

Downtown Livability Initiative

Transmittal of Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Recommendations



Bellevue City Council Study Session *January 20, 2015*



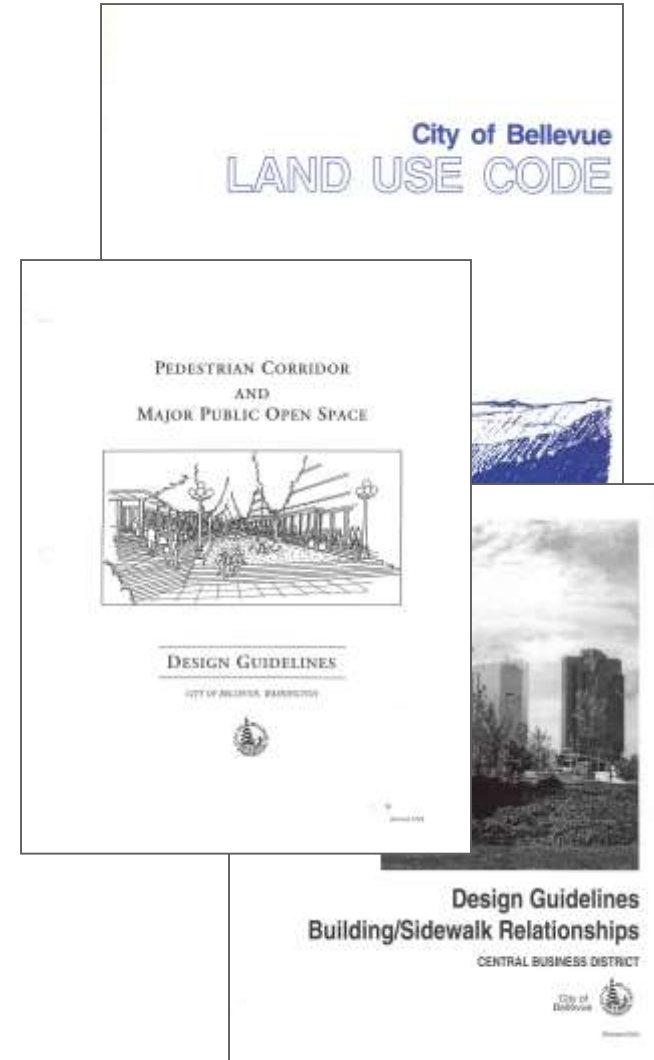
Broader Livability Strategy

- Public Safety
- Schools
- Pedestrian Safety and Convenience
- ADA Access
- Traffic Capacity
- Bicycle Access
- Public Transit
- Parks
- “Grand Connection”



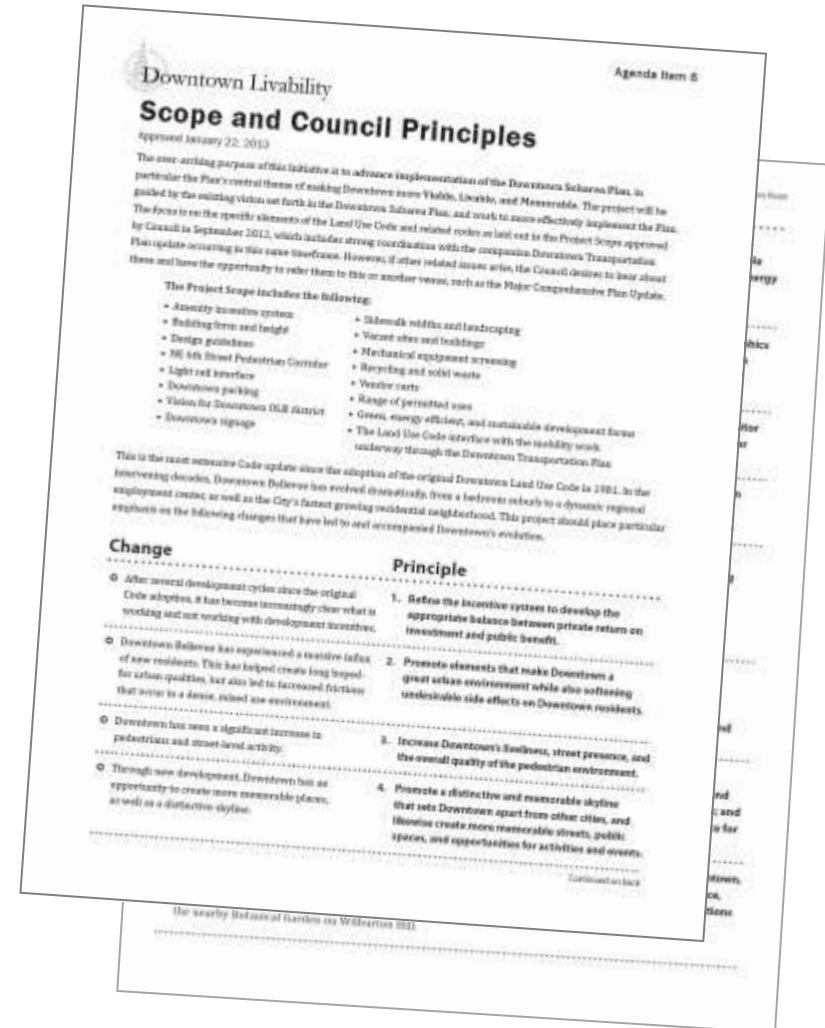
Focus of the Livability Initiative

- Targeted review of regulations that guide Downtown development and land use activity
- Important to set the stage for future development; most extensive update since original 1981 Land Use Code
- Incorporates elements from Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link planning
- Implements Downtown Subarea Plan
- **Tonight: Presentation of Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Final Report**



Council Principles

- Series of 12 principles built upon *What's Changed*
- Providing guidance as project progresses



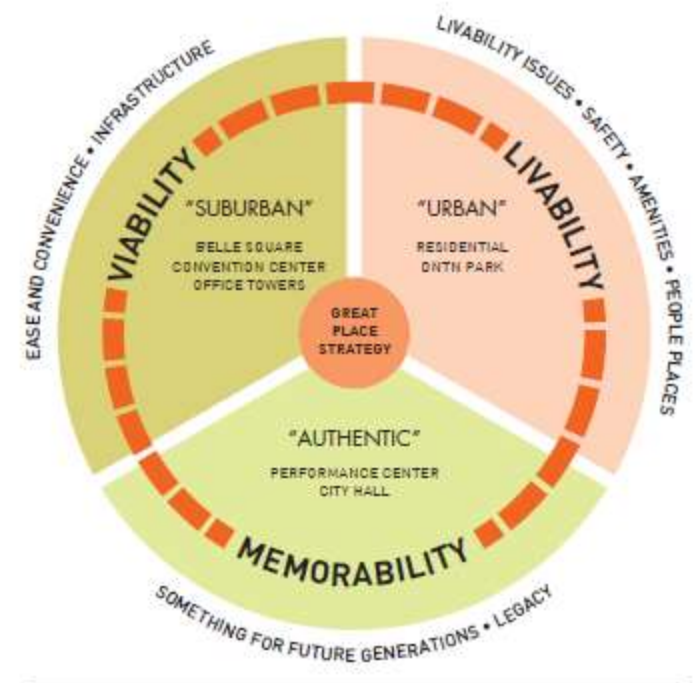
Citizen Advisory Committee

- Council-appointed CAC tasked with studying and recommending updates to Downtown Land Use Code
- CAC held 13 meetings from May 2013-June 2014
- Public comment accepted at all meetings
- CAC's recommendations now being formally transmitted to Council

MEMBER	REPRESENTATION
Aaron Laing (co-chair)	Planning Commission
Ernie Simas (co-chair)	Transportation Commission
Hal Ferris	Planning Commission
Erin Powell	Parks & Community Services Board
Jan Stout	Human Services Commission
Brad Helland	Environmental Services Commission
Trudi Jackson	Arts Commission
Patrick Bannon	Bellevue Downtown Association
Gary Guenther	Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
Ming Zhang	Small business representative
Michael Chaplin	Architect
Mark D'Amato	Downtown resident
Lee Maxwell	Resident from nearby neighborhoods
Loretta Lopez	City-wide representative

What is Livability?

- Specific Objectives of the Downtown Livability Initiative
 - ▣ Better achieve the vision for downtown as a vibrant, mixed-use center
 - ▣ Enhance the pedestrian environment
 - ▣ Improve the area as a residential setting
 - ▣ Enhance the identity and character of downtown neighborhoods
 - ▣ Incorporate elements from Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link design work



Source: City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan.

Public Outreach

- Broad range of interested parties
- Open Houses
- Focus Groups
- Walking Tours
- Community Meetings
- Website



Land Use Code Audits

- Series “audits” summarized:
 - ▣ Existing code provisions and policies
 - ▣ Described results on the ground
 - ▣ Where codes and policies were working well and where they could be improved, and new opportunities
- Provided important foundation for considering potential Downtown Land Use Code changes

