



Bellevue Planning Commission

June 10, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Check-in on the High Density Residential and Planned Unit Development Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).

STAFF CONTACT(S)

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POLICY ISSUES

This Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) and Rezone will implement updates to the Future Land Use Map in the Bellevue 2044 Comprehensive Plan to align with new land use designations. The LUCA will implement standards for the High Density Residential Land Use District, which will apply in designated areas within Crossroads and Factoria. It will also update planned unit development (PUD) provisions to allow greater flexibility on large sites and on sites redeveloped with affordable housing.

The proposal directly advances several key policy directives aimed at addressing housing capacity, variety, and site-responsive design:

- **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 the preservation of trees and open space.
- **Affordable Housing Strategy (Action AH.4.3):** Calls for amendments to the PUD code to allow greater flexibility to facilitate affordable housing development.

On May 12, 2026, the City Council initiated work on this LUCA and directed the Planning Commission to review and process the proposal.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

The goal of this study session is to provide the Planning Commission with an initial briefing on the scope, approach, and public engagement framework for the HDR-PUD LUCA. Staff requests feedback from the Commission on the proposed code mechanics and the engagement strategy.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Proposed Scope of Code Amendments

The project scope implements three components of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan related to addressing housing capacity, variety, and site-responsive design:

- High Density Residential Land Use District Implementation and Rezone
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) Code Update
- Overlake Farms Rezone

The legislative history of each item and its scope components is summarized below.

High-Density Residential Land Use District Implementation and Rezone

The Need for a New Zone

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update introduced a High-Density Residential land use designation allowing density up to 60 dwelling units per acre. Because the current Land Use Code lacks a standalone zone to accommodate this level of residential intensity outside of mixed-use areas, establishing a new land use category with associated dimensional standards is necessary. The Future Land Use Map with areas designated as High Density Residential (HDR) is provided as Attachment A.

Location and Implementation

This new HDR district will build on the existing medium-density framework, which allows up to 30 dwelling units per acre. The HDR district will apply to designated areas within the Crossroads and Factoria neighborhoods, expanding housing capacity and providing a predictable pathway for high-density residential development.

Dimensional Standards

The LUCA will implement dimensional standards for the HDR district, including maximum building height, setbacks, and maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) capable of supporting development density of approximately 60 units per acre. The LUCA will also consider transition standards and compatibility with adjacent lower-density areas.

The LUCA will include a rezone of designated properties to High Density Residential.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Code Update

What is a PUD?

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.

Why Update Now?

Bellevue's PUD regulations have remained largely unchanged since the mid-1990s and have only been used ten times over the past two decades. While this suggests that the underlying Land Use Code (LUC)

effectively facilitates many standard development projects, the limited application of the PUD process indicates that the tool may no longer be calibrated to meet the unique challenges of today's more complex, infill-oriented sites. This update aims to update the PUD framework to ensure it remains a practical and predictable option for atypical development circumstances.

Policy Foundation

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.

Key Opportunities for Improvement

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. While PUD standards and processes will be reviewed comprehensively, the following known opportunities for improvement have been identified:

- Increasing the minimum eligibility threshold to 10 acres instead of five;
- Replacing subjective 'compatibility' criteria with clear, predictable, and objective development standards;
- Expand flexibility for underlying development standards, including setbacks, lot coverage, and building placement;
- Clarifying increased height and density potential through the PUD process;
- Strengthening clustering provisions to encourage more compact development on less sensitive areas; and
- Incentivizing increased tree retention and affordable housing development.

Finally, the update will clarify and streamline the overall review and permitting process to reduce procedural complexity and align PUD provisions with current environmental regulations regarding critical areas and tree retention.

Overlake Farms Rezone

The proposal 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 from Large Lot Residential (LL-1) to Low Density Residential 3 (LDR-3).

Separately, proposed PUD code amendments may be used to facilitate future redevelopment of the site on a reduced footprint with increased building height in exchange for enhanced retention of mature trees beyond underlying requirements and the provision of meaningful open space. A potential PUD on the site would be initiated by the property owner at a future date, following the adoption of the LUCA and rezones.

