



DATE: March 7, 2024

TO: Chair Stash and members of the Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: Wilburton Vision Implementation Policy Amendments

DIRECTION REQUESTED

- Action
- Discussion/Direction
- Information

Staff will present an updated recommendation on draft transportation policy amendments (Attachment A) that would be applicable within the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area. The Transportation Commission first reviewed updated proposed policy amendments on November 9, 2023; this current version includes the staff recommendation for the NE 6th St extension between 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE based on an evaluation of this extension in the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update & Wilburton Vision Implementation Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), published on February 1, 2024.

Staff request that the Transportation Commission discuss and approve a recommendation on draft transportation policy amendments and approve a revised transmittal letter to the Planning Commission (Attachment B).

BACKGROUND/INFORMATION

On July 13, 2023, the Transportation Commission approved recommending draft transportation policy amendments for the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan. These amendments are within the scope of the Wilburton Vision Implementation planning initiative, which considers and determines how the Wilburton TOD area is a key component in implementing the citywide growth strategy for housing and jobs for the next 20 years.

To prepare the draft transportation policy amendments, staff met with the Transportation Commission on the following dates:

- **July 14, 2022:** Overview of the Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative

- **March 9, 2023:** Review of preliminary guidance for developing policy amendments (vision and goals)
- **June 6, 2023:** Review of draft transportation policy amendments
- **July 13, 2023:** Recommendation of draft transportation policy amendments and concurrence on internal access concepts
- **November 9, 2023:** Review of updates to draft transportation policy amendments, discussion of TOD access concept map, discussion of evaluation criteria in the FEIS to inform NE 6th Street extension policy recommendation

POLICY ISSUES

NE 6th Street Extension

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) I-405 Master Plan includes a planned extension of NE 6th Street between the center of I-405 and 116th Avenue NE to be dedicated for HOT/HOV/Transit use only. This project is a component of the I-405 Master Plan, and it is not currently designed or funded for construction. A determination of the EIS process was regarding the potential extension of NE 6th Street between 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE, east of WSDOT’s planned extension. An arterial extension of NE 6th Street has been studied previously and is supported through existing subarea plan policy (S-WI-25) and is identified in the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP-211). As currently planned, the design for this extension would be a 5-lane arterial like the NE 4th Street extension between 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE, which was completed in 2015.

The extension was evaluated through the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation EIS under the preferred land use alternative and transportation network assumptions. The evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative metrics to determine if an arterial provides significant public benefit to the area in terms of land use, transportation, environment, and urban design.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR DRAFT TRANSPORTATION POLICY AMENDMENTS

Attachment A contains the strike/underline of all proposed transportation policy changes. The “New Number” column reflects proposed enumeration in the final Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan. The enumeration from the November 9 study session materials is included in (parentheses) for reference only.

Below describes additional refinements to proposed draft transportation policies shared on November 9, informed by the Transportation Commission’s feedback. Changes that involve minor text edits or grammatical corrections to policies are not included below.

- **S-WI-66 (NEW WI-TR-3).** Updated to broaden access as “vehicle access” rather than “garage and service vehicle access”, which was viewed as limiting.
- **S-WI-67 (NEW WI-TR-4).** Updated “walking and biking” to “active transportation” as a more consistent term across transportation policies.
- **S-WI-68 (NEW WI-TR-5).** Updated “pedestrians and cyclists” to “active transportation users” as a more consistent term across transportation policies.

- **S-WI-71 (NEW WI-TR-8).** Deleted policy based on staff's recommendation regarding the arterial extension of NE 6th St, discussed in greater detail below.

Policy Recommendation for NE 6th Street Extension

Based on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update & Wilburton Vision Implementation FEIS, staff recommends that the arterial extension of NE 6th Street **terminates on the east at 116th Avenue NE**. The quantitative and qualitative metrics used in the FEIS were defined during the November 9 Transportation Commission meeting and have been omitted from this memo for brevity.

The findings from the FEIS that informed the staff recommendation include:

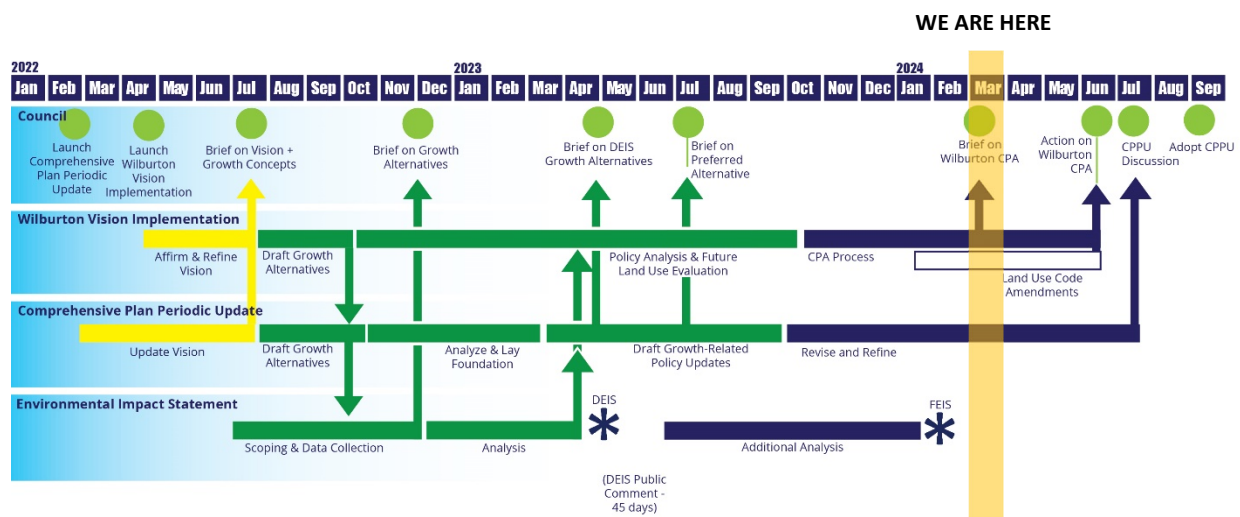
- **Mobility Implementation Plan Performance Targets:** There was minimal difference in the calculated volume/capacity (V/C) ratio at nearby system intersections if NE 6th Street was extended as an arterial east of 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE. The extension would create an additional vehicular connection and east-west capacity, but would neither materially alleviate nor exacerbate congestion elsewhere.
- **Land Use Compatibility:** An arterial extension of NE 6th Street to 120th Avenue NE would be incompatible with the future vision of the Wilburton TOD area as a walkable urban neighborhood, and incompatible with new transportation, land use, and open space opportunities.
- **Climate and Environment:** An arterial extension of NE 6th Street to 120th Avenue NE would increase impervious and pollution-generating surfaces, and potentially induce vehicle trips that would increase greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled.
- **Connectivity and Access:** An arterial extension of NE 6th Street to 120th Avenue NE would provide a new complete streets connection. It would also create a new vehicle crossing of Eastrail that would introduce a modal conflict point between vehicles and active transportation users.
- **Traffic:** An arterial extension of NE 6th Street to 120th Avenue NE could induce general purpose vehicle trips by providing new vehicle capacity, and may have adverse safety impacts to active transportation users.
- **Constructability and Cost:** An arterial extension of NE 6th Street to 120th Avenue NE would require substantial engineering of steep slope areas due to elevation differences between the Eastrail and 116th Avenue NE. It would likely be a public project funded with resources dedicated by the City Council through the Capital Investment Program Plan (CIP).

This recommendation results in no new vehicular crossings across Eastrail within the Wilburton TOD area as part of this planning initiative. The removal of S-WI-71 in the updated policy recommendation does not preclude maintenance/emergency vehicles from accessing and crossing the Eastrail corridor. Moreover, the city is working on an implementation document concurrent with the CPA/LUCA that will include design

guidance and concepts for active transportation access to Eastrail. As part of this implementation work, staff will revise the Wilburton TOD Multimodal Access and Walkability Concepts Map (shared with the Transportation Commission on November 9) that does not show access for general purpose vehicles across the Eastrail along the NE 6th Street alignment.

SCHEDULE & NEXT STEPS

The Transportation Commission recommendation on final draft policies will be transmitted to the Planning Commission when they review policy amendments for the Wilburton TOD area through March and April.



ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Staff Recommendation for Transportation Policy Amendments in the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan
- Attachment B: Draft Transmittal Letter to the Planning Commission