



Bellevue Planning Commission

February 14, 2024

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Staff Recommended Policy Changes in the Land Use Element and Introduction to the Future Land Use Map Categories

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan provides the roadmap for growth in the City. Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) directs counties and cities to periodically update their Comprehensive Plans. The update was launched February 28, 2022 and has included extensive public engagement. This memo focuses on staff-recommended updates to policies in the following elements:

- Land Use

The update includes changes to the Future Land Use Map. This memo will introduce the Future Land Use Map designations.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



BACKGROUND

The background of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update was included in the memo for the meeting on January 24 and is not reprinted here for brevity. Since then, the City has published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FEIS contains analysis of the Preferred Alternative and compared it to the No Action Alternative. The Preferred Alternative was developed as a combination of the three Action Alternatives in the Draft EIS (DEIS). It was recommended by Planning Commission on June 28, 2023, and modified by Council on July 24,

2023. The expectation was that additional analysis of the Preferred Analysis would be undertaken in the FEIS.

The impacts from the Preferred Alternative are the same or greater than the Action Alternatives, however, no new mitigation measures were added in the FEIS to supplement those already included in the DEIS. The environmental review in the EIS is not site-specific, so the mitigation measures are more general than what would be included in a site-specific EIS, therefore they are relevant for mitigation of a range of impacts. Many of the mitigation measures included in the DEIS have been incorporated into the updates to the policies.

The Planning Commission has been involved in the development of the policies since the beginning and will continue to be involved in reviewing the proposed changes. Attachment A includes the dates and topics of past and future meetings. The topics of future meetings are preliminary and may change.

At this meeting, the Commission will review staff recommended updates to the policies in the Land Use element based on Commission feedback, community engagement to date, potential mitigation measures and other recommendations in the DEIS and study documents, and state and regional requirements. In addition, the Commission will review the Future Land Use Map designations and their relationship to the designations studied in the EIS, the current Comprehensive Plan land use designations and the existing zoning designations.

The City is continuing to engage with the community about the updates to the policies, including the policies in this element. The current policy engagement period will close on February 16. Staff will bring community feedback to the Commission regarding the Land Use element and the Future Land Use Map at the February 28 meeting and note any changes recommended based on the feedback.

POLICY UPDATES – LAND USE

Below, the policy updates in the Land Use (LU) element are listed by subsection, highlighting the main changes in the subsection. Changes that are a clarification or a grammatical change are not included below. Attachment B contains the strike/underline of all policy changes in this element, including minor edits that are not highlighted in this memo.

Policy changes in the Land Use element were based on community feedback, direction from City Council and their identified priorities, county and regional guidance through Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs), and the recently updated state GMA requirements. Staff outlined the factors leading to the general changes on October 11, 2023. In addition, some updates were made to make the policies clearer, remove duplicate or overlapping policies, or move policies to other elements where they fit better.

Land Use Strategy

This subsection focuses on the overarching growth strategy in the City.

- LU-2. Updated to add the acquisition of parks.
- LU-3. Added to support the preservation of open space and the management of ecosystem services.

Residential Areas

Policies in this subsection apply to areas of the City that are predominantly residential.

- LU-12. Updated to focus on ways to maintain and improve vitality in residential areas beyond code enforcement.
- LU-13. Broadened to focus on scale instead of use.
- LU-15. Updated to focus on the quality of pedestrian connections.

Neighborhood Centers

This section has been renamed to focus on Neighborhood Centers, small commercial nodes in areas that are otherwise primarily residential. The policies have been updated to focus specifically on these areas (see Attachment C).

- LU-16. Updated to reflect the designation of Neighborhood Centers.
- LU-17. Updated to create a framework for the designation of new Neighborhood Centers.
- LU-18. Updated to reflect the designation of Neighborhood Centers and the types of uses that are appropriate within them.

