



# Bellevue Planning Commission

June 8, 2022

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

### SUBJECT

Study Session on the Wilburton Vision Implementation.

### STAFF CONTACTS

Emil King AICP, Assistant Director, 452-7223

Janet Shull AICP CUD, Strategic Planning Manager, 452-5371  
*Community Development*

Nick Whipple, Code and Policy Planning Manager, 452-4578  
*Development Services*

### POLICY ISSUES

The Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative will amend the existing Wilburton/8th Street Subarea Plan and BelRed Subarea Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Map, and the City's 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.

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**ACTION**



**DIRECTION**



**INFORMATION ONLY**



As a follow up to the May 11 Study Session introduction to the Wilburton Vision Implementation work plan, staff will present an overview of the 2018 Wilburton Vision.

### WHAT IS THE WILBURTON VISION?

This agenda memo provides an overview of the Wilburton Vision which is documented in the July 2018 [Wilburton Commercial Area Study](#). The following is the stated vision from the Executive Summary:

*Our vision is that the Wilburton Commercial Area become Bellevue's next urban mixed-use community that enhances livability, promotes healthy living, supports economic vitality, and serves the needs of a diverse and growing population. As Bellevue's cultural and innovative hub, it serves as a regional and international destination that connects people and fosters community by leveraging its existing assets to define a distinctive sense of place and character.*

### **Wilburton Study Area:**

The Wilburton Commercial Area (See Attachment A) is defined by I-405 to the west, NE 12th Street to the north, SE 5th Street to the south, and navigates 118th, 120th, and 124th Avenues NE to the east.

The entire area is over 300 acres and is uniquely positioned between Downtown to the west and BelRed to the north.

### **Background and Overview**

The Wilburton Commercial Area Study was prepared by a 15-member Council-appointed Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) with consultant and staff support. The work of the CAC was guided by Council Principles, (See Attachment B) and direction to develop a land use, transportation, and urban design vision and policy recommendations for the Wilburton study area. The CAC included members from City boards and commissions, representatives from businesses, institutions, and civic organizations, and residents from nearby neighborhoods.

The CAC met for over a year and examined the study area in depth, developed and evaluated alternative courses of action, and produced a preferred land use, urban design, and transportation vision. The CAC vision promotes a desirable but realistic evolution in land use and urban design supported by implementable transportation solutions, that will create a unique and welcoming urban neighborhood.

At the April 25, 2022 City Council Study Session, Council provided direction to use the Wilburton Vision from the 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Study as the baseline for planning, policy and code development work that is now underway and will continue through 2023 with final adoption of the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) in mid-2024, following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

### **A Preferred Urban Design Framework**

The CAC study presents a “Preferred Urban Design Framework” (see p. 82 and onward in the report – link above). A visual depiction of the recommended future development shows how the most densely developed area would be located closest to I-405 between NE 8th Street, NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE. Building heights would step down from this core area to the north, south and east to the boundaries of the study area. The range of future building heights depicted is from 70 feet along the eastern perimeter to up to 450 feet tall near I-405.

The CAC’s Preferred Urban Design Framework includes the following elements:

- Land Use, with an emphasis on mixed use and transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Trail-oriented development to create a unique and accessible environment within the Eastrail corridor
- Street network with improved connectivity to support transit and trail access as well as to improve walkability
- A vision for 116th Avenue NE to serve as a grand boulevard that accommodates bicycles and pedestrians
- Extension of NE 6th Street eastward to terminate at 116th Avenue NE

## **Recommended Design Principles**

The Preferred Urban Design Framework also includes “Recommended Design Principles” for:

- Enhanced streets and streetscapes
- The public realm, including the Eastrail corridor, a large civic space in the core of the study area associated with the future Grand Connection crossing over I-405
- Enhanced natural systems, including wetland reconstruction and stream daylighting
- A network of small parks and plazas that are incentivized as part of future development

## **A Sustainable Development Framework**

The Preferred Urban Design Framework highlights the following aspects of a sustainable community for Wilburton:

- Sustainable Transportation - transitioning Wilburton from auto-dominated to walkable
- Habitat restoration recognizing the stream and wetland network
- Green infrastructure to help increase tree canopy and manage stormwater

## **Affordable Housing**

The CAC Study identifies general recommendations for the provision of affordable housing. It states that affordable housing should be an integrated component of the neighborhood and include a mix of rental and ownership opportunities. Affordable housing options should be targeted to the needs of many different demographic and socio-economic groups including seniors, single-parent families, ethnicities, abilities, workforce housing, first-time buyers and residents seeking to downsize. This section of the study also includes recommendations for incentivizing the provision of affordable housing and leveraging public resources and partnership opportunities.

## **Building Design**

Building design principles are presented in the study to guide development of city code and policy related to building design. These principles include recommendations for building setbacks and stepbacks, creating a street-level experience and accommodating views.

## **Implementation Strategies:**

The CAC study concludes with a chapter on implementation strategies (Chapter 5). These strategies are focused on recommended improvements to 1) Streets and Streetscapes, and 2) Parks, Open Space and Natural Systems. Some of the recommended strategies are underway, most notably the Eastrail Framework Plan that is nearing completion in collaboration with King County Parks and Sound Transit.

Examples of the implementation recommendations that will be considered in the Wilburton Vision policy and code development work include:

- Requirements for green infrastructure in new development
- Requirements for additional trees and landscaping with new development
- Requirements and/or incentives to create new streets, bike and pedestrian connections to increase permeability
- Design guidelines for vibrant streetscapes and active frontages on the Eastrail corridor

- Incentives for the provision of publicly accessible open spaces
- Multi-modal level of service standard to be applied to assess transportation impacts.

### **NEXT STEPS**

A follow up study session will be scheduled with the Commission in the next few months.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Wilburton Study Area

Attachment B: Wilburton Guiding Principles