

May 29, 2018

## **CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

### **SUBJECT**

Initial discussion of initiation of the Neighborhood Area Planning Program.

### **STAFF CONTACTS**

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### **POLICY ISSUES**

Bellevue is a community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods. The City works to ensure Bellevue's neighborhoods enjoy a high-quality environment that facilitates a safe and welcoming community, have the ability to adapt to changing needs and preserve distinct elements of neighborhood character. Building from this foundation, the Council has recently identified the strategic implementation of the neighborhood planning process as one of its 3-year priorities for 2018 – 2020.

Initiation of the neighborhood area planning program is consistent with Comprehensive Plan guidance as described in the Neighborhoods Element:

*Dividing Bellevue into subareas is an effective way to address neighborhood needs and to focus planning efforts in small areas of the City. Subarea plans, written with direct citizen involvement, are a key element in maintaining stable land use patterns in the City. This stability is one measure of the high quality of life that citizens in Bellevue have come to expect.*

Several policies address the preparation of neighborhood area plans, including Policy N-13, which identifies the current neighborhood area planning boundaries.

- Policy N-12.** Periodically assess and update neighborhood area plans and adapt plans to changing conditions.
- Policy N-13.** Update neighborhood area plans consistent with the planning boundaries shown in Map N-1 (see Attachment A). For any given site, the 2014 subarea plan policies remain in effect until and unless they have been superseded by new planning area boundaries and policies.
- Policy N-14.** Use the neighborhood area planning process to engage local communities to define neighborhood area specific values and policies.
- Policy N-15.** Ensure neighborhood area plans and policies are consistent with the other policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

### **ACTION**



### **DIRECTION**



### **INFORMATION ONLY**



This presentation is for information only. After receiving public input on June 12, staff will return to Council to seek direction on how to proceed.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

As part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, Council directed staff to develop a new Neighborhoods chapter that recognizes that each neighborhood area has a unique and distinct character and establishes new neighborhood area boundaries that better align with topography, major arterials and how people perceive their neighborhoods. Based on this direction, the Comprehensive Plan established new boundaries for the 16 neighborhood areas (subareas) and, provides a pathway for residents to help their neighborhoods envision and plan for the future. New neighborhood area plans will clearly articulate each neighborhood area's singular character and include strategies for how to adapt to change while preserving what is valued.

The objectives of the program are:

1. To develop neighborhood plans that reflect current Citywide and neighborhood priorities and address issues and opportunities that are relevant to neighborhood residents.
2. To conduct a planning process that is based on a collaborative partnership between the City and neighborhoods; to expand community capacity for neighborhood leadership that will carry forward beyond this planning process.

## **Neighborhood Area Plan Contents**

While the content of each neighborhood area plan will be unique and tailored to fit the pertinent neighborhood area, all neighborhood area plans will follow a consistent organizational structure and format. A uniform structure for all neighborhood area plans will make it easier for readers to use the document, support a more efficient planning process, and reinforce awareness that each neighborhood element is part of the larger Comprehensive Plan.

As shown in Attachment B, all neighborhood area plans will include:

- *Community profile* – key information provided in a graphical and succinct style.
- *Neighborhood opportunities map* – areas of opportunity and concern identified by residents.
- *Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan* – discussion of how the neighborhood plan fits into the Comprehensive Plan.
- *Vision, goals and strategies* – vision, goals and priority strategies identified through the planning process. Although the emphasis will be on strategies and actions, broader policies may be included if not addressed elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan.

When complete, the new neighborhood area plans will:

- identify key priorities and initiatives in each neighborhood area,
- identify neighborhood-based actions that can help support neighborhood and Citywide priorities,
- provide updated information to help inform future Comprehensive Plan updates, and

- result in an outcome in which neighborhood residents and businesses have a strong sense of ownership.

Neighborhood plans will occur within the framework of the City's values, vision and adopted policies and regulations. For example, a neighborhood plan could advocate for neighborhood-specific actions to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety or for neighborhood-specific measures to support neighborhood character as infill development occurs.

Neighborhood plans will not propose direction that conflicts with Citywide policy guidance or expressed priorities, propose direction that will result in a Citywide or regional impact or limit the ability of private property owners to exercise reasonable use of their property. For example, a neighborhood plan could not change the function or connectivity of the City's designated transportation network or the Citywide growth strategy established in Volume I of the Comprehensive Plan.

For a description of what is included, or not included in a Neighborhood Area Plan (see Attachment C).