Mixed Use Centers and Countywide Centers

The name of this subsection has been updated to reflect the designation of Mixed Use Centers (see attachment C) and the creation of Countywide Centers, proposed by Bellevue and provisionally approved by King County (see Attachment D). Mixed Use Centers and Countywide Centers have had identical boundaries in the past. Staff is recommending using different boundaries for these two designations because they have different purposes. Policies in this section have been updated to reflect the evolution of these definitions.

- LU-21. Updates to reference Mixed Use Centers.
- LU-22. Added to support the designation of Countywide Centers by King County.

- LU-23. Added to support the designation of Countywide Centers by King County.

Land Use Compatibility

Policies in this section focus on how land uses relate to each other, especially the relationship to transportation.

- LU-24. Added to address commercial displacement in areas with significant change.
- LU-26. Updated to use language more inclusive of the many ways a development can integrate with the surroundings.

Transit Oriented Development

This subsection name was updated to focus on the type of development instead of specific areas. Policies in this section focus on the design and function of development meant to respond to the availability of high-capacity transit.

- LU-31. Moved from Transportation element. Updated to remove language in conflict with direction from state legislation and regional guiding documents.

Citywide Policies

This subsection contains policies that apply to land use citywide.

- LU-34. Moved to the citywide policy section to allow incentive systems to be used anywhere in the City.
- LU-35. Added to support direction from the CPPs to celebrate cultural resources.
- LU-38. Added to support safe access to public amenities like parks.
- LU-39. Updated to expand the list of things to consider in the provision of childcare.
- LU-40. Added to reduce exposure to poor air quality.
- LU-41. Added to improve indoor air quality.
- LU-42. Added to especially consider the impacts of air quality on low-income communities and others that have historically been more impacted by poor air quality.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP DESIGNATIONS

The scope of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update includes the direction to, “Explore amending the land use categories used in the Comprehensive Plan map to reference zones more broadly.” The proposed future land use map will be discussed with the commission in the future. At this meeting, the Commission will review and provide feedback on the proposed Future Land Use categories. Attachment E is a crosswalk of proposed Future Land Use categories with existing zones and categories used in the EIS. Attachment F is a key to be included in the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan. This would replace the list of categories in the glossary of the current Comprehensive Plan.

The Future Land Use designations in the Comprehensive Plan are meant to provide broad direction on the general uses and scale for the future development of areas of the City while more detailed requirements and regulations are described in the Land Use Code and zoning map. Currently, a one-to-one correspondence exists between many future land use designations and zoning classifications. Several areas in the City also have future land use designations tied to a specific planning area, such as Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), East Main TOD, BelRed, and Downtown. This provides tighter control over development. However, because the Comprehensive Plan may only be amended once a year, it also makes it more difficult and expensive to change the zoning, even when the proposed new zone is generally aligned with the City's vision for the area.

In broadening the Future Land Use designations, the goal is to provide more general guidance and flexibility for how development can respond to community needs while being consistent with the City's vision for the general use and scale of development in an area. A change in zoning is still subject to specific standards and decision criteria (LUC 20.30A.140) through a public process, however, consideration of these changes is not restricted to once a year.

The broadening of land use designations was focused in mixed use areas and in residential areas because many similarities between zones exist in these categories. Designations that are not recommended for broadening are Light Industrial, General Commercial, and Hospital Institutions. These are not sufficiently similar to other zones to be included in a general designation for an area. No change is recommended for Downtown.

New zoning classifications consistent with the proposed Future Land Use designations will be discussed with the Planning Commission as part of the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) process. The Wilburton Vision Implementation LUCA will be brought before the Planning Commission concurrent with the Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA). However, the Comprehensive Plan LUCA and the BelRed Look Forward LUCA will be brought before the Planning Commission following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan update and the BelRed Look Forward CPA.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Planning Commission Meetings and Topics
- B. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Proposed Land Use Policies
- C. Map: Mixed Use Centers and Neighborhood Centers
- D. Map: Countywide Centers
- E. Future Land Use Designation Crosswalk
- F. Future Land Use Map Key (provided separately)
- G. Glossary