

## URBAN DESIGN & THE ARTS ELEMENT SUMMARY

### URBAN DESIGN & THE ARTS VISION FOR 2035

BELLEVUE CREATES EXTRAORDINARY PLACES FOR PEOPLE, AND EMBRACES THE ARTS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

*Through keen attention to urban design, Bellevue's new buildings are contributing to the memorability, livability and character of the City and its neighborhoods. Rich expressions of arts and culture are found throughout the City; they are embraced by residents and "must see" attractions for visitors.*

### MAJOR THEMES & DRIVERS

The Urban Design & the Arts Element is focused on people and design. It guides both private development and public investments to create a city that is engaging, aesthetically appealing and functionally understandable, and a great place to live. Ultimately, the policies in this element strive to enhance the character of the community, the city as a whole, and each of its distinct neighborhoods. This is accomplished through design of the built environment and the support of a rich array of cultural and artistic experiences.

As the name implies, this element plays a key role in the design review process for new development. It guides the design of city facilities and provides direction for enhancing city streets and boulevards. As the primary location of arts-related policies, this element guides the efforts and defines the vision of the Arts Program.

Policy updates and changes are proposed in response to public engagement efforts as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update process and the Downtown Livability Initiative, with additional changes recommended by the Planning and Arts commissions. The Arts Commission focused specifically on a new section of policies dedicated to Arts and Culture, while the Planning Commission reviewed the new urban boulevard maps and the overall element.

### SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

**Arts & Culture.** Interest in providing clearer recognition of the City's support for the arts led to proposing a new Arts & Culture subsection (policies UD-X1, 36, X2, X3, 35, 37, and X4). The Urban Design Element is the primary home to arts-related policies. No other element directly addresses the community vision of being the arts and cultural center of the Eastside. This expanded section supports the city's Arts Program, development of and access to arts and cultural facilities throughout Bellevue, improving arts education for all skill levels, and supporting artists and arts groups working in the community.

**Sustainability in Design.** Proposed policy additions UD-X6, X7 encourage the integration of environmental technologies in building design, such as the use of green roofs and walls and the use of solar panels and other energy-efficient technologies.

**Building Design.** Policy changes distinguish between broad citywide design objectives and those that apply specifically to new building design. These policies continue to seek to encourage attractive built environments that convey an excellence in architecture, site design and construction. Policy on building top signs (UD-74) is updated to improve consistency with past updates to the city's sign code.

**Neighborhood Centers.** New and updated policies UD-X14, 59, X19 reinforce the importance of neighborhood centers to the surrounding community and help incorporate the character of the surrounding community into the design as well as to improve access to surrounding neighborhoods.

**Pedestrian experience.** New and updated policies UD-75, 66, 40, X18, X19 support making pedestrian areas comfortable, safe and attractive places that people enjoy as part of their neighborhoods, not just as a means of getting from A to B. This relates to aging in place and public health, by making walking easier and safer. Policy changes focus on creating an active and engaging pedestrian experience Downtown and in other mixed use centers. In addition to the pedestrian experience, policy UD-38 supports alternative sidewalk and street designs that minimize environmental impacts.

**Street Trees.** The health and distribution of street trees is an important aspect of maintaining the city's tree canopy and "City in a Park" character. New policy UD-X17 supports use of appropriate street trees and providing adequate space to prevent damage to sidewalks and infrastructure.

**Urban Boulevards.** The current Urban Boulevards map helps identify arterial streets for enhanced landscaping and design treatment that goes beyond standard to help express the character of the city and establish gateways. However, the current designation provides no distinction between neighborhood streets like 119th Avenue SE in Newport Hills and through-city boulevards like NE 8th Street. The update includes two new maps and updates to policies (UD-42, X18, and X19) to recognize the distinct roles and design intent of city boulevards, scenic boulevards, and neighborhood shopping streets. In addition, new policy UD-X20 supports working with neighborhoods to identify safe neighborhood greenways to provide local access to parks, schools and services.

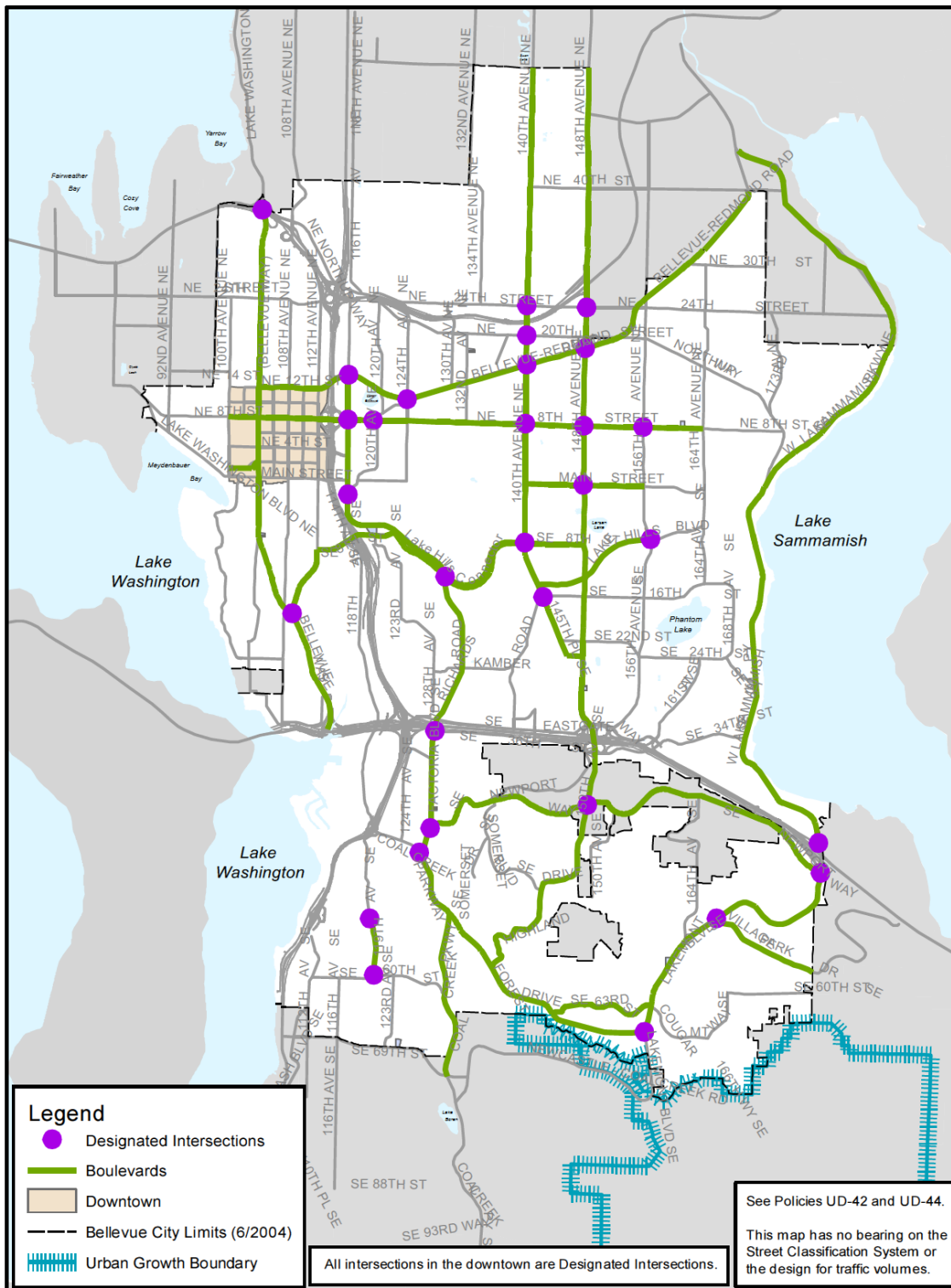
## **ISSUES/MAJOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION TOPICS**

**Arts Facilities.** Over the coming years the Arts Program will continue to work with the community to identify strategies to support the development of both regional and local arts facilities. The economics and affordability of arts space is an increasing challenge for individual artists as well as for major facilities. As land values and rents rise, affording studio, office, shop, and performance space becomes an increasing challenge. The Arts Commission has recognized this as a perennial problem. While the policies recommended in the plan provide support for art facilities they also open the door to discussing this challenging economic issue that will require more work.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Any questions about what is recommended for change?
- Any additional information needed on this topic?
- Any gaps or concerns to follow up on?

## Current Urban Design Treatment Map



**FIGURE UD.1**  
**Urban Design Treatment**  
**For Boulevards and Designated Intersections**



This map designates streets and intersections that play a significant role in establishing the city’s design character. See Policy UD-42 for a description of City Boulevards, Policy UD-\_\_ (NEW-18) for a description of Scenic Boulevards and Policy UD-44 for a description of Key City Entry and Neighborhood Identity Points, and Designated Intersections.



# URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

## Shopping Streets

This map designates key streets adjacent to neighborhood shopping centers and other neighborhood retail areas that offer the opportunity to operate as the local “main street” and support active retail uses. See Policy UD-\_\_ (NEW-19) for a description of Shopping Streets.

