



# Bellevue Planning Commission

July 14, 2021

## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

### SUBJECT

Final Review Public Hearing on the Neighborhood Area Plan for Northeast Bellevue

### STAFF CONTACTS

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### POLICY ISSUES

Staff recommends approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Northeast Bellevue’s Neighborhood Area Plan. This plan brings the City’s broader vision to life in a local way, responding to changing needs across the City that impact Northeast Bellevue. The policies found within this plan provide guidance to City staff and consultants, those working on projects in the community, and others helping to shape our neighborhoods’ futures. This plan provides a broad framework for future work in Northeast Bellevue, defining what is important to maintain and protect and what needs improvement.

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

<b>ACTION</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>DIRECTION</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>INFORMATION ONLY</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Request	Summary Guidance	
1. Conduct a Final Review public hearing for the proposed amendment	Direct staff to first review and present the staff recommendation, then open the public hearing and accept public testimony. Close the public hearing.	
2. Conduct a study session following the public hearing to make a recommendation	Review the application, staff recommendation, public record, and testimony. Ask questions of staff, applicants or persons giving testimony; review the proposed resolution.	
3. Take action on a recommendation	The Commission uses a resolution to the City Council for the recommendation action. Direct staff on resolution content.	

City Council-initiated amendments address broader Comprehensive Plan policy implementation; this year’s Neighborhood Area Plans address the Council’s desire to implement the Comprehensive Plan in a local way, updating the existing policies to reflect today’s neighborhoods and their unique needs and desires.

Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment proposals are reviewed by the Planning Commission and acted upon by the City Council through the Final Review process set forth in the Land Use Code at [LUC 20.30I](#). Final Review evaluates the merits of proposed amendments included in the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program. Final Review evaluation and decision includes staff review, a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation by resolution, and City Council action by ordinance. The

Planning Commission holds Final Review public hearings and makes recommendations. The City Council's subsequent action on those recommendations—conveyed by resolution—amends the Comprehensive Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY**

The Final Review Decision Criteria for a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment are set forth in the Land Use Code in Section [20.30I.150](#). Based on a review and application of the criteria, and using a process as described in 2020 study sessions before the Planning Commission, Community Development staff developed Final Review recommendations.

Staff recommendation for the proposed amendment is in the Recommendation Summary (below.) The full report is available [online](#) and in detail in the report materials provided to Commissioners along with the June 17, 2021, notice of Final Review public hearings. Such materials may also be requested in print.

#### **Summary Recommendation**

The proposed plan amendment would replace the existing Northeast Bellevue Subarea Plan with the proposed new Northeast Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plan as well as make map amendments to the Northeast, Crossroads and Southeast Bellevue Land Use Plan maps at the end of each Subarea Plan. These were only boundary changes. No changes were made to land use designations in any of the maps. Additionally, policies in the current Crossroads Subarea Plan that refer only to areas within the new Northeast Bellevue boundary, will be stricken from the Crossroads Subarea Plan.

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See [Staff Report](#).

#### **Summary Public Comment**

Public comments throughout the engagement process have highlighted the importance of each of the five sections addressed in the proposed policies: Sense of Place (related to the unique physical qualities of the Neighborhood Area), Sense of Community (related to community members' cohesion and camaraderie), Housing Affordability (related to the affordability of housing across a variety of income levels and family types/configurations), Mobility and Access (related to transportation safety, choice and convenience), and Environment (related to trees, parks and open space, sustainability, and related issues). These comments were discussed in previous Planning Commission sessions.

Public comments during the Final Review process have been forwarded to the Commission and included on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment [website](#). They have brought up a few specific points regarding the Northeast Bellevue plan. These were discussed in more detail in the [July 7 packet materials](#) but focus around a few primary topics:

- Calls for maintaining the existing use on the Bellevue Technology Center property along with its PUD and concomitant agreements that preserve the open space meadow in the west and the stand of trees to the south,
- Concerns about the possible introduction of detached accessory dwelling units, duplexes and/or triplexes and their impact on the tree canopy and adjacent properties within Northeast Bellevue,

- Concerns about large expensive homes replacing smaller more affordable homes and cutting down trees in the process,
- Calls for addressing traffic and providing multi-modal transportation facility improvements along Northeast Bellevue arterials given increased traffic flows and speeds resulting from development in adjacent areas, including the City of Redmond, and
- Calls for immediate action to revise City codes related to tree preservation and retention.

**Summary Planning Commission Comment**

Planning Commission comments throughout the various study sessions have focused on a few areas of interest. At the April 28 meeting, multiple Commissioners provided feedback on potential future engagement approaches that could be utilized in upcoming public outreach efforts. In the subsequent study sessions, the importance of providing choices – in housing, transportation, and other areas was also discussed.

Several Commissioners also expressed interest in additional review and discussion time, so a special meeting was scheduled for July 7 to provide this. Some Commissioners had also expressed an interest in separating out the controversial policies for additional discussion. The meeting on July 7 provided an opportunity to focus on those policies for additional discussion. The following table contains comments provided to staff along with some potential amendments that the Commission could add to the resolution if desired.

Commission Comment	Potential Amendment / Staff Response
<b><i>Sense of Place</i></b>	
Concern that Sense of Place policies may imply a preference between renovating and building new, whereas the focus is on the resulting consistency of neighborhood character.	S-NE-1. Preserve Northeast Bellevue’s existing neighborhood identity by <b>supporting efforts to maintain and renovate</b> encouraging rehabilitation and maintenance of existing mid-century homes and later styles, and <b>to preserve</b> preservation of trees.
Reword policy to clarify “renovation” rather than “rehabilitation.”	<del>S-NE-22.</del> <b>S-NE-2.</b> Minimize impacts from any new housing typology to the environment and to the existing residential character of the street experience.
Move policy related to introduction of new housing typologies from the Housing Affordability section to the Sense of Place section.	
<b><i>Housing Affordability</i></b>	
Change “ensure” for schools to “work with BSD to address additional needs.”	S-NE-21. Ensure adequate infrastructure exists for new housing typologies (e.g. transportation, utilities, <del>schools</del> and parks), <b>and work with Bellevue School District to address additional educational facility needs.</b>

Commission Comment	Potential Amendment / Staff Response
<b><i>Mobility and Access</i></b>	
For policy S-NE-40, call attention to reviewing projects proximate to the boundary between Redmond and Bellevue.	S-NE-40. Review private sector development projects in Redmond and recommend mitigation for transportation system impacts that may occur in Bellevue <b>paying close attention to projects and their related impacts proximate to the boundary of the two cities.</b>
<b><i>Environment</i></b>	
S-NW-41 could include “tree preservation” in addition to protection of the tree canopy to clarify that individual trees should be preserved in addition to the overall tree canopy.	S-NW-41. Support efforts to <del>both</del> protect Northeast Bellevue’s tree canopy, <b>preserve its trees</b> , and enhance the health of trees on both public and private property.

### **AMENDMENT NOTICE**

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan amendment for Northeast Bellevue’s Neighborhood Area Plan was introduced to the Planning Commission with an April 28 study session discussing the overall process and focusing on the community engagement to date. The draft plan itself was brought to the Planning Commission through study sessions held on May 26, June 9, and July 7, the first two of which focused on introducing the plan as a whole while the latter was scheduled to review specific policies needing additional discussion in advance of the public hearing.

Notice of the application was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on May 27 and mailed and posted as required by [LUC 20.35.420](#). Notice of the July 14 Final Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on June 17 and included notice sent to parties of record.

Public comments come in throughout the process. All written comments are included in the public record. Public comments are posted on the proposed [Comprehensive Plan amendments web site](#). Written comments received throughout the earlier engagement process were attached to the [May 26 agenda materials](#) and are available on [Engaging Bellevue](#).

### **Effective community engagement, outreach and public comments in 2021**

Applicants, residents and communities are engaging across a variety of media during the 2021 annual plan amendment review process. The city’s early and continuous community engagement for this Comprehensive Plan amendment includes:

- ✓ Responsive early outreach to requests for information and to become parties of interest
- ✓ Responding in writing to each written public comment submitted and returning phone calls
- ✓ Expanded web page material for Comprehensive Plan Amendments with the review schedule, the applications list, and a “What’s Next” timeline
- ✓ An April 28 Community Engagement Overview Planning Commission study session
- ✓ A May 26 Final Review Introductory Planning Commission study session
- ✓ A June 9 Final Review Planning Commission study session
- ✓ A July 7 Final Review Planning Commission study session
- ✓ Official Weekly Permit Bulletin notice as required

- ✓ Summary of outreach conducted for the proposed plan amendment between June 2020 and May 2021:

#### Community Meetings

- Community meetings on this topic were described in detail in the [May 26 materials](#).
- 10 separate community meetings took place regarding the Northeast Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plan.
- 76 one-on-one or small group meetings and 7 additional presentations were given to community groups regarding both the Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plans.

#### City Council Meetings

- City Councilmembers initiated the Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Northeast Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plan in 2018. Following a pause due to staffing constraints, it was added to the 2021 Comprehensive Plan amendment work program.
- City Council received an October 12, 2020 briefing on the process to date and planned future engagement process.
- City Council received a March 22, 2021 briefing summarizing the engagement process and overarching themes to date.

#### Planning Commission Meetings

- The Planning Commission received briefings on April 28, May 26, June 9, and July 7 regarding the Northeast Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plan.
- Public Hearings with the Commission on the 2021 Neighborhood Area Plan amendments are scheduled for July 14.

#### Other Outreach

- Two mailers were sent (in November 2020 and April 2021) to every resident of Northeast Bellevue. The second mailer included a questionnaire that nearly 400 residents returned.
- An [online engagement platform](#) was utilized throughout the process to continue engagement outside of scheduled meetings with community members.
- Public engagement information was posted to the Engaging Bellevue website, WeChat, KaKao Talk, Facebook, and NextDoor.
- Digital advertising campaigns were used to reach residents who may not be subscribed to city email lists or social media channels.
- Four Cultural Outreach Assistants provided targeted and personal outreach to key communities.

#### City Publications

- Updates regarding the Neighborhood Area Plan and information about opportunities to participate were posted to *Neighborhood News* in August, October, and November of 2020 as well as in January of 2021.
- Articles highlighting the Neighborhood Area Plan appeared in *It's Your City* in August 2020 and February 2021.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Northeast Bellevue Draft Neighborhood Area Plan
- B. Planning Commission Resolution for the Northeast Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plan
- C. Northeast Bellevue Draft Land Use Map
- D. Southeast Bellevue Draft Land Use Map
- E. Crossroads Draft Subarea Plan
- F. Crossroads Draft Land Use Map