

July 6, 2015

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Review of the recommended Comprehensive Plan update.

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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.

Growth Management Act

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.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

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

This Study Session continues and potentially concludes the Council's review of the recommended update to the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council reviewed the draft Comprehensive Plan at eight Study Sessions this spring following the presentation of the Planning Commission's recommendation on April 6, 2015. This Study Session will review specific items related to Transportation, Environment and Urban Design and provide an opportunity to confirm any other changes to the draft plan. At the conclusion of this Study Session staff will ask for Council direction to bring forward an ordinance for adoption, scheduled for July 20.

Please bring your copies of the recommended Comprehensive Plan to the meeting. The Council may also want to bring your hard copies of the "policy review tables" (strike-drafts showing policy evolution), also available in your electronic document library.

BACKGROUND

Following the presentation of the Planning Commission's recommendation for updating the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council has reviewed each element of the plan and considered changes to a number of individual policies. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's foundational

policy document that captures the community's vision for the future of Bellevue, directs City actions and decisions, and helps guide capital investments. This update responds to a state Growth Management Act requirement to conduct a major review and update of local plans every seven to ten years. The update also seeks to ensure that the plan continues to reflect the dynamic changes and trends that affect the growth of the community.

Council's review of the update is based on the recommendation of the Planning Commission, which is the result of more than two years of work and dozens of Study Sessions considering policies one by one. The Planning Commission's draft was substantially informed by the recommendations of the Arts Commission, Environmental Services Commission, Human Services Commission, Parks and Community Services Board, and Transportation Commission, which reviewed those sections and policies related to their individual areas of expertise. The work of the boards and commissions was also informed by an extensive, multi-pronged public engagement effort that ranged from formal venues, such as a public hearing, to new, innovative techniques, such as an online contest to generate the "best ideas" for Bellevue.

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.

Proposed Update

The recommended update to the plan does not "start over." Rather the update builds from the current plan and continues to support many of its existing strategies, including investing in a strong Downtown neighborhood, revitalizing commercial areas, protecting neighborhoods, and enhancing the character of the city, as a "City in a Park." Therefore, some of the components of the existing plan needed minimal updates. Other parts of the plan see significant changes to address new and evolving conditions or to bring components up to date. A key overall objective of the update is to make the whole plan more accessible and usable so that it is an effective tool to guide growth.

While this update of the Comprehensive Plan builds from the current 2004 edition, it makes a number of significant changes that bring the plan up to date and look forward to the future. As a base, the update addresses out of date facts and figures. Policies were reviewed for consistency with state law and regional plans. City information was updated to recognize the current geographic extent of the city, following recent annexations.

Some of the key themes addressed by the update include:

Vision – The plan includes a new community vision that updates the vision set by the current Comprehensive Plan, is integrated with the Council’s vision and explicitly links to each element of the plan. This Vision looks out to what the City will be like in 2035 and serves as a framework for the entire Comprehensive Plan. The Vision furthers the community interest in a strong, growing Downtown and healthy mixed use and neighborhood centers, while preserving and enhancing natural areas and open spaces that make Bellevue a “City in a Park.” The Vision recognizes the value of Bellevue’s attractive neighborhoods and the strength of its diverse population.

Growth Strategy – The plan extends the planning horizon and anticipates growth of 15,800 housing units and 51,800 jobs by 2035. With few areas left to annex or available for raw land development, the vast majority of growth will be accommodated through redevelopment in Downtown Bellevue or in other mixed use centers, including Bel-Red, Eastgate, Factoria, Wilburton and Crossroads.

Diversity – In the decade since the last major plan update, Bellevue has become one of the most diverse cities in the state. The population is increasingly more ethnic and is also growing older. The Comprehensive Plan considers this change to the community in terms of its economy, neighborhoods, housing, community services and human services, and how the community engages with the City. The plan seeks to make public engagement open and accessible for all.

