



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 19, 2020

TO: Chair Hummer and Members of the East Bellevue Community Council

FROM: Trisna Tanus, Consulting Attorney
Eric Engmann, Senior Planner
Development Services Department

SUBJECT: Public Hearing – Ordinance No. 6513

I. Introduction

On June 30, the East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC) will hold a public hearing and take action on Ordinance No. 6513 imposing an Interim Official Control (IOC) setting reduced minimum parking standards in the Land Use Code for certain housing developments located near frequent transit service. The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6513 on May 18. A copy of the Ordinance is provided as Attachment A.

II. Discussion

A. Background

The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6513 to address housing affordability and availability in Bellevue. This is in direct response to the City's Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) adopted in 2017, the current COVID-19 emergency, and to conform the LUC minimum parking standards to RCW 36.70A.620 by the June 11, 2020, the effective date of Washington State Substitute House Bill (SHB) 2343.

Specifically, the Interim Official Control sets reduced minimum parking standards for certain housing developments (affordable housing, market-rate multifamily housing, senior housing, and housing for people with disabilities) located near frequent transit service.

Affordable Housing Strategy

The City Council memorialized its commitment to creating affordable housing opportunities in Bellevue with the adoption of the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) in 2017. This vision recognized the affordable housing crisis in the City due to the growing unavailability of affordable housing stock. The AHS created a list of specific recommendations to increase the supply of affordable housing and to reduce barriers associated with costs and processes that hinder the construction of affordable housing.

The Interim Official Control aligns with the AHS by lowering costs to building affordable housing (Policy C-5) and through the reduction in parking requirements for apartments around light-rail stations (Policy B-1). The amendments are also consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-1 to "direct most of the City's growth to the Downtown regional growth center and to other areas designated for compact, mixed use development served by a full range of

transportation options” and with the Transportation Master Plan recommendation to support transit use through design regulations (Transit Strategy 7).

COVID-19 Emergency

The COVID-19 emergency and the economic consequences resulting from this public health emergency has exacerbated the affordable housing crisis in the City and the region. Governor Inslee’s Stay Home – Stay Healthy Order (the “Order”), imposed on March 25 and extended on several occasions, has prohibited all people in Washington State from leaving their homes and prohibits non-essential businesses from conducting business, including non-essential construction. Notably, the Order carves out activities related to housing for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals.

The Interim Official Control reduces development costs and provides greater predictability with respect to the City’s parking requirements for housing near frequent transit and transit corridors. Such cost efficiencies and predictability serve to encourage housing developments in Bellevue, thereby increasing the housing stock available within the City, encouraging the construction of affordable housing around light-rail stations and transit stops, and mitigating the stagnant or delayed housing construction due to the COVID-19 emergency.

RCW 36.70A.620

On March 27, 2020, SHB 2343, concerning urban housing supply, was enacted to amend certain requirements for cities planning under the Growth Management Act. In part, SHB 2343 amended RCW 36.70A.620 to place a maximum ratio that cities can impose for required minimum parking for housing units near frequent transit service. The effective date of SHB 2343 is June 11, 2020, and this Interim Official Control is necessary to conform the LUC to state law by this date.

B. Interim Official Control

Prior to the Interim Official Control, the LUC provided for varying minimum parking requirements per the subject Land Use District in which the housing development was located. The prior LUC requirements did not consider the subject site’s proximity to frequent transit service. The Interim Official Control reduced minimum parking standards for certain housing developments located near frequent transit service.

Frequent transit service in the Interim Official Control is defined consistent with RCW 36.70A.620, or “within one-quarter of a mile of a transit stop that provides service at least two times per hour for 12 or more hours per day for affordable housing units; and at least four times per hour for 12 or more hours per day for market rate multifamily housing units and housing units for seniors or people with disabilities.” A map of areas meeting this frequent transit service, with the EBCC jurisdictional area delineated, is shown in Attachment B.

The reduced parking standards included in the Interim Official Control are the same as those currently in place within the City for transit-oriented Land Use Districts such as Eastgate and BelRed, as follows:

- 0.75 parking space per unit for affordable housing and market rate multifamily housing;
- parking for employees and guests only at housing for seniors and people with disