



Bellevue Planning Commission

April 26, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Summary of Community Feedback on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update & Preview of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

Planning Commission will use the input from the community, environmental analysis in the EIS, other analysis including analysis of economic and racially disparate impacts, staff analysis and the members' own expertise to evaluate the EIS alternatives and recommend a preferred alternative and growth strategy. This summary of community input is a synthesis of all of the feedback the city has received since the launch of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update on February 28, 2022. Previous summaries of community feedback have been shared with Planning Commission at prior meetings. Summaries of each phase can be found at the links below and on EngagingBellevue.com.

- July 14, 2022 (Summary of Engagement during Phase 1, especially the Vision Survey – [Phase 1 Summary](#))
- September 28, 2022 (Brief summary of Engagement during Phase 2a – [Phase 2a Summary](#))
- February 22 (Summary of engagement with specific groups)

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

DIRECTION

INFORMATION ONLY



BACKGROUND

Council launched the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update on February 28, 2022. Planning Commission reviewed the scope of the update on March 9, 2022. In that meeting, the Commission reviewed the timeline. The update is occurring in three phases. These phases have

distinct engagement activities that feed into the development of the alternatives and policies (Attachment A: Timeline).

- Phase 1 – The focus is on aligning the requirements of the update with Council’s vision for the city and raising awareness of the update to the plan.
- Phase 2 – This phase is broken into three focus phases. Phase 2a is focused on developing the alternatives that will be studied in the EIS. Phase 2b is focused on technical review and analysis. Phase 2c is focused on identifying the growth strategy and making policy changes to align with the growth strategy.
- Phase 3 – The focus is on refining the draft policies and shepherding it through the legislative review process.

We are currently in Phase 2b, focusing on technical analysis, including the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A summary of the EIS process and Planning Commission’s role was provided at the February 22 meeting. The anticipated release date for the Draft EIS (DEIS) is April 27. This will be followed by a 45 day comment period. Planning Commission will provide direction on the preferred alternative to be studied in the Final EIS (FEIS) which will inform the growth strategy for the city for the next 20 years.

The primary role of Planning Commission is to “Review, consider amendments, and make recommendations to the city council on the comprehensive plan and...implement the state Growth Management Act.” (Bellevue 3.64.070). The EIS is important analysis that will inform the Planning Commission’s recommended growth strategy. The Planning Commission will have the opportunity to review the analysis in the DEIS and recommend an alternative to be studied in the FEIS based on the analysis and the public comment.

In addition to the analysis in the EIS and other analysis currently underway, Planning Commission can consider the input of the Bellevue community in determining a growth strategy. Staff has engaged with the community throughout the project in a variety of ways including through surveys, comment cards, presentations in English, Spanish and Chinese, community events, and feedback exercises. Information provided by the community at each stage led to changes in the work of that phase and subsequent phases. The Vision Survey and open houses in Phase 1 helped to focus the feedback areas in Phase 2a. The feedback in Phase 2a through the Deep Dive events, Engaging Bellevue exercises and Strategy Team conversations contributed to the development of the alternatives studied in the EIS. Feedback in Phase 2b is contributing to the clarification of issues around housing and neighborhood preferences. All of the feedback is relevant to the recommendation of a growth strategy. This memo extracts some of the key themes that we have heard to be used in the commissions deliberation.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The city has engaged with groups in different ways in an effort to reach as many people with a stake in the future of Bellevue as possible. Across all modes of engagement, about 90 percent of participants have been Bellevue residents. The other 10 percent is a mix of people who work

in Bellevue, used to live in Bellevue, or have friends and/or family connections to Bellevue. The city used a variety of means to hear from voices that are not always a part of the process. Staff assembled a Strategy Team to hear from representatives with special knowledge of the resident, business, and service provider communities in Bellevue. Staff also reached out to specific groups to engage staff or clients about issues that are of importance to them.

Below is a description of the ways we have engaged groups and the purpose behind these methods. Table 1 shows the groups that were engaged in each outreach mode.

- Vision Events. (3 events, about 225 attendees) The vision events were open houses with information on the Comprehensive Plan process. The purpose was to raise awareness of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and to gather feedback on the vision for the update.
- Vision Survey. (3,152 respondents) The vision survey was sent to all households in Bellevue and was available at tabling locations, engagement events and presentations. The purpose was to gather information from people concerned about the future of Bellevue about how the city is doing in meeting its goals and the areas the city should focus on in the future.
- Strategy Team (50 participants) The Strategy Team, consisting of representatives of businesses, developers, nonprofit service providers, and neighborhood organizations, was convened monthly between September 2022 and March 2023. The purpose was to provide expert insight in specific areas such as housing development, business, and social services.
- Deep Dives (4 events, 183 event attendees) The Deep Dives were in-person events held between June and September 2022 with materials and input mechanisms available online after the events. The topics were Environment, Connection, Access, and Housing. The purpose was to acquaint people concerned about the future of Bellevue with the update requirements and data related to the update.
- Online Engagement (over 500 online participants) Many of the activities at the Deep Dives were available online on Engaging Bellevue. The purpose was to gather wider feedback from people who could not make the events or felt more comfortable engaging online.
- Housing Forums (about 125 attendees) The Housing Forums were in-person and virtual events held in March 2023. The purpose was to discuss the ways capacity for housing could be increased in the city that are being studied in the EIS.
- Tabling and Community Events (17 events) Tabling events are when staff host a table at a community location or neighborhood event with information. The purpose of these events is to make people aware of the CPPU and how they can participate.

- Community Presentations and Focus Groups (35 events; about 800 attendees)
Community presentations and focus groups have happened in all phases of the Comp Plan Update, including presentations in Spanish and Chinese. The purpose is to connect with specific interest groups to share information and gather input on issues specific to that group.
- Statistically Valid Survey (1,152 respondents) The Survey of residents was conducted in January and February 2023. The purpose was to understand the relative value of different priorities in planning for growth. The dashboard is available online at <https://bellevuewa.gov/comprehensive-plan-update-survey>.

There are three primary topics that require updating in this periodic update cycle. The summary of the community input has been grouped under the headings,

- Equity
- Housing
- Climate Change.

These are areas in which the city must make the most changes because of changes in state law or changes to the Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs) and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and were therefore areas of focus in the outreach.

Equity: Recent changes to the Growth Management Act have added requirements to plan for housing for households at all income levels and addressing systemic racism and exclusion through policy updates. Updates to the Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs) and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) emphasize planning for the most vulnerable groups. Three major themes we heard from the community related to equity are,

- Access to housing is out of reach for many people.
- Spanish is the second most-spoken non-English language spoken in Bellevue yet often not a focus of outreach and services.
- The poorest residents are often overlooked in the city.

Housing: Recent changes to the Growth Management Act have added requirements to plan for a variety of housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, and other middle density housing types. The housing element of the CPPs was substantially updated to center equity in the policies for housing production. Three major themes we heard from the community related to housing are,

- Bellevue needs many different neighborhoods to meet the needs of people at all stages of life.
- Supporting homeownership for first-time home buyers and others with less means is important.

- Some places in Bellevue are more suited for middle density housing than others.

Climate Change: The MPPs have been updated to emphasize the importance of responding to the causes and impacts of climate change. Three major themes we heard from the community related to environmental sustainability and climate change are,

- Preserving the tree canopy is important for aesthetic and health reasons.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions should be a focus of city policy.
- Supporting the safety of people walking, biking and using transit is needed.

A more detailed summary of the engagement is in Appendix B.

OPTIONS

1. Information only

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Timeline
- B. Summary of Community Feedback