

## LAND USE ELEMENT SUMMARY

### VISION

BELLEVUE GROWS IN A MANNER THAT ENHANCES THE LIVABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY, WHILE MAINTAINING THE ELEMENTS THAT RESIDENTS CHERISH. *Growth in Bellevue is focused in denser mixed use centers, like Downtown, BelRed, and Eastgate, while maintaining the city's outstanding natural environment and the health and vitality of established residential neighborhoods.*

### MAJOR THEMES & DRIVERS

The Land Use Element is one of the fundamental components of the Comprehensive Plan. Within the Land Use Element the city sets expectations for future job and housing growth and establishes a framework for other parts of the plan, which helps ensure that an appropriate mix of land uses are available to support the city's economic goals, provide services to residents, and provide an array of choices for where to live. The Land Use Element guides development of commercial, industrial, office and residential areas and their distribution throughout the city. The Land Use Element also helps protect sensitive uses and the character of established neighborhoods, while allowing the city to change and evolve over time to meet the needs of its current and future residents.

The overall direction of the Land Use Element is to continue to focus growth Downtown and in other mixed use areas, while protecting the character of residential neighborhoods. With most single family areas now largely built out, about half of future growth is expected to occur in Downtown Bellevue. A large share is also forecast to occur in BelRed with smaller amounts expected in Wilburton and Eastgate. Downtown is anticipated to continue as a major regional commercial center and new mixed use developments will blossom around light rail stations.

The 2004 update established direction to systematically review plans for the city's employment centers. Intentional changes to land use designations and regulations have occurred through these reviews over the last ten years to Crossroads, Wilburton, BelRed, Downtown and Eastgate, which has provided the city with sufficient capacity to continue to grow and attract economic development. The current Comprehensive Plan update integrates these changes and incorporates the land use designations for the Eastgate area consistent with the updated vision for the area from the Eastgate/I-90 project.

### SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

**Growth strategy and updated forecasts and targets.** Population and employment targets have been updated consistent with the Council's ratified 2006-2031 growth targets (LU-3). The city's

growth strategy directs most future housing and job growth to Downtown Bellevue and other areas designated for compact, mixed use developed served by a full range of transportation options (LU-1). The growth strategy also calls for maintaining the health of single family and multifamily residential neighborhoods and providing a range of commercial services.

**Schools.** The updated plan seeks to better address the role of education and schools in the community. New Land Use policy (LU-X3) supports working with the school district on the siting of new schools (anticipated to be needed to respond to growth) and the master planning of large institutions (LU-11), including Bellevue College, as a means to emphasize community compatibility.

**Recognizing mixed use centers.** In addition to recognizing Downtown as an Urban Center, new policy supports the development of compact, livable and walkable mixed use centers in BelRed, Eastgate, Factoria, Wilburton and Crossroads (LU-28 and X4).

**Light Industrial Lands.** Following an analysis of Bellevue's industrial lands, policy (LU-34) was updated to support maintaining a critical supply of Light Industrial lands in the Richards Valley area and other appropriate areas to serve local needs.

**Support for neighborhoods.** Although the existing Land Use element includes several policies supporting Bellevue's neighborhoods (LU-19-27), these policies require some updates to stay current with the changes that have happened in Bellevue over the last ten years and to capture community aspirations. New policy (LU-X5) supports community efforts to maintain, their local, distinctive character.

**Placemaking.** New policy (LU-X6) supports the placemaking value of arts and cultural facilities.

**Families.** New policy (LU-X7) encourages the development of amenities, services and facilities that support all types of families.

**Annexation.** Bellevue has essentially completed annexation of the city's designated potential annexation area. Only a handful of parcels remain in the city's potential annexation area. For this reason, the recommended plan replaces the Annexation Element with a reduced set of policies in the Land Use and Utilities elements.

## **ISSUES/MAJOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION TOPICS**

**Role of faith based institutions.** The role and changing nature of religious institutions in the community continues to evolve. Religious institutions are protected by state and federal laws that broadly allow uses related to religious belief. Now, some religious institutions include uses such

as thrifts shops, day cares, homeless shelters, and housing that may not have been originally contemplated when the facilities were first established. While new policy could potentially begin to define a broad city approach to religious institutions, circumstances are often unique to each individual facility and there was concern that any new policy would not increase clarity of an issue that is largely defined by federal and state law. After reviewing this issue the Planning Commission and staff conclusion is not to add new policy guidance on this matter.

**Neighborhood Centers.** Existing policy encourages the maintenance of neighborhood centers and new neighborhood retail areas in a manner compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods. While this policy direction is maintained (LU-25-27), the city will need to continue to look for strategies to support the health of shopping centers with excess vacancies or in need of redevelopment.

**Eastgate/I-90.** The Citizen Advisory Committee for the Eastgate/I-90 project recommended a number of plan changes to advance the vision for the corridor, improve economic opportunity, increase opportunities for local services, and develop a better connection to Bellevue College. The recommendations of the CAC report have been incorporated in the updated Comprehensive Plan and will be reviewed in greater detail at an upcoming Study Session.