New Neighborhoods Element – The updated plan includes a new Neighborhoods Element that creates a “home” for neighborhood issues. It also frames the neighborhood/subarea area plan update process, planned to occur following conclusion of the Comprehensive Plan update.

New Neighborhood Areas – Related to the Neighborhood Element, the plan includes a comprehensive update of neighborhood area (subarea) boundaries. The older boundaries had not been updated in many years. These new boundaries better match areas with which people self-identify and will create a stronger base for neighborhood area planning. In addition to the citywide review of the boundaries, the plan includes a minor adjustment of the Downtown boundary in three specific areas that will help to regularize the current boundary without impacting the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Housing – Housing received more comments than any other topic during review of the draft plan and at the public hearing. While the current Housing Element includes a robust set of housing policies, this update increases emphasis on housing affordability, housing for seniors and addressing homelessness.

Utilities – This update adds new policies supporting widespread access to high-speed internet service to support the City’s ideal of being a connected community. The plan also includes a combination of new and established policies to address the need to mitigate the impacts of

new electrical facilities and to support identifying new funding opportunities for undergrounding and mitigation.

Multimodal transportation – Strong support for non-motorized transportation came early in the process during the “Best Ideas” campaign in 2013 and recently from the online open house for the draft plan review. The update continues to support a comprehensive transportation system that addresses the mobility needs of all people. The update places an increased emphasis on addressing all modes of travel, whether by car, bus, train, bicycle or walking.

Economic development – The plan works to preserve and strengthen the City’s economic position through a combination of supporting business development, becoming increasingly connected globally, supporting economic opportunity for all citizens, and by creating a quality environment where people want to live, work and shop.

Environmental preservation – Over the last decade there has been increased community interest in environmental preservation even as the City continues to become more urban in some neighborhoods. To support the city’s image as a “City in a Park” and to respond to the threat to trees and open space from development and infrastructure projects, new Environment policy supports working towards a tree canopy target of 40% coverage and initiating an action plan for achieving it. The Environment Element also directs development of a community-level goal for greenhouse gas emissions and supports low impact development techniques that address stormwater impacts holistically.

Actions to Implement the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan sets the long-range policy direction for the City. While implementation of the plan may occur over many years, some of the key near-term actions that are anticipated to follow adoption of the plan include the following. These are new initiatives in addition to ongoing work, such as implementation of the Economic Development strategy.

- Continued planning for the City’s primary employment centers, including new direction for the Wilburton commercial area.
- Update of the City’s subarea/neighborhood area plans to respond to changing conditions in the city’s neighborhoods.
- Launching work on a Housing Strategy Plan to address opportunities to increase access to affordable housing, and development of a homeless shelter.
- Consistency updates to the Traffic Standards Code to update MMA boundaries as shown in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Development of the methodology to support a multi-modal transportation level of service and drafting of a Transportation Master Plan.
- Pedestrian and bicycle implementation initiative (underway).
- Follow through on new environmental policies, including development of an action plan to enhance the city’s tree canopy and work towards identifying Bellevue-specific goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Over the longer term, implementation of the plan will also occur through application of the policy framework it establishes for a wide range of City actions.

Round 2 Review

During the first several Study Sessions, Council received an overview of individual elements. During that ‘Round 1’ of review, specific items were identified for further discussion and potential policy changes.

This Round 2 review follows up on those specific items Council identified in Round 1 to discuss in greater detail. At the June 15 and 22 Study Sessions Council provided direction on a number of policy changes related to Citizen Engagement/Diversity, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities and Urban Design and the Arts. This Study Session will focus on remaining items from the Utilities and Urban Design and the Arts elements and will look at the items identified for review in the Transportation and Environment elements. These items are addressed individually in the attached tables.

Additional edits to resolve corrections identified in the draft and to respond to comments from the state Department of Commerce and the Puget Sound Regional Council are also addressed in the attached tables. The draft will be finalized to include renumbered policies and will be screened for typos and consistent formatting.