Study Area: Downtown Subarea

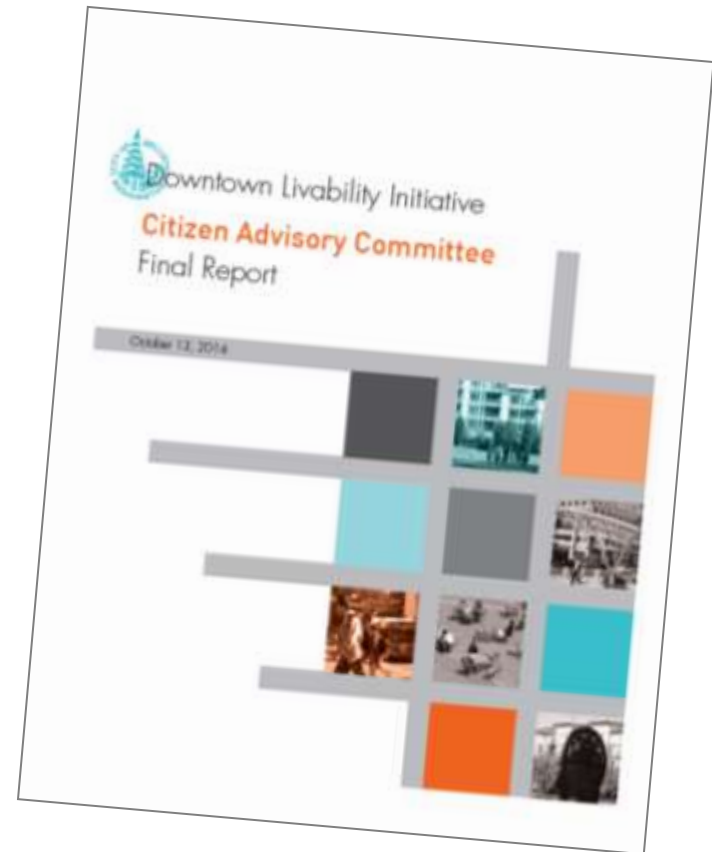
Lake Washington



	1980	2012 Existing	2030 Forecast
Jobs	10,600	43,300	70,300
Population	1,000	10,000	19,000

Committee Recommendations

- CAC developed code-related and non-code related recommendations based on alternatives evaluated against Council Principles and sets of evaluation criteria
 - ▣ Public Open Space
 - ▣ Pedestrian Corridor
 - ▣ Design Guidelines
 - ▣ Amenity Incentive System
 - ▣ Station Area Planning
 - ▣ Building Height & Form
 - ▣ Downtown Parking
 - ▣ Other Topics



Public Open Space

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Code-Related

- Open Space Expression – Identify and incentivize open space for each Downtown neighborhood, to help address each neighborhood's needs and character.
- Through-Block Connections – Strengthen requirements and guidelines for integrating through-block connections internal to superblocks.

Other Recommendations

- I-405 Open Space/Connection – Explore potential for significant open space/park lid over I-405 from Downtown to Wilburton.
- Funding Mechanism – Explore method for helping to fund Downtown open space acquisition and improvement.

RELATIONSHIP TO LIVABILITY

- Provides recreation, and open space for all
- Increased “greening” of Downtown
- Presents opportunities for social interaction, places for families, and a healthy community
- Promotes a walkable and safe healthy community
- Will reinforce neighborhood identity



Public Open Space

- = High priority, may be provided as part of development, city-initiated, or implemented through a public-private partnership
- ◐ = Priority, incentivized or developed through a public-private partnership

EXAMPLES OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS BY DISTRICT

Use/function/feature	Northwest Village	City Center North	Ashwood	Eastside Center	Old Bellevue	City Center South	East Main
New neighborhood park (city-owned)	●						●
Large plaza/mini park—min. size 4,000 SF	●	◐ ⁽¹⁾	◐	● ⁽²⁾		◐	◐
Small plaza with active edges min. size 1,000 SF, max 4,000 SF	◐	◐		◐ ⁽⁴⁾		◐	◐
Internal corridors / alleys with addresses	●					●	●
Streetscape / open space with landscape amenities	◐	◐	◐	◐	● ⁽³⁾	● ⁽³⁾	● ⁽³⁾
Community garden/pea patch	◐	◐	◐			◐	◐
Outdoor pet area	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Improvements made to city-owned parks	●		◐		◐		●
Recreational activities (e.g., children's play area, climbing wall, sports court)	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Major bicycle facility (e.g., repair stations storage, showers)				● ⁽⁵⁾	● ⁽⁵⁾	● ⁽⁵⁾	● ⁽⁵⁾

Pedestrian Corridor

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Code-Related

- Extend the Pedestrian Corridor to the east to integrate with Civic District and light rail station.
- Provide for mostly continuous weather protection.
- Identify methods to better activate the Corridor.
- Provide opportunities to add landscaping and green elements.
- Integrate bicycles and other wheeled users to coexist with pedestrians.

