

GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

PROCESS OUTLINE AND CRITERIA FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP AMENDMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan is Bellevue's foundational planning document, which provides the framework for the City as it seeks to grow over a 20-year planning horizon. As such, neighborhood area plans – a Comprehensive Plan Amendment initiated by City Council per Bellevue Land Use Code (LUC) Section [20.301.130.B.3](#). – are legislative actions with broad public participation and discussion for the orderly and coordinated development of a community. The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use element sets the direction of future growth in a community and is depicted as a Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use Map is policy-oriented, and a Future Land Use designation represents the community's long-term vision for a specific area. The Future Land Use designations in the Comprehensive Plan are meant to provide broad direction on the general uses and scale for the future development of areas of the city, while more detailed requirements and regulations are described in the Land Use Code and zoning map. The Future Land Use designation links the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals and policies with the specific zoning classification, or Land Use District, that implements the Comprehensive Plan's direction.

Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update was launched by the City Council on February 28, 2022, and adopted by Council on October 22, 2024. The scope of the update included amendments to the Future Land Use Map centered around accommodating the anticipated growth for the next 20 years consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the overall growth strategy for the City, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). As directed by Council, the scope included updates to the Future Land Use Map to expand housing capacity to plan for the growth targets in the CPPs, while also addressing mandates under new state housing legislation, specifically requirements to allow middle-scale housing and accessory dwelling units on the majority of residential lots in Bellevue.

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update entailed citywide policy changes to the Future Land Use Map as well as location-specific map changes that were based on a reconsideration of land uses within the City, new stakeholder requests to consider a change in land use on a specific parcel or set of parcels, or new information about a site or the future of the area surrounding it. As neighborhood areas plans have broad public participation and discussion around the future development of the neighborhood area at a greater localized level, the neighborhood area planning process provides an appropriate platform to set direction for the future development of sites that are either publicly owned or privately-owned community gathering spaces.

Relationship to the Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program

Per [LUC 20.301.110](#), Comprehensive Plan amendments in a specific neighborhood area may not be proposed by the public during the review of a City Council-initiated Comprehensive Plan amendment for that specific neighborhood area as part of the Great Neighborhoods program, i.e., a neighborhood area plan update. However, as outlined in LUC [20.301.130.A.3](#), the City can decide to include a proposal that is not included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Work Program in an ongoing work program, such as Great Neighborhoods, if it raises issues more appropriately addressed by such work program.

The process and criteria outlined below provide a framework for the City to consider site-specific plan map amendments put forward by property owners for those neighborhood areas that are part of the Great Neighborhoods program. This process does not replace the code provisions in Part 20.30I LUC but is instead a framework for the City to consider whether a proposal for a site-specific plan map amendment will be included in a Great Neighborhoods Comprehensive Plan work program as allowed by LUC 20.30I.130.A.3.a.

Amendment Initiation

Site-specific plan map amendments are not City-led but initiated by property owners. Initiated amendments need to meet the Final Review Decision Criteria per [LUC 20.30I.150](#) and can be initiated by public entities or private property owners.

- Public entities may initiate site-specific map amendments for property located in neighborhood areas for which the City has initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments as part of the Great Neighborhoods program. This property belongs to the public at large rather than an individual or a company.
- Private property owners, or their authorized agents, may initiate a site-specific map amendment that meets the following requirements:
 - The subject property is located in a Neighborhood Center (see Map LU-2 of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update) or in Countywide Centers as identified by King County. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update defines Neighborhood Centers as “a small commercial or mixed-use area in a location that is otherwise primarily residential. Neighborhood Centers are often anchored by grocery stores and often meet the daily needs of local residents”.
 - The proposed map amendment creates or strengthens the property’s function as a Third Place helping to establish neighborhood identity. As defined in the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, Third Places are “places that people go to when they are neither home nor at work that are seen as spaces to provide connection and build community. They can occur informally in any publicly- or privately-owned place as long as it is known to the community as a safe and welcoming space”.
 - The proposed map amendment encourages new retail or services supporting residential uses, ensuring easy pedestrian access and enhancing the livability of the neighborhood.
 - The proposed map amendment provides increased benefits for the public realm, such as pedestrian-oriented building design, through-block connections, public spaces, activities, openness and views.
 - The proposed map amendment minimizes the risk of business displacement and encourages retention and (temporary) relocation of affected businesses.

Similar to annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments, an “intake application” letter, following a template provided by Community Development staff, is required before a site-specific map amendment will be included on the list of initiated amendments. The letter includes location and

land use designation details, information as to why an amendment is being proposed, describing support for, reasoning, or background information in line with the requirements outlined above. Final applications will also have to respond to the Final Review Decision Criteria per [LUC 20.30I.150](#) and will be subsequently reviewed by Community Development staff.

Process Outline (2025-2026)

Summer 2025	Engage with public entities and interested private property owners
September 15, 2025	Deadline for interested property owners to submit intake applications
September 16, 2025	List of initiated site-specific map amendments is established
Winter 2025/2026	Study session before the Planning Commission
Spring 2026	Staff review including any SEPA of finalized proposals
Summer/Fall 2026	Final review and a public hearing before the Planning Commission on the neighborhood area plans, including any site-specific map amendments
Fall 2026	City Council action on neighborhood area plans, including any proposed site-specific map amendments