



Bellevue Planning Commission

July 12, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Study Session on Wilburton Vision Implementation draft Comprehensive Plan amendments

STAFF CONTACTS

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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 amendments to policies for the Wilburton TOD study area (Attachment A), focusing on a discussion and guidance on draft policies related to *Cultural and Community Connections* within the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (Wilburton TOD).

This study session is one in a series of Planning Commission study sessions intended to lead to a Planning Commission recommendation 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 in 2024.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Boards & Commissions Feedback

The first Planning Commission study session on draft amendments to policies on May 24 focused on *Open Space & Natural Systems*. Staff received Planning Commission direction to consider the following:

- Ensuring the right incentives achieve the vision as staff looks ahead to implementation
- Considering wildlife corridors as part of the connectivity network
- Integrating wayfinding that is both sensitive to and celebratory of Bellevue’s cultural diversity
- Promoting access to Eastrail and Lake Bellevue as community assets

On June 13, staff solicited input from the Parks and Community Services Board on draft parks, recreation, and open space policies to inform additional policy refinements. Comments included:

- Providing greater clarity around implementation actions (requirements, incentives, etc.)
- Clarifying what “public access” means for Lake Bellevue – visual, recreational, etc.
- Providing specific references to Bellevue Botanic Garden as a key destination for the area
- Emphasizing the Eastrail corridor opportunity for a linear park; and new neighborhood-serving parks throughout the area to serve new residents.

On June 8, staff shared draft amendments to transportation policies with the Transportation Commission for initial input and direction on policy refinements. Comments included:

- Clarifying types of internal access and circulation needed to break up larger block sizes and facilitate local access
- Clarifying Eastrail access opportunities and related investments (crossing signalization, non-motorized access paths, etc.)

Following the June 8 Transportation Commission study session, staff incorporated their input into revised draft transportation. Staff will return to Transportation Commission on July 13 with a staff recommendation of draft transportation policy amendments and seek approval on recommended draft transportation policies for transmittal to the Planning Commission for their review in the context of all draft policy amendments in the fall.

Relationship to Environmental Review

Staff presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update to the Planning Commission on June 14, 21, and 28 regarding a recommendation on a Preferred Alternative to City Council for study in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FEIS is planned to be released in the early fall and will inform the growth strategy for the overall Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation. The analysis of the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS may also inform refinements to draft policies.

POLICY UPDATE PROGRESS

This study session focuses on draft policies for *Cultural and Community Connections*, part of a new section of the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan for the Wilburton TOD area. Staff are considering revising the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea boundaries so applicable policies in the BelRed Subarea Plan would be moved to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan.

In Attachment A, draft Comprehensive Plan Amendments include draft policy changes in support of Economic Development; Arts and Culture; and Urban Design goals. These draft policies support the implementation of opportunities identified by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in the 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Study and are aligned with the long-range planning framework established in documents, such as the Economic Development Plan. For awareness, staff will also provide an update on transportation policy development that we will be sharing with the Transportation Commission on July 13. The Transportation Commission's recommendation of draft transportation policies will be transmitted for the Planning Commission's review in the fall.

During the July 12 study session, staff will provide an overview of the policy outcomes related to these draft policies for Planning Commission input, and reference potential implementation tools that could be considered during the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) process and via other future city efforts.

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

1) Cultivating an active, vibrant identity

A guiding Council Principle for the Wilburton Vision Implementation is to create a pedestrian destination that welcomes diverse communities. The experiential qualities of buildings, streets, and open spaces contribute to an inviting, vibrant street- and trail- level environment. Amended policies will provide guidance on urban design, placemaking, and arts & cultural components that contribute to this distinct pedestrian-oriented identity.

2) Fostering a unique mix of businesses

Many businesses draw community members into the area today, including hospitals, medical and professional offices, hotels, auto dealerships and services, anchor retail tenants, grocery stores, and mom-and-pop shops. The Wilburton TOD vision sees small businesses and larger facilities/institutions contributing toward job growth, a diverse business mix, and a unique economic niche. Amended policies will provide guidance on retaining and enhancing economic vitality as the area transitions from an auto-oriented to a vibrant, mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented area.