Other Recommendations

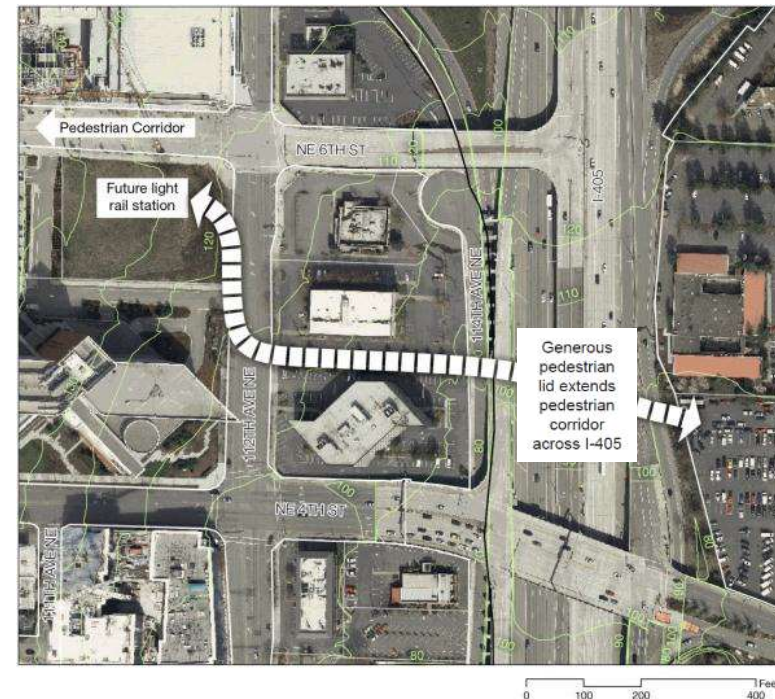
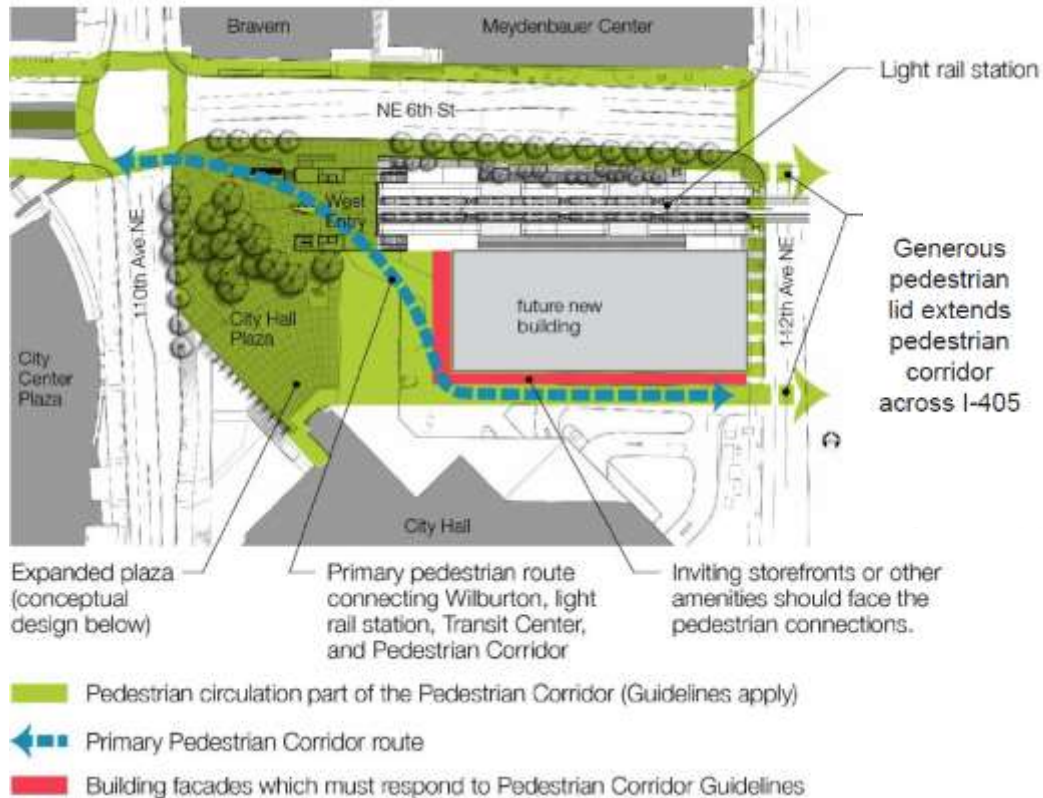
- Invest in key segments of the Corridor.
- Add pedestrian amenities (lighting, wayfinding).
- Investigate partnership opportunities.
- Seek creative funding for a grand design.
- Consider potential new identity for the Corridor.

