



# Bellevue Planning Commission

January 24, 2018

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

### **SUBJECT**

Comprehensive Plan Amendments Overview

### **STAFF CONTACT(S)**

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### **POLICY ISSUES**

The purpose of this agenda item is:

1. To provide an overview of the annual process used to amend the City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan;
2. To discuss metrics for success based on the Growth Management Act; and
3. To discuss how the Planning Commission can evaluate the comprehensive plan amendment process' effectiveness and efficiency as it unfolds throughout 2018.

### **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

#### **ACTION**



#### **DIRECTION**



#### **INFORMATION ONLY**



The 2018 comprehensive plan amendment work program will dominate the Commission's year. There will be several publicly and privately initiated amendments with complex issues. It is important to understand the plan amendment process, the relationship to the Growth Management Act, the schedule, the requirements and the expectations. Several metrics of a successful plan amendment process well executed are included.

A parallel track to this year's plan amendment track is a process audit. This will be conducted throughout the year, and a suggested evaluative framework is proposed.

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

The Comprehensive Plan is a foundational policy document in that it is the basis upon which many other programs, expenditures, regulations and other actions are predicated and which affect the lives of every person living and working in Bellevue. The policies in this plan are far reaching and form and direct the land development code (a code that implements the comprehensive plan in part), direct long-term capital expenditures in a range of infrastructure, and guide the long-range land use development pattern of this community. The Plan is designed to be a readable, functional document, guiding Bellevue's future development and fulfilling the city's regional responsibilities in growth management. This plan is organized into two volumes:

- Volume 1 contains the community's Vision in the introduction, followed by the General Element chapters that contain goals and policies for each subject. These General Elements are required by

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the state Growth Management Act. Some of those include: Land Use, Neighborhoods, Housing, Transportation, Economic Development, Human Services and Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

- Volume 2 contains goals and policies of the subarea (or neighborhood area) plans and a consolidated list of long-range transportation facility projects. There are 16 sub-area or neighborhood areas in Bellevue.

### The Role of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the city's foundational policy document. It is the one place that various city plans and programs come together to work towards a single community vision for the future. As an "umbrella" document, the plan's policies guide other city plans, neighborhood area plans, spending on capital projects, development of regulations, and other programs and services, all of which affect the community in large or small ways. The Plan represents the confluence of land use planning, transportation planning and analysis, economic development, utility analysis around growth, and community building strategies.

A comprehensive plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the orderly and coordinated physical development of a city into the future. A comprehensive plan anticipates change and provides specific guidance for future legislative and administrative actions. It reflects the results of citizen involvement, technical analysis, and the judgment of decision makers. The maps, goals, and policies of the plan provide the basis for the adoption of regulations, programs, and services which implement the plan. The plan serves as a guide for zoning, infrastructure development, and developing community services. Because Bellevue has been remarkably successful in achieving consistency between the Comprehensive Plan, regulations, and actual development, the present physical design and function of the city has evolved in an orderly fashion that is aligned with community expectations.

### Planning Framework

A city's comprehensive plan is vital in preparing for future growth and emerging challenges such as traffic congestion, housing needs, and environmental stewardship. People need a safe and secure place to live, an economy that provides jobs, ways to get around, schools and colleges, and recreational opportunities. It is the city government's responsibility to provide public services and facilities, develop policies, and adopt regulations to guide the growth of a city that meets the needs of its people. The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan captures community goals and establishes specific policies that directly influence how our city will grow and change over time. It is also aspirational, addressing things the City may consider utilizing in the future (i.e. certain transportation demand technologies), but may not necessarily implement.

### How is the Plan implemented?

Adopting a plan is the first step toward shaping the city's future. Bellevue's implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is comprised of a combination of short-term and long-term actions. Some of the short-term actions include amending regulations such as the Land Use Code and the Traffic Standards Code, and approving rezones that match the plan's land use designation. Long-term actions include neighborhood area/subarea planning; monitoring, evaluating, and amending the plan as conditions change; and developing a capital investment program that allocates resources to projects that will spur the city's development in the direction envisioned in the plan.