### **Work Program**

The work program is organized into several phases of activity that will allow participants to share information about what is unique and distinctive in their neighborhood, identify priorities, and consider strategic options in a logical and transparent manner.

The following summarizes and provides examples of work that would occur in each phase of the work program (see Attachment D for additional information and anticipated work products).

#### *Project Initiation: Building a foundation for success*

- **Overview:** Start-up and internal project organization activities, data collection, early project publicity, informal outreach and launch of an interactive project website.
- **Timeline:** 2 months
- **Outcomes:** Project schedule, public engagement plan, draft plan sections (Introduction, Community Profile), project website, project collateral, early outreach

#### *Discovery: What is important to us?*

- **Overview:** Two-way conversation promoting shared understanding of issues and identification of neighborhood priorities. For example, issues could include tree preservation, traffic calming, community character, housing affordability and others. Provide background research and data to support topical conversations.
- **Timeline:** 2 – 3 months
- **Outcomes:** Inventory of neighborhood issues and concerns, identification of top 3 – 5 priorities for additional work, draft plan sections (Neighborhood Issues and Opportunities, Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan)

*Develop and Refine Strategies: What actions should we take?*

- **Overview:** Work together to turn preliminary ideas into fully developed strategies for potential inclusion in the plan. If helpful in planning, implement a tactical urbanism project – i.e., a small demonstration project or event to help inform decisions.
- **Timeline:** 4 - 6 months
- **Outcomes:** Inventory of neighborhood issues and concerns, draft plan section (Neighborhood Vision and Action Strategy), preliminary draft compiled plan

*Review and validation: What did we choose and do we agree?*

- **Overview:** Confirm understandings, resolve outstanding issues and achieve agreement on strategies. Use meetings, instant polling, online surveys and other methods to invite feedback and gather opinions on the preliminary draft plan.
- **Timeline:** 4 - 6 months
- **Outcomes:** Revised draft recommended plan

*City review and action: Adopting our neighborhood area plan*

- **Overview:** Legislative process to review and adopt the draft neighborhood plan as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- **Timeline:** 3 months
- **Outcomes:** Final City action on the neighborhood area plan

**Timeline**

Two neighborhood area plans will be prepared annually. To maximize public participation, the proposed timeline would generally follow the school-year calendar, publicly kicking-off in September and concluding in June. Summers will focus on Planning Commission and City Council review of the prior year's draft plans and staff preparation for the upcoming year's pending plans. While alignment with the school year is recommended, this timeline is flexible and can be set up to work at any time over the course of a year (see Attachment E).

**Public Engagement**

In support of the neighborhood planning process, public engagement goals are to:

- Facilitate a meaningful public dialogue tailored to each neighborhood and leading to a plan that is relevant to the neighborhood.
- Engage with and incorporate the perspectives of all residents, including those who have been historically under-represented.
- Enrich knowledge and understanding of neighborhood and Citywide issues, priorities and opportunities.
- Establish communication channels that are flexible, accessible, transparent and welcoming.

A draft public engagement plan for the neighborhood planning program has been developed and contains information about audiences, key messages, methods and a menu of potential public engagement activities and criteria and measures of success. Individual neighborhood-level plans tailored to specific neighborhood interests and needs will be developed at the start of each neighborhood area planning project.

In all cases, public engagement will include opportunities for interaction both through in-person and online activities. Examples of in-person methods include traditional workshops, public meetings and small group meetings, as well as walking tours, youth/school involvement, neighborhood-sponsored photography, story-telling, artist-supported activities and others. Multi-lingual translation and interpretation services will be incorporated, including meetings set-aside for non-English speakers based on individual neighborhood needs and interests. Online activities will include project background and updates, interactive forums, surveys, questions and answers, story-telling, interactive maps and opportunities to post photos.

Planned initial engagement activities include:

- In-person - a kick-off meeting, as well as potential walking tours, small group meetings, school activities and opportunities for StoryCorp recordings, depending on interests.
- Online - an interactive website, online survey tools, opportunities to post photos and participate in discussion forums and project update information on a regular basis.

### **Next Steps**

1. Staff will meet with neighborhood leaders on June 12 (City Hall, 6 – 8 p.m.) to provide an overview of the proposed neighborhood planning process and get feedback on key issues in each of the neighborhood areas and ways to enhance local participation in planning process.
2. Report back to Council with feedback from neighborhood meeting and recommendations for next steps.

### **OPTIONS**

N/A

### **RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Neighborhood Areas Map
- B. Neighborhood area plan outline
- C. What is a neighborhood plan?
- D. Project work program
- E. Project timeline

### **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

N/A