RELATIONSHIP TO LIVABILITY

- Creating a must-see Downtown attraction
- Adding character and memorability
- Creating a more green Pedestrian Corridor
- Walkable, safe, and comfortable Downtown
- Encouraging multi-modal travel
- Opportunities for more programmed events
- Responding to emerging changes, including the NE 6th Street light rail station



Pedestrian Corridor



Design Guidelines

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Format:** Improve Code Clarity and Readability.
- **Content:**
 - **Building Frontages/Sidewalk Relationships** – Focus on quality of pedestrian experience.
 - **Pedestrian Circulation/Through-block Connections** – Map existing/conceptual locations to improve connectivity.
 - **Building and Public Realm Materials** – Emphasize permanence and durability and urban context.
 - **Façade Treatments** - Building massing and articulation with emphasis on building base, human scale, visual interest.
 - **Rooftop Design** – Promote a more memorable skyline. Address mechanical equipment screening.
 - **Public Views** – Emphasize views from major public spaces, such as the Downtown Park and Pedestrian Corridor.
 - **Reinforcing Neighborhood Character** – Emphasize the character and distinctiveness of Downtown neighborhoods.
 - **Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods** – Ensure development presents an appropriate interface with adjoining neighborhoods.
- **Procedures:**
 - Maintain the current administrative design review process
 - Allow greater flexibility through departures
 - Consider alternative process for projects that provide exceptional benefit

RELATIONSHIP TO LIVABILITY

- Design Guidelines influence development to create a functional, safe, aesthetically pleasing and sustainable Downtown.
- More beautiful, interesting, memorable Downtown
- Promotes walkability, and a healthy community
- Strengthens neighborhood character








Design Guidelines

Prototypical examples of proposed right-of-way designations.



OPTIONS FOR DESIGN OF THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

Frontage	Description	Examples
A. Retail Connection (12 ft. clear minimum – consistent with existing guidelines)	Retail storefronts with generous window transparency, pedestrian entries, weather protection, and outdoor seating/ dining areas.	
B. Residential Activation (6 ft. clear minimum)	Stoops or similar residential frontages with private individual entries, private individual patio frontages, lobbies/ common residential entries or other common facilities with generous transparency/ activation elements.	
C. Passive/Walk-through (6 ft. clear minimum)	Passive corridors that connect uses and open spaces and featuring landscaping, lighting, human scaled details, and other pedestrian amenities.	
D. Vehicular plus Pedestrian Access (6 ft. clear pedestrian access vehicular access TBD)	Connections could take the form of a low traffic route where autos and pedestrians share space) or separated access. Lighting, landscaping, and or other design element separates autos from pedestrians to create a safe and attractive pedestrian route. Frontages along the sides may be landscaped or building walls with transparency and human scaled details that add visual interest.	
E. Through-building connection (project specific)	Some building types lend themselves to through-block connections open to the public during business hours. Hotels, shopping, office buildings, and community uses may provide a safe and weather protected route through a block or large scale development.	

Other Downtown Code Topics

Topics to be covered through Design Guidelines

- Garbage collection
- Mechanical Equipment
- Vendor Carts/Food Trucks
- Vacant sites/ buildings
- Permitted Uses



Amenity Incentive System

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Update list of amenities.
 - Focus on amenities most important to achieving livability and desired future for Downtown.
 - Consider what needs to be incentivized vs. what market will do without incentives.
 - Provide flexibility to encourage creative design.
 - Amenities should help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity.
 - Modified incentive system must be feasible and act as a real incentive.
- Make weather protection a development requirement.
- Consider neighborhood-specific weighting.
- Develop method to consider alternative amenities.
- Recalibrate economics of amenity incentive system.

RELATIONSHIP TO LIVABILITY

- Opportunities for amenities to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity
- Potential to focus bonuses on the most important amenities
- Addition of new amenities that focus on livability and the future of Downtown
- Opportunities to encourage creative design
- Potential for added “lift” to incentive system through additional height and FAR



Existing Amenities & Potential New Amenities

Existing Amenities	Potential New Amenities
Public Gathering Spaces/Placemaking	
Major Pedestrian Corridor	Signature Streets
Pedestrian Oriented Frontage	Third Places, gathering places
	Farmers Market Space
Neighborhood-Serving Uses	
Public Meeting Rooms	None
Child Care Services	
Retail Food	
Space for Non-profit Social Services	
Parks/Green/Open Space	
Outdoor Plaza	Upper Level Plaza
Landscape Feature	Green Space/Open Space
Landscape Area	Pocket Parks & Urban Courtyards
Donation of Park Property	Green Streets Concepts
Residential Entry Courtyard	Landmark Tree Preservation
Active Recreation Area	Significant Tree Planting
Enclosed Plaza	Activated Rooftops
Parking	
Underground Parking	None
Above Grade Parking	
Above Grade Parking in Residential Bldg	
Housing	
Residential Uses	Affordable Housing
Arts and Culture	
Performing Arts Space	Art Space
Sculpture	Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources
Water Feature	
Design	
None	Iconic Features (i.e. rooftop, tower, etc.)
	Increased Setbacks for Light/Air
	Small Lot Interesting Architecture
	Sustainable Features/Practices
	Freestanding Canopies at Corners
	Pedestrian Bridges