## **Overview of the annual process used to amend the City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan**

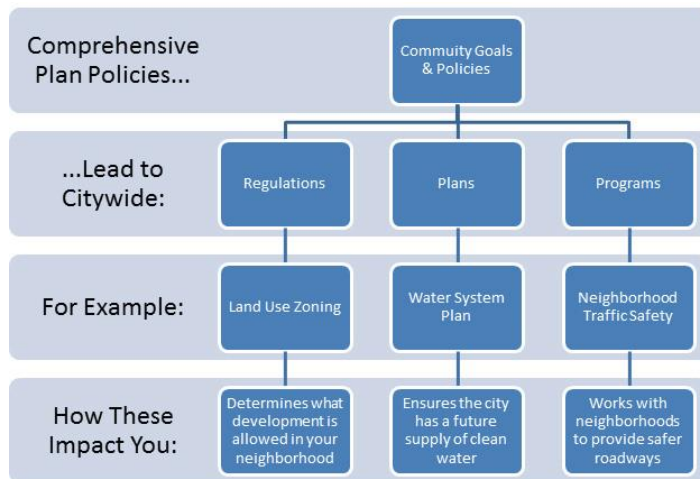
### **a. Purpose**

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- b. Annual timeline
- c. Who May Apply
- d. The Application
- e. Planning Commission Threshold Review determination
- f. Planning Commission Final Review and action
- g. City Council action on amendments



### Metrics for success based on the Growth Management Act

Several organizational metrics of success can be attributed to the Growth Management Act and the regulatory procedures established in the City Codes. Some of those include:

#### Process

1. Successful procedural steps. Were all the procedural steps conducted, in the proper order and in accordance with the timeframes required.
2. Documenting and transmitting decision-making in a sound manner. Is a recommendation made in a timely manner to Council allowing that body sufficient time to deliberate and act.

#### Content

3. Validating of GMA mandates by the state. Is the recommendation consistent with Growth Management Act mandates and is it internally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?
4. Recommendations to City Council are based on decision criteria. Is the recommendation made based on the decision criteria established in the Land Development Code? Are there obvious reasons established to demonstrate its consistency?
5. Articulate the difference between policy and code for parallel plan and code amendments. Is the recommendation for the plan amendment made based on policy and not land development regulations?
6. Cumulative effect. Do the plan amendment recommendations reflect consideration of their cumulative effect to the entire city?

## Public Engagement

7. Public engagement is early and continuous. Is there public engagement permitted throughout the plan amendment process starting with the beginning of the process?

Some of the citations from the RCW (Revised Code of Washington) include:

*“RCW 36.70A.130(1)(a): Each comprehensive land use plan and development regulations shall be subject to continuing review and evaluation by the county or city that adopted them...a city shall take legislative action to review, and if needed, revise its comprehensive land use plan and development regulations to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of this chapter... [36.70A Growth Management].”*

*“RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a): Each county and city shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program...that identifies procedures and schedules whereby updates, proposed amendments, or revisions of the comprehensive plan are considered by the governing body of the county or city no more frequently than once every year...”*

*“RCW 36.70A.130(2)(b): Except as otherwise provided in (a) of this subsection, all proposals shall be considered by the governing body concurrently so the cumulative effect of the various proposals can be ascertained...”*

### **How the Planning Commission can evaluate the comprehensive plan amendment process' effectiveness and efficiency as it unfolds throughout 2018.**

The Planning Commission has indicated an interest in reviewing the plan amendment process for efficiency and effectiveness. The Commission will be auditing the plan amendment process in 2018 in real time and discussions will be programmed throughout the year to solicit feedback.

Evaluating a process (such as the comprehensive plan amendment process) is different than evaluating a project (such as Downtown Livability). One possible means is to use some general criteria and use those as a basis for developing evaluative questions during each phase of the plan amendment process.

An example of general criteria might include:

- Relevance – The extent to which the objectives of the plan amendment process are consistent with the Growth Management Act and local needs.
- Efficiency – A measure of how economically resources/inputs (such as staff time, Commission time, noticing expenses) are converted to results.
- Effectiveness – The extent to which the plan amendment process' objectives were achieved given the process used.
- Impacts – The positive and negative impacts of the process on the stakeholders.
- Sustainability – The ability to sustain the process over time achieving with a resilience of risk to net benefit flows.

The evaluation would take place through discussion at various milestones throughout the process. Those might include scheduled points in the process and non-scheduled points. Examples of scheduled points may include: scoping and setting the plan amendment process calendar; threshold review; and Final Review. Non-scheduled points might include times when there was substantial public comment

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received that wasn't part of a public hearing, or if a situation arises in the process that requires a workaround.

A detailed, specific evaluation process could take several meetings to debate and decide and one isn't necessary. A commitment to having the dialog throughout the year and a simple framework in which to have it may be all that is needed.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

A. CPA Amendment and Procedures Guide