

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation – Continued Review of Planning Commission’s recommended Preferred Alternative to Undergo Additional Analysis in Environmental Impact Statement

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

DIRECTION

Provide direction to proceed with analysis of the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation. This may occur tonight or on August 7 if additional Council time is needed.

RECOMMENDATION

Confirm Council direction for the Preferred Alternative to be studied in the FEIS.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

On July 17, Council discussed the Planning Commission recommendation for the Preferred Alternative to be studied in the FEIS for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation. The purpose of a preferred alternative is to do additional environmental analysis on a combination of different aspects of the alternatives studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). It is essentially a way to study how the impacts may change (better, worse, or same) with a blending or modification of the different alternatives. A preferred alternative is not the final plan and it does not eliminate any alternatives already studied. The Planning Commission recommended a citywide Preferred Alternative based on Alternative 3 in the DEIS with some modifications, and a hybrid of Alternatives 2 and 3 for the Wilburton study area.

The July 17 Council feedback on elements of the Preferred Alternative is summarized below. The purpose of the July 24 study session is threefold:

- Affirm and clarify, as needed, Council feedback from July 17;
- Review and affirm or modify Planning Commission recommendations on individual property owner requests not studied in any alternative and not included in the Preferred Alternative; and
- Provide final direction on the Preferred Alternative so it may be further studied in the FEIS.

The following is a summary of Council feedback for each of the topic areas discussed July 17. Staff is seeking affirmation or clarification, as needed, to ensure the summary accurately captures the Council’s feedback. Staff may also ask for clarification on specific items as needed.

1. Wilburton Study Area

Council Feedback on Recommendation: Council consensus was to do additional environmental analysis on the Planning Commission's recommendation in order to better understand the differences in terms of land use designations and impacts. The Commission's recommendation is a hybrid of Alternatives 2 and 3 that provides redevelopment opportunities at a variety of scales with the highest intensity of development potential west of the Eastrail corridor.

Discussion Regarding FEIS Analysis: Council expressed interest in the environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative on neighborhoods to the east of the study area in terms of traffic, view corridors, and transition in scale and character. There was also interest in the environmental impact of the Commission's recommendation relative to Alternative 3 which provides more flexibility for land uses and higher densities. In addition, there was interest in the environmental impacts around Lake Bellevue, including the potential for public access through future development. This environmental analysis is included within the FEIS scope and will inform Council's future policy decisions for the Wilburton Study Area.

2. Other Mixed Use Centers:

Council Feedback on Recommendation: Council indicated support for the Planning Commission Preferred Alternative for other Mixed Use Centers for purposes of further study. This includes Downtown, East Main, BelRed, Factoria, Crossroads and Eastgate.

Discussion Regarding FEIS Analysis: There was interest in better understanding the transportation impacts associated with a Preferred Alternative and potential mitigation measures in these Mixed Use Centers, particularly in Factoria. This is within the FEIS scope of analysis, which will include a new transportation model run specifically for the Preferred Alternative and analysis of transportation impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative.

3. Neighborhood Centers: There are a range of existing Neighborhood Centers in the City. These include **shopping centers (Bel-East Shopping Center, Kelsey Creek Center, Lake Hills Village, Lakemont Village, Northtowne Shopping Center, Newport Hills Shopping Center)**; way stations (anchored by gas stations); retail incorporated into standalone office complexes; and "undefined" with no retail anchor.

Council Feedback on Recommendation: Council discussion focused on the differences among the **shopping centers** while reviewing the Planning Commission recommendation for Mixed Use-Low (MU-L) to apply to all **shopping centers** in the Preferred Alternative. There was Council interest in further discussion of a potential new mixed use designation between the low and medium designation (e.g., five to seven stories) for **shopping centers**, though not for any of the smaller centers in this category. There were suggestions to study this potential new mixed use designation for some or all **shopping centers** or specifically Kelsey Creek Center and Northtowne.

Staff is seeking clarification from Council about whether the Preferred Alternative should be limited to those two **shopping centers** or broadened to include all six of the **shopping centers** named above. If the Council would like the flexibility of considering whether to apply a new mixed use

designation in neighborhood **shopping centers**, staff recommends including all six **shopping centers** in the FEIS for further environmental analysis. The additional analysis would provide more information about where an increase may be suitable. Additional environmental review may be required if Council were to consider a designation greater than the MU-L later in the update process. However, at this point in the environmental review process, either approach is within the FEIS scope of analysis.

- 4. Areas of Opportunity:** Areas of Opportunity were analyzed in the DEIS as places in the City close to jobs, retail and restaurants, transit and other amenities where residential development capacity could be added to create more opportunities for “15-minute neighborhoods.” This included areas within a quarter mile walk of Mixed Use Centers and Neighborhood Shopping Centers. The proposal included potential increases in height and density in existing multi-family zones as well as more middle type housing at densities similar to or slightly greater than required under new state laws.

Council Feedback on Recommendation: Council provided feedback that the Preferred Alternative should not include any Areas of Opportunity. The Council indicated that the new state legislation under House Bill (HB) 1110 for middle housing (duplex, triplex, etc.) and HB 1337 for accessory dwelling units would already likely apply in these areas. Council discussed reevaluating the need for additional density at a future point beyond this plan update. The FEIS will evaluate environmental impacts associated with City compliance with HB 1110 and HB 1337.

