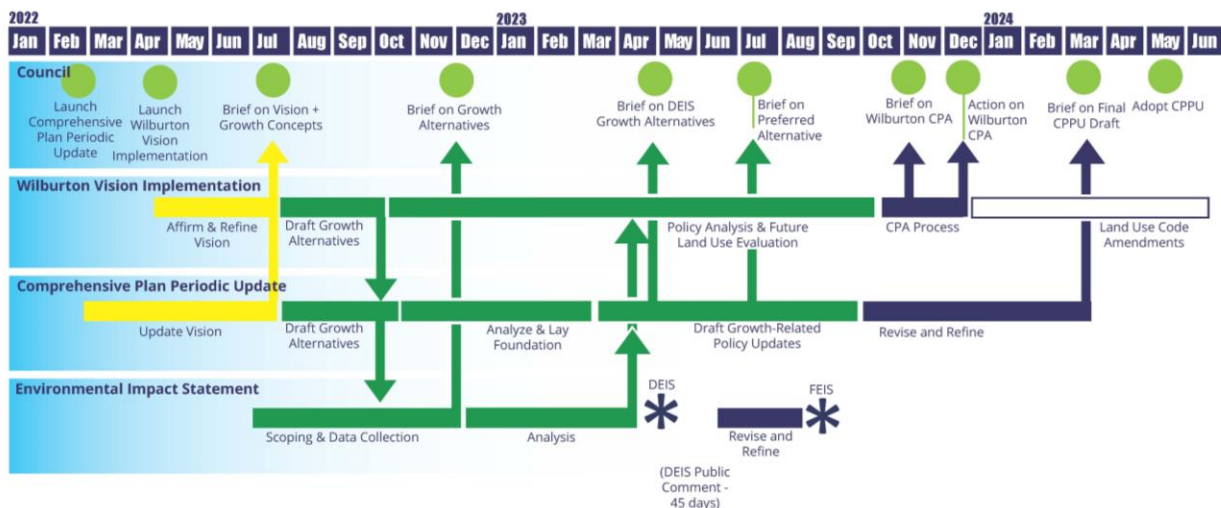
An important function of the draft comprehensive plan amendments is to provide a foundation for future land use code amendments that will direct how the Wilburton TOD develops. At the May 24 study session, staff requests guidance from the Planning Commission on the following:

- Do draft policies provide adequate direction to achieve the Wilburton TOD vision, including land use regulations and other implementation tools?

SCHEDULE & NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the Planning Commission in July to review additional draft CPAs, under the following policy focus areas:

- **May 24, 2023 - Open Space and Natural Systems:** Environment; Parks, Recreation & Open Space; Eastrail
- **July 12, 2023 – Cultural and Community Connections:** Economic Development, Arts & Culture, Transportation, Urban Design
- **July 26, 2023 – Land Use and Urban Form:** Land Use, Housing, Urban Design, Implementation



OPTIONS

This briefing is provided for Commission discussion and guidance on draft comprehensive plan amendments – no action is required.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A: Draft Comprehensive Plan Amendments to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan – *Open Space and Natural Systems*