Station Area Planning

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations for design guidelines call for activated areas and streetscape at entrances to the NE 6th station.
- Optimization of density and uses for transit-oriented development addressed in updated vision for the DT-OLB District.
- Importance of a strong connection between the Pedestrian Corridor and the NE 6th station.
- Non-motorized connection across I-405.

CAC DISCUSSION

- Desired character of station area
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit linkages
- Transit-oriented development
- Coordination with East Link/Sound Transit
- Traffic and parking management



Building Height and Form

PRINCIPLES FOR HEIGHT AND FORM REVIEW

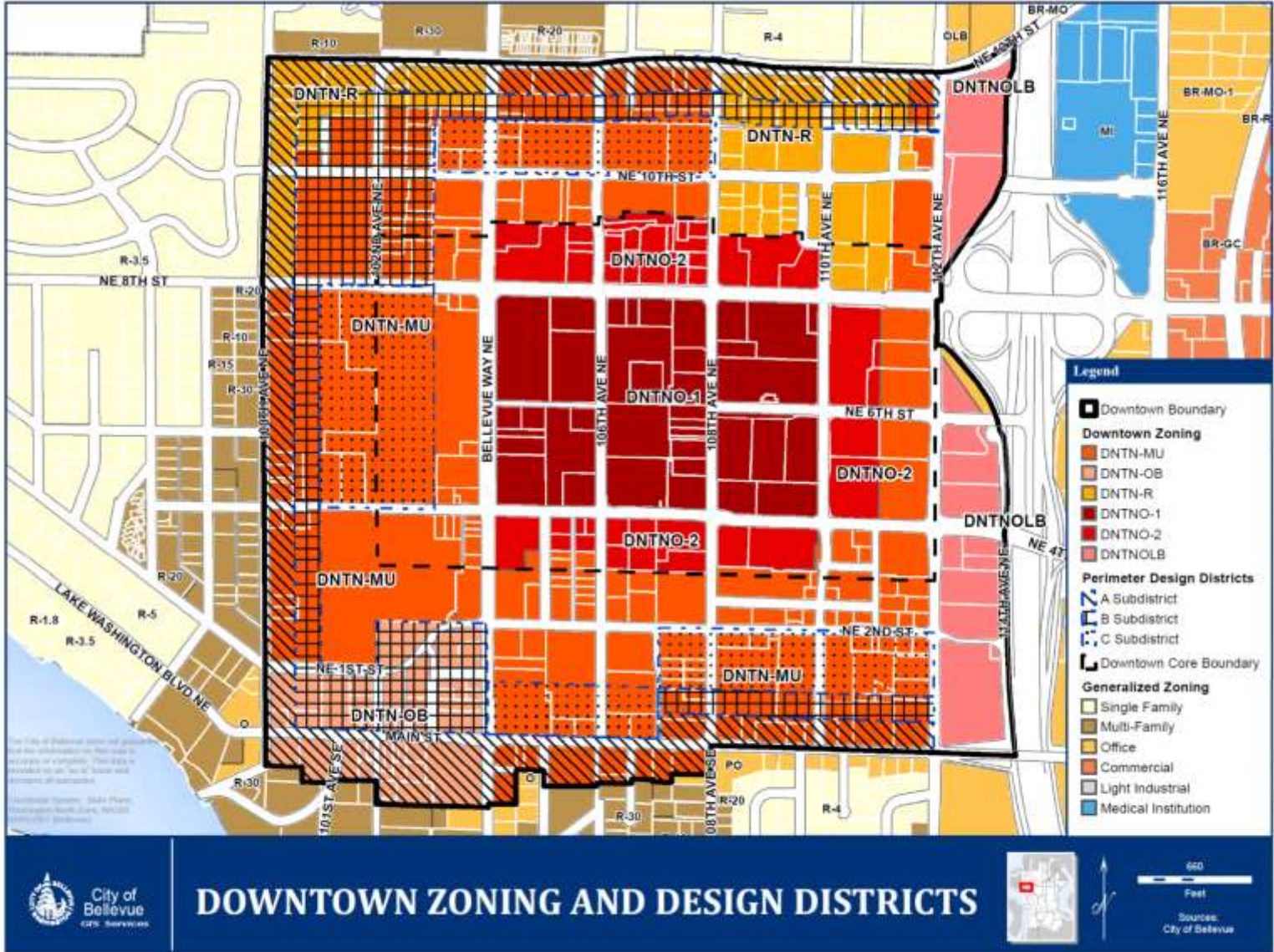
The CAC used the following principles to help guide their work on any potential changes:

- Additional height or density would result in a better urban design outcome than status quo, adding to the architectural excellence, character and memorability of the city center.
- Continue to distinguish special market niche played by Downtown.
- Help deliver additional amenities that enhance livability and character of Downtown.
- Address impacts that may result from the additional height or density (e.g., public views, shadows, tower spacing).
- Continue to provide appropriate transitions between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods while promoting better linkages.

