



Bellevue Planning Commission

May 1, 2024

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Final Review Public Hearing on the Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA)

STAFF CONTACTS

Emil King AICP, Planning Director, 452-7223
Janet Shull AICP CUD, Strategic Planning Manager, 452-5371
Justin Panganiban AICP, Senior Planner, 452-7674
Andrea Tonc, Senior Planner, 229-6490
Community Development Department

POLICY ISSUES

Staff recommends approval of the Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea Plans. The recommended policy, Future Land Use Map and Subarea Plan boundary amendments implement the vision for the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area generally bounded by NE 12th Street on the north, Interstate I-405 on the west, Lake Hills Connector on the south, and 124th Avenue NE to 118th Avenue NE on the east.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION ONLY <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 staff recommendation, public record, and consider the public testimony. Ask questions of staff; review the proposed resolution.	
3. Take action on a recommendation	The Commission uses a Resolution to the City Council for the recommendation action. Take action to provide Planning Commission recommendation by Resolution.	

City Council-initiated 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 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 Planning Commission recommendations is the final City action to amend 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, Community Development developed Final Review staff recommendations.

Staff recommendation for the proposed amendment is included in the Staff Report (Attachment B) and in the Recommendation Summary (below.) The full Staff Report with attachments including: proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments in strike-underline; proposed Future Land Use Map; and proposed Subarea Boundary Adjustments is available here:

https://bellevuewa.gov/sites/default/files/media/pdf_document/2024/22-106096-AC%20Wilburton%20Vision%20Implementation%20%28CPA%29_UPDATED.pdf

Attachments C, D, E, and F – which are included in the Staff Report – are also included separately. Such materials may also be requested in print.

Summary of Recommendation

The proposed plan amendment would amend the existing Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street and BelRed Subarea Plan policies, and Subarea Plan boundaries. The proposed amendment will also amend the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to implement the vision for the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area located within the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea (TOD area boundary described on page 1 of this Agenda Memo).

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment because it carries forth the Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative per the vision established in the 2018 Wilburton Commercial Area Citizen Advisory Committee Study, and satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See Staff Report in the link provided above.

Summary of Planning Commission Input

Planning Commission Meetings

The Wilburton Vision Implementation Initiative Comprehensive Plan amendment was introduced to the Planning Commission at their May 11, 2022 study session following official launch of the initiative with the City Council on April 25, 2022.

The Planning Commission held study sessions on the following topics:

- **May 11, 2022:** Overview of the Wilburton Vision Implementation project, including key priorities, scope and timeline, and community engagement
- **June 6, 2022:** Discussion of vision refinements
- **July 13, 2022:** Direction on growth concepts in the Wilburton TOD area for further study through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and community engagement (presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update)
- **September 28, 2022:** Discussion of growth alternatives in Wilburton to inform the EIS (presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update)
- **March 22, 2023:** Direction on preliminary policy guidance to inform the CPA
- **May 24, 2023:** Direction on key policy moves and draft CPAs for *Open Space & Natural Systems* related policies.

- **June 14, 2023:** Discussion of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) analyses to inform consideration of potential Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update)
- **June 21, 2023:** Direction on Preferred Alternative to be studied in the FEIS (presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update)
- **June 28, 2023:** Recommendation of the Preferred Alternative to be studied in the FEIS (presented jointly with the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update)
- **July 12, 2023:** Direction on key policy moves and draft CPAs for *Cultural & Community Connections* related policies.
- **July 26, 2023:** Direction on key policy moves and draft CPAs for *Future Land Use* related policies
- **November 29, 2023:** Discussion of community input on key policy moves to inform the CPA
- **February 14, 2024:** Overview of the general structure and schedule of CPA/LUCA
- **February 28, 2024:** Direction on Future Land Use Map for Wilburton TOD area
- **March 27, 2024:** Direction on *Transportation, Streets, and Blocks* for both draft CPA and LUCA
- **April 3, 2024:** Direction on *Future Land Use* for CPA

In the spring and summer of 2023, the Planning Commission reviewed and affirmed the general direction of draft policies. Staff asked for direction on the draft vision statement, policy goals, and policy guidance areas (March 22), and subsequently asked for direction on key policy moves and draft policies. Draft policies were organized into three focus areas: Open Space & Natural Systems (May 24), Cultural & Community Connections (July 12), and Future Land Use (July 26). During this time period, the Planning Commission provided feedback that affirmed the general direction of draft policies which will inform land use regulations and implementation tools to achieve the Wilburton TOD area vision. Planning Commission guidance from each of the three study sessions included the following:

1. May 24: Open Space & Natural Systems
 - Ensuring the right incentives achieve the vision as staff looks ahead to implementation
 - Considering wildlife corridors as part of the connectivity network
 - Integrating wayfinding that is both sensitive to and celebratory of Bellevue’s cultural diversity
 - Promoting access to Eastrail and Lake Bellevue as community assets
2. July 12: Community & Cultural Connections
 - Fostering activity and vibrancy all throughout the year, including wetter and darker months
 - Treatment of edge conditions
 - Fostering cultural events and venue spaces
 - Emphasizing public safety (“eyes on the street”)
 - Emphasizing flexibility and reduction of barriers for business owners
 - Emphasizing safe access to Eastrail and Grand Connection for all ages and abilities
3. July 26: Future Land Use
 - Incorporating walkability in future land use pattern
 - Considering greatest densities in nodes around transit centers
 - Right-sizing parking to ensure access for those who are dependent on cars to get around
 - Considering stronger action language around green affordable housing opportunities
 - Exploring opportunities associated with different landowners, including Bellevue School District

Planning Commission guidance reflected above, as well as engagement with community on key policy moves in the fall of 2023, led to policy refinements listed in the table below:

Summary of Policy Refinements based on Planning Commission Input
<p><i>Land Use (last discussed at July 26 Study Session)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S-WI-1. Updated for consistency with the intended future land use pattern, and addresses the relationship between the Wilburton TOD area and adjacent residential areas. • S-WI-33. Updated to specify greater density around the Grand Connection as part of the proposed future land use map. • S-WI-36. Updated to add local access as a consideration to inform vehicle and bicycle parking supply and requirements. • S-WI-37. Updated for better integration with policy direction around access concepts described in the transportation policies.
<p><i>Economic Development (last discussed at July 12 study session)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S-WI-39. Updated to broaden different types of opportunities to support small businesses, which may include retail space, programs, and partnerships.
<p><i>Environment (last discussed at May 24 study session)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S-WI-47. New policy added to address sustainability mobility opportunities related to the sustainable district framework. • S-WI-49. Updated for clearer policy direction around tree canopy and urban wildlife connectivity as part of future development.
<p><i>Parks, Recreation & Open Space (last discussed at May 24 study session)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concept map for Wilburton TOD area parks and open space network proposed to be added into the subarea plan to conceptually illustrate park needs for the area and graphically represent the proposed Parks, Recreation, and Open Space policies. • S-WI-55. Updated to use broader language in supporting different implementation tools to achieve open space features • S-WI-56. Updated to swap the term “non-motorized” to “active transportation” as a more consistent term across transportation-related policies. • S-WI-57. Updated to swap the term “non-motorized” to “active transportation” as a more consistent term across transportation-related policies. • S-WI-58. Updated for broader language around Lake Bellevue opportunities, which could include public access, placemaking, environmental enhancement, etc.
<p><i>Urban Design (last discussed at July 12 study session)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S-WI-75. Updated for more flexible language on how activation along a building frontage’s zone is achieved. • S-WI-84. Clarified the policy intent for Eastrail activation, which is to allow spaces and amenities being developed within the Eastrail corridor to be public.

Implementation (last discussed at July 26 study session)

- **S-WI-91.** Updated to clarify the policy intent around how the City engages with public and private development to implement infrastructure, such as future access, efficiently and in a context-sensitive manner.

At the April 3, 2024 Planning Commission study session, the Planning Commission considered the staff recommended Future Land Use Map for the Wilburton TOD area and directed staff to make one revision to remove the designation of *Medical Office – Highrise* where applied and change the designation to *Mixed Use – Highrise*. That change is reflected in the future land use map included in the Staff Report (link provided above).

Summary of Public Comment

Public comments throughout the Planning Commission review process have been forwarded to the Commission as part of their meeting packet materials. These comments will be posted to the [Comprehensive Plan Amendment](#) page.

Effective community engagement, outreach and public comments at Final Review

This proposal incorporated community input across several phases. Engagement contributed toward expanding the list of community members who wished to participate in the planning process, updating the 2018 vision to consider changed conditions in the Wilburton TOD area, developing and refining alternatives for environmental review, and developing and refining Subarea Plan map and text amendments. Types of outreach activities included:

- **Community Events.** Facilitated broad participation and input gathering across the community. These include in-person events such as the Wilburton Vision Implementation Open House on August 15, 2023.
- **Board Updates.** Engaged specific community subject matter experts on topical issues and priorities, including Youth Link, Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA), Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), and Parks & Community Services Board.
- **Community Conversations, Presentations & Tabling.** Facilitated more targeted conversations with specific groups, including those staff had not heard from as frequently during earlier phases of engagement. These groups include youth, seniors, employees, and communities of color.

Engagement activities throughout 2022 and 2023 culminated in an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on major policy moves through an in-person open house and online questionnaire in August and September 2023. Policy moves built on earlier work completed by a Citizen Advisory Committee in 2018 to define the vision for Wilburton. An engagement report was published in October 2023 summarizing community feedback. Key priorities highlighted include expanding tree canopy, supporting small businesses, providing for an appropriate development scale and density relative to Downtown, transit stations, Eastrail, and residential areas to the east, and increasing housing affordability. Community feedback and potential policy refinements were shared with the Planning Commission during the November 29, 2023 study session. These refinements, intended to provide updated or clearer policy direction from what was shared with the Planning Commission in the spring and summer of 2023, are described on page 4 of this agenda memo.

Other Outreach

- Approximately 900 mailers were sent to residents and businesses within the Wilburton TOD area to inform community about ways to engage in the initiative through the EIS process, Engaging Bellevue and information sessions.
- The planning team met with employees and business owners at Design Market Center (1044 116th Ave NE) and Brierwood Center (12001-12005 NE 12th St), two shopping centers within the Wilburton TOD area, to share information on the initiative.
- Engaging Bellevue was used as an [online engagement platform](#) throughout the process to distribute materials and continue engagement outside of scheduled meetings with community.
- Public engagement information was posted to the Engaging Bellevue website, Facebook, LinkedIn, and NextDoor.

City Publications

- Updates regarding the Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative and information about opportunities to participate were posted to *Neighborhood News* in September 2022 and August 2023.
- Articles highlighting the Wilburton Vision Implementation initiative appeared in the winter/spring 2023 edition of *It's Your City*.

AMENDMENT NOTICE

Notice of the application was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on May 5, 2022, and mailed and posted as required by [LUC 20.35.420](#). Notice of Intent to adopt amendments as required by RCW 36.70A.106 was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on February 29, 2024. Notice of the May 1 Final Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on April 11 and included notice sent to parties of record.

Public comments come in throughout the process. Public comments submitted in connection with the City's environmental review for the Comprehensive Plan/Wilburton EIS, as well as responses to those comments, were included in the FEIS (see [Bellevue 2044 Environmental Review](#) webpage). Comments and summary of input from Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement activities are included on [Engaging Bellevue](#).

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Planning Commission Resolution for the Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA
- B. Staff Report
- C. Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments (strike-underline) for Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Subarea Plan
- D. Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments (strike-underline) for BelRed Subarea Plan
- E. Proposed Future Land Use Map for Wilburton TOD area
- F. Proposed Subarea Boundary Adjustments for Wilburton/N.E 8th Street and BelRed Subareas