Miscellaneous Items

In addition to the specific issues and changes outlined per each element, there are other miscellaneous changes worth identifying to ensure Council direction on the draft. These include the following:

- **Citizen Engagement Element** – In the discussion of addressing community diversity, Council directed several edits to the Citizen Engagement Element that are documented in the attached summary of changes. Council directed policy language for some changes. Other changes were made with clear Council direction, although the precise wording was not viewed at that time. Those items can be confirmed on the summary of changes document (Attachment 5).
- **Land Use Element Correction** – The population figures on page 36 should be corrected to show a 2035 population of 160,400 to account for dormitory housing. This is captured on Attachment 5.
- **Consolidated Transportation Facilities Plan** – The draft plan consolidates multiple different long-range transportation facility plans into a single project list and updates project descriptions to be consistent with the proposed TFP (Transportation Facilities Plan). The new Comprehensive Transportation Project List and an annotated version are included as Attachment 7A and 7B.
- **Bel-Red naming** – Based on an urban design and character study, there is consideration of changing the name of Bel-Red to “BelRed” to strengthen the area’s identity as a neighborhood. Please see Attachment 8.
- **Subarea/Neighborhood area boundaries** – As noted above, the update includes a broad review and update of the boundaries of neighborhood areas. Please see Attachment 9, which provides detailed information about the individual boundary changes. The new boundaries retain some of the existing boundaries, while including a number of adjustments to better reflect the neighborhood areas with which people associate. These boundaries have been well vetted with neighborhood leaders over the past two years and

will serve as a foundation for upcoming neighborhood area plan updates. While no additional changes to the boundaries are recommended at this point, we want to ensure that Council is aware of the updated neighborhood areas and has the opportunity to review the boundaries in detail.

Staff welcomes identification of any other outstanding items that should be addressed prior to adoption.

NEXT STEPS

This Study Session provides an opportunity to work through the remaining items and changes that Council identified. At the conclusion of this review, Council will be asked to direct staff to prepare ordinances for adoption of the update (the draft umbrella ordinance is attached). The anticipated date of adoption is July 20.

Consistent with the state requirement to limit most Comprehensive Plan amendments to once a year, ordinances will also be drafted to allow for action on the amendments related to the Eastgate/I-90 project and the two proposed annual amendments – St. Luke's and Public Storage.

Immediately following adoption, staff will prepare an ordinance to update the Traffic Standards Code for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, minor updates to the Mobility Management Areas as shown in the Transportation Element. This could be brought forward on August 3.

OPTIONS:

1. Provide direction on the remaining policy issues and then direct staff to bring forward ordinances for Council action adopting update amendments to the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan on July 20.
In accordance with the requirements of the Growth Management Act, this update replaces Volume 1 and the Land Use Map of the existing Comprehensive Plan, and includes limited amendments to Volume 2, including updates to the Downtown Bellevue, Southwest Bellevue, Eastgate, Richards Valley, and Factoria subarea plans, and replacement of the transportation facilities plans. Consistent with the limitation on amending the Comprehensive Plan once annually, the update includes amendments related to the Eastgate/I-90 project and individual amendments related to St. Luke's and Public Storage.
2. Provide direction on the remaining policy issues and provide further guidance to staff on any other items needed to be resolved before the Council is ready to take action on the Comprehensive Plan update.
3. Provide alternative direction to staff regarding the update of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

If the July 6 Study Session provides sufficient opportunity for Council review of the remaining policy items for the Comprehensive Plan update, staff recommends proceeding with Option No. 1.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Urban Design & the Arts Element – Remaining Items
2. Utilities Element – Remaining Items
3. Transportation Element Items
4. Environment Element Items
5. Summary of Council Direction
6. Environment Element: Additional Information Regarding Greenhouse Gas and Tree Canopy Targets
- 7A. Comprehensive Transportation Project List
- 7B. Comprehensive Transportation Project List - Annotated
8. Bel-Red Naming Information
9. New Neighborhood Areas PowerPoint
10. Draft umbrella ordinance

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
7. Annotated Transportation Project List