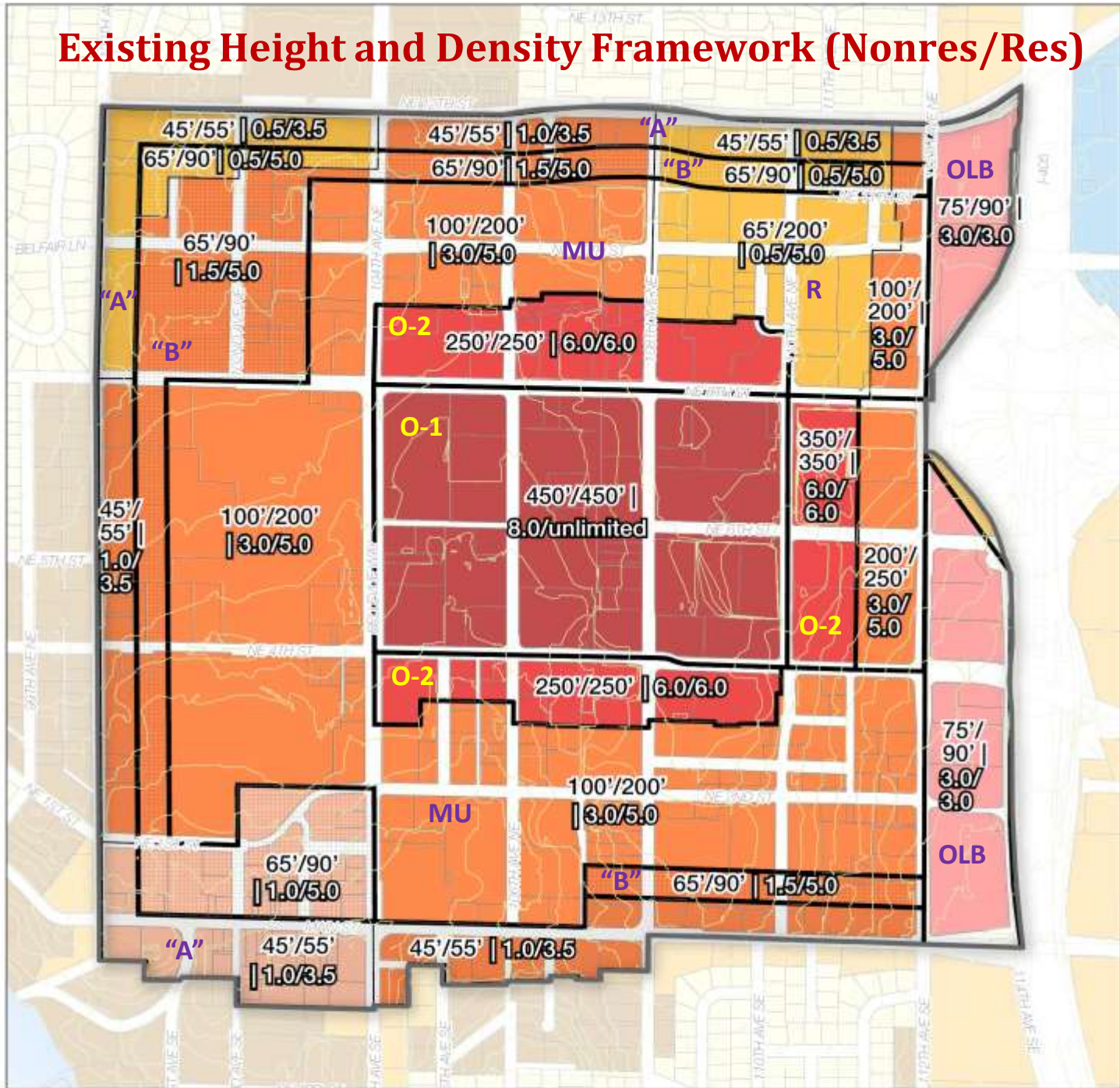
RELATIONSHIP TO LIVABILITY

- Opportunity to create more distinctive skyline
- Encourage more interesting and memorable architecture
- Opportunity for more light and air between buildings by allowing additional height
- Opportunity for more ground-level open space
- Ability to promote variability in building heights
- Ability to reinforce district identity
- Potential for additional height or FAR to add “lift” to incentive system
- Potential to add density around light rail transit investment