3) Multimodal connections to and through Wilburton

A system of local access and active transportation facilities in the Wilburton TOD are intended to achieve a vibrant, walkable urban neighborhood. Active transportation facilities in Wilburton provide connections to adjacent neighborhoods, including multipurpose paths over I-405 on Main Street and NE 12th Street, crossings over I-405 at NE 4th St, NE 8th St, and NE 10th St, and sidewalks and bicycle facilities along NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE. There are also planned investments in Eastrail, Grand Connection, and 116th Avenue NE that will enhance mobility options and connectivity, as well as planned improvements for NE 8th St. Amended policies will provide guidance on future multimodal circulation and access to implement these connectivity elements.

DISCUSSION

Draft comprehensive plan amendments provide a foundation for future land use code amendments that will direct how the Wilburton TOD develops. At the July 12 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 policies, under the following policy focus areas:

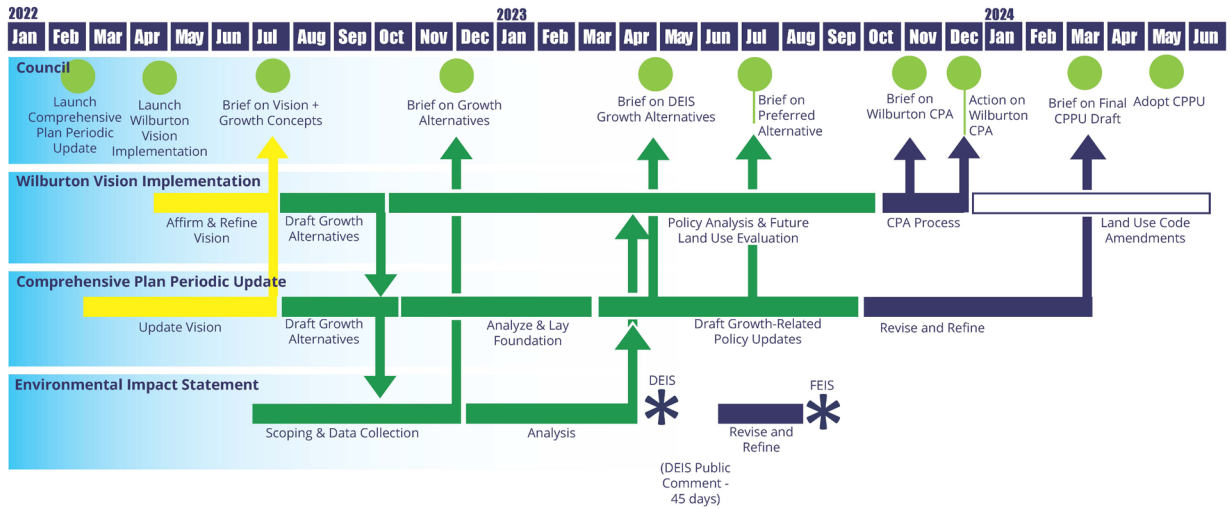
- **July 26, 2023 – Future Land Use:** Land Use, Housing, and Implementation

Upcoming Boards & Commissions Touchpoints

A staff recommendation on draft transportation policies will be shared with the Transportation Commission on July 13. Staff will review the final draft policies with the Transportation Commission and will seek a recommendation for transmittal to the Planning Commission for their review in the context of all draft policy amendments in September.

Upcoming Community Engagement

Following the series of study sessions in July on draft CPAs, staff will share draft policies with community members on Engaging Bellevue and via an in-person Open House for comments. The full draft of Wilburton TOD policy amendments staff will bring to the Planning Commission in September will be informed by several feedback streams, including board & commission direction, community input, and FEIS analysis.



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 – *Cultural and Community Connections*