City Council Direction

On May 12, the City Council directed staff to initiate work on the LUCA and associated rezones. This discussion included the following themes:

Overlake Farms Height & Conservation Balance: Some residents expressed concerns over the potential for increased building height on the Overlake Farms site. Council noted that increased building height could be balanced by increased tree retention. Council provided staff with direction to explore a PUD incentive structure, potentially allowing building height up to 65 feet on sites similar to Overlake Farms, provided such height is conditional upon greater environmental protection, meaningful open space, and robust tree preservation.

- **Infrastructure Coordination:** Council emphasized that local capacity must move in tandem with density. Staff will ensure the LUCA aligns with ongoing infrastructure planning, specifically referring to recent municipal wastewater capacity studies.
- **Equity & Displacement in Upzone Areas:** Council raised equity considerations regarding the potential impacts of upzoning on immigrant and diverse communities within the Crossroads area.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Staff is implementing a two-phase engagement strategy to gather citywide input and address localized impacts. This approach ensures that the community provides feedback on project fundamentals before staff begins drafting specific code language. The engagement plan is provided as Attachment B.

- **Phase One (June–September 2026):** Focuses on listening and fundamentals. Staff will establish a baseline project scope and gather feedback on housing density priorities. Phase One concludes with an Engagement Summary Report delivered to the Planning Commission.
- **Phase Two (Q4 2026–Q1 2027):** Focuses on reviewing and drafting. Staff will solicit feedback on specific draft code language and density mechanics to ensure the final recommendation is practical and predictable.

Outreach Methods

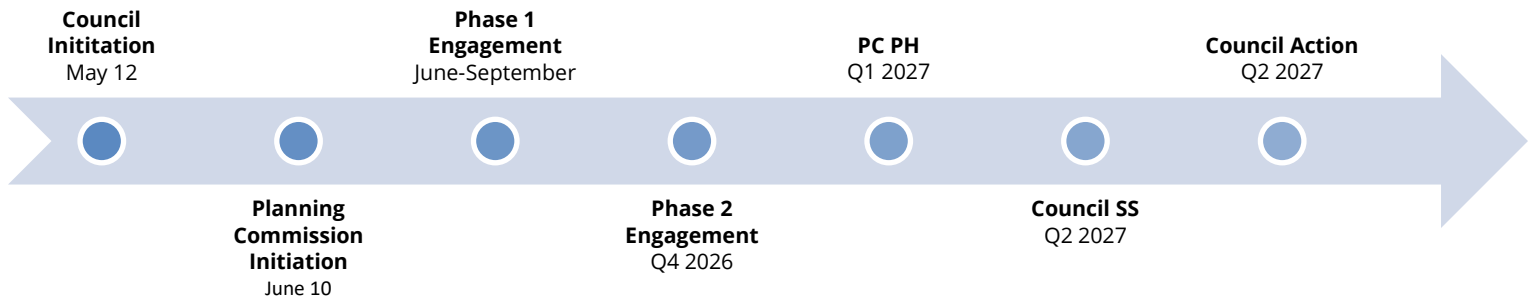
To ensure the public and interested parties have the opportunity to stay informed and provide comments, staff will utilize the following six modes of outreach:

- **Process IV Requirements.** Consistent with Chapter 20.35 LUC procedural requirements, public input will be solicited via a notice of application, notice of public hearing, and the required formal public hearing.
- **Public Information Sessions.** Staff will host at least two hybrid community open houses. These sessions will feature visual exhibits of objective development metrics and virtual sessions tailored for working professionals and developers to help visualize new housing densities.
- **Targeted Listening Sessions.** Focused sessions will be held with representatives from citywide neighborhood associations, the Bellevue Development Committee (BDC), and the PUD applicant

group. This includes direct dialogue with community leaders in Bridle Trails, Crossroads, and Factoria to address localized impacts.

- **Language Access and Equity.** In alignment with the City’s equity frameworks, staff will partner with neighborhood liaisons to translate fact sheets and visual exhibits into multilingual formats. This effort specifically targets high populations of non-English primary speakers in the Crossroads and Factoria subareas.
- **Direct Mail and Notifications.** Staff will distribute a physical mailer to all property owners and residents within a 1,000-foot radius of the proposed High-Density Residential (HDR) rezone areas.
- **Online Presence.** A dedicated project webpage will serve as a central hub for timelines, FAQs, preliminary drafts, and direct feedback channels.

Project Timeline



ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. Future Land Use Map (Factoria, Crossroads, and Overlake Farms rezones)
- B. Engagement Plan