Building Height and Form



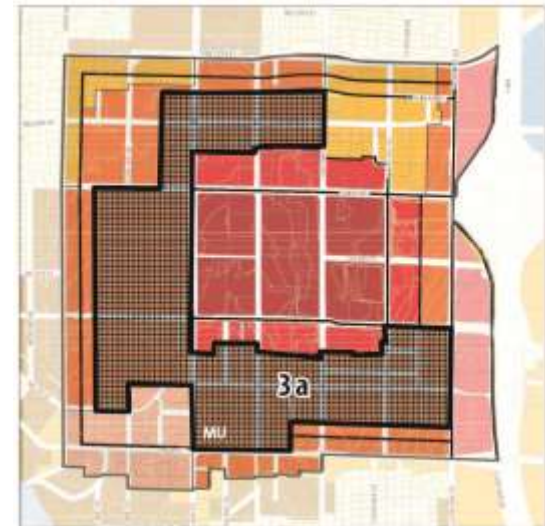
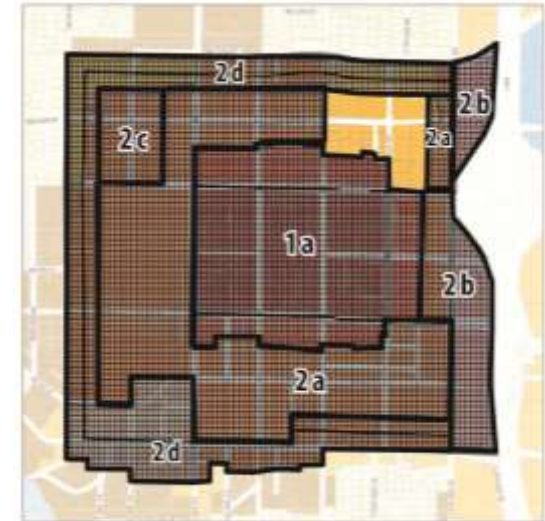
Existing Height and Density Framework (Nonres/Res)



Building Height and Form

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1a (Downtown Core): Up to 600' in O1 and up to 300' in O2 to help accentuate the "wedding cake" with no FAR increase (provided residential FAR is currently unlimited in O1).
- 2a (MU District): Up to 300' for residential buildings and up to 200' for non-residential buildings in MU district.
- 2b (OLB District): Up to 350' and 6.0 FAR between NE 8th and NE 4th and up to 200' and 5.0 FAR between NE 4th and Main Street.
- 2c ("Deep B" District/NW Corner): Range of 160-240' for residential with average tower height of 200' but no FAR increase.
- 2d (Perimeter): Up to 70' for residential in "A" perimeter design district with no increase in FAR. No change to remainder of "B".
- 3a (MU District): Equalize nonresidential and residential density in MU. Increase both to 5.0 FAR taking into account floorplate needs of nonresidential buildings.
- To be addressed in next phase: Tower design and separation; transition issues; effect of added FAR/height at pedestrian scale and larger scale; and mitigation of any localized traffic impacts.



Use of 3D Model

Downtown Office Limited Business (OLB) District: The CAC considered additional height and density in the OLB district. Analysis included heights up to 350 feet and 6.0 FAR between NE 4th and NE 8th Streets, and up to 200 feet and 5.0 FAR south between NE 4th Street and Main Street.



Area 2B: Development per Current Code



Area 2B: Examination of Additional Height and FAR (shown in purple)

Downtown Parking

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Code-Related

- CAC drew no conclusions about changes to Downtown parking ratios.
- CAC direction to defer potential changes to parking until a comprehensive Downtown parking study can be done.
- Ensure Old Bellevue parking req's are clear and consistently applied and enforced.

FUTURE WORK:

- Conduct a comprehensive parking study to include items such as on-street parking, potential for public garages, and opportunities for coordinated management of the parking supply such as valet or shared use, etc.
- Revisit Code to respond to changing parking needs related to East Link.

RELATIONSHIP TO LIVABILITY

- Important relationships to commuter, resident and visitor populations, provided CAC did not form recommendations on this topic.

PARALLEL EFFORT:

- Work with stakeholders to develop strategies to provide adequate Old Bellevue parking supply and management.

Next Steps

- **Tonight:**
 - ▣ **Presentation of CAC final recommendations**
 - ▣ **Q & A**
- **Follow-Up Study Session:**
 - ▣ **Council direction on Land Use Code process**
 - ▣ **Additional direction on proceeding with Code work**

More Info / Project Manager Contacts

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