- 5. Neighborhood Residential:** The Planning Commission recommendation included review of new state legislative requirements in HB 1110 and HB 1337 for residential areas across the City.

Council Feedback on Recommendation: Council concurred with the Planning Commission recommendation. Council also discussed increasing the density on the additional parcels that make up Overlake Farms to Residential-Low (R-Low) and supported including the property owner request for additional environmental review in the FEIS. There was also a comment by Council about potentially increasing the density on other Residential Large Lot (R-LL) parcels to the lowest density under Residential-Suburban (R-Suburban); however, Council did not indicate there was consensus to study this change at this time.

Discussion Regarding FEIS Analysis: Council requested a future briefing on the FEIS technical study of HB 1110 and HB 1337. This is within the FEIS scope of analysis, which will evaluate the environmental impacts associated with City compliance with HB 1110 and HB 1337.

- 6. Affordable Housing:** The Planning Commission recommendation included an analysis of both mandatory and voluntary affordable housing programs. Bellevue currently has voluntary affordable housing incentive programs in portions of the City.

Council Feedback on Recommendation: Council indicated support for the Planning Commission recommendation to study both mandatory and voluntary affordable housing programs in the FEIS.

Discussion Regarding FEIS Analysis: Council expressed interest in the Preferred Alternative including all types of incentives, leveraging upzones to develop more affordable

housing, looking at both rental and ownership programs, and the impacts of mandatory affordable housing on the cost of market rate units. This is within the FEIS scope of analysis.

7. **Tree Canopy:** The Comprehensive Plan currently has a target for a citywide tree canopy of at least 40 percent. Although the DEIS acknowledged that density increases could result in fewer trees and discussed the tree canopy goals, the environmental impacts of the alternatives on the tree canopy were not analyzed in the DEIS in detail.

Council Feedback: Council discussed the significance of tree canopy and the City's established tree canopy goals. Council asked for additional information on how the ongoing tree code amendments align with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. Council asked staff to consider how to better assess the impacts of increased development on tree canopy and consider tree canopy as a priority in establishing land use for the Comprehensive Plan.

Discussion Regarding FEIS Analysis: The environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the tree canopy will be studied in the FEIS. This is within the FEIS scope of analysis.

8. **Other:** One or more Councilmembers asked for the following information to be provided and also clarified to aid discussion.
- Traffic analysis to include vehicle counts. Analysis of the transportation system in the FEIS will include the modeled number of trips generated based on land use under an informed buildout scenario of the Preferred Alternative. In addition to trips generated, the FEIS will also produce performance metrics for vehicles for targets identified in the Mobility Implementation Plan. These include system intersection volume-to-capacity (V/C) and Primary Vehicle Corridor speed.
 - Summary of alternatives, impacts and mitigation for each DEIS alternative is provided as Attachment A.
 - A 2019 tree canopy map is provided as Attachment B. An updated tree canopy map will be available prior to the end of the year.
 - A review of examples of housing types which represent missing middle as mandated under HB 1110 will be reviewed with Council on July 24.

Site-specific requests. As part of the update process, several site-specific requests were submitted for additional height, density, or a wider range of allowed uses. Some of these were already analyzed in the DEIS, considered by the Planning Commission and recommended or not recommended for inclusion in the Preferred Alternative. To the extent that the environmental impacts associated with these specific requests were already analyzed in the DEIS, they could be included in the final plan and no additional consideration is needed at this time.

Attachment C includes a table and map of individual property owner requests not analyzed in the DEIS alternatives and not recommended for inclusion in the Preferred Alternative. Staff is highlighting this list as information for the City Council at this time in case you have any questions about the recommendation. Because these have not been analyzed in the DEIS and would not be included in the

Preferred Alternative, they would not be eligible for inclusion later in the update process in the absence of additional environmental review that considers the impacts of these requests.

Each request was evaluated in the context of the surrounding land use, consideration of previous similar requests, appropriateness for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan update (e.g., consistency or compatibility with surrounding land use designations, more appropriate as a site-specific annual amendment, or LUCA), and other considerations. Staff is not recommending any changes to the Planning Commission recommendation.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The intent of the EIS process is to ensure environmental values are given appropriate consideration during the City's long-range planning efforts. The DEIS and the FEIS will inform the ultimate growth strategy and policies that are part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation.

Fiscal Impact

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's guiding policy document that looks out over a 20-year planning period. Functional plans are developed or updated as future steps. The precise fiscal impacts of the Comprehensive Plan update are unknown at this time.

OPTIONS

1. Confirm Council direction for the Preferred Alternative to be studied in the FEIS based on July 17 and July 24 discussion.
2. Further deliberate Preferred Alternative and provide direction at a later date (target August 7).

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary of Draft Environmental Impact Statement Alternatives, Impacts and Mitigation
- B. Urban Tree Canopy in Bellevue by Neighborhood
- C. Site-Specific Requests Not Analyzed in DEIS or Recommended for Preferred Alternative

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A