

## **CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

### **SUBJECT**

Review of the recommended Comprehensive Plan update.

### **STAFF CONTACT**

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### **POLICY FOUNDATION**

#### Comprehensive Plan

The *Bellevue Comprehensive Plan* is the foundational policy document that sets overall City policy direction on a wide range of topics, from growth and development to transportation, parks, utilities, economic development, human services, and other topics. The update responds to the state Growth Management Act requirement to periodically update the plan, and addresses local needs to ensure that the plan remains relevant and responsive to community values. The state deadline for adoption is June 2015.

### **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information

The Planning Commission's recommendation for updating the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan was presented at the April 6, 2015, Study Session, where the Council heard from the chair persons of all six boards and commissions that participated in the update. Study Sessions have been scheduled for April 20, 27, May 11 and June 1 for the Council to review policies and topics in detail before taking action on the updated plan. This Study Session presents information about the Neighborhoods; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Urban Design and the Arts; and Economic Development elements.

***Please bring your copies of the recommended Comprehensive Plan to the meeting.***

### **BACKGROUND**

The Comprehensive Plan captures the community's vision for the future of Bellevue, sets foundational policy that directs City actions and decisions, and helps guide capital investments. Every seven to ten years Bellevue is required to update its Comprehensive Plan to ensure continued compliance with the state Growth Management Act and, just as important, to ensure it reflects the dynamic changes and trends that affect the growth of the community. More than meeting a state requirement, Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan has been a fundamental part of the community's vision for the future since the beginning of the City. The last major update of the Comprehensive Plan was in 2004.

## **Project Objectives**

At initiation of the project, the City Council provided direction on the update to ensure that it:

- Fully captures the community's long range vision for the future
- Remains relevant to the community, decision makers and staff
- Comprehensively addresses long-term needs of the community, economy and environment
- Provides a strong policy foundation for City decisions and actions, especially related to infrastructure investments, neighborhoods, land use, environment and economic development
- Includes up to date information about the community
- Is consistent with state law, regional plans and court decisions.

Some of the components of the existing plan are relatively current and needed minimal updates. Other components were found to be significantly out of date and a number of changes are recommended. A key objective of the update is to make the whole plan more accessible and usable so that it remains an effective tool to guide growth.

## **Review of Board and Commission Recommendations**

At the April 6 Study Session, the Council heard from the chair persons of the Planning, Transportation, Human Services, Environmental Services, and Arts Commissions and the Parks and Community Services Board, where each chair summarized the review that they conducted and their commission's recommendation to the Council.

During the update the boards and commissions systematically reviewed every element in the plan and each policy line by line. While the plan includes updated background information, maps and graphics, the update focused on reviewing and amending the policies encompassed by the plan, which are the planning foundation that frames City efforts, such as functional plans and development regulations. Policy review tables were maintained that track the original policy, considered revisions, and the recommendations of the boards and commissions. These policy tables are posted on the project website for the public's review. The Comprehensive Plan update also streamlines the plan, clarifies language, and consolidates policies in order to improve the usability of the document. The City received positive comments that the draft plan is more readable and more enjoyable to read with colorful graphics, photos and more detailed maps.

The Comprehensive Plan includes fourteen elements (or chapters) that categorize the vision and policies of the plan in Volume 1. Volume 2 includes a limited set of amendments to the City's subarea plans to implement the Eastgate/I-90 project, to adjust the Downtown boundary, and to include a change to support the Surrey Downs Park master plan. Volume 2 also includes a number of transportation facility plans that are recommended to be consolidated into a single long-range transportation facility project list.

The Council review process allows for several Study Sessions to review the individual elements of the plan one by one. For this April 20 Study Session, summaries of the Neighborhoods, Parks, Urban Design and the Arts, and Economic Development elements are attached.

Each element includes a number of policies that are import to the community. The summaries point to the significant changes recommended in the update and key issues that were identified and addressed during the process. As Council reviews the recommended policies you may wish to consider these questions:

- Is it clear what is recommended for change?
- Do the individual elements and policies support and provide sufficient direction to advance the Community Vision over the long term?
- Is the plan clear, reasonably concise and useful in guiding City actions and providing a strong policy foundation for City decisions and actions, especially related to infrastructure investments, neighborhoods, land use, environment and economic development?
- At a foundational level, does the plan comprehensively address long-term needs of the community, economy and environment?
- Is there need for additional information about this topic?
- Are there gaps or concerns about the recommendation that require follow up?

Issues and questions identified during the Council’s review will be brought back for additional review at the June 1 Study Session or at interim Study Sessions as time permits.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Study Sessions are proposed to provide Council the ability to review each individual chapter of the plan. The following draft schedule organizes the topics of the Comprehensive Plan. The schedule could be adjusted as necessary.

### **Draft Review Schedule** *(modified from that presented on April 6, 2015)*

April 6	<i>Completed</i> - Presentation of the boards and commissions of the recommended Comprehensive Plan update
April 20	Neighborhoods; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Urban Design and the Arts; Economic Development
April 27	Citizen Engagement, Land Use, Housing, Transportation
May 11	Human Services, Utilities, Capital Facilities, Environment, Subareas
June 1	Recap and issue follow up; Integration of annual amendments
June 15	Tentative adoption action

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Neighborhoods Element Summary
2. Economic Development Element Summary
3. Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element Summary
4. Urban Design and the Arts Element Summary

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

1. Draft Comprehensive Plan – Planning Commission Recommendation
2. Planning Commission Transmittal dated March 25, 2015
3. Letters and memos from the individual boards and commissions are attached to the Planning Commission transmittal.
4. Project Public Engagement Report
5. Public Review Draft Comments
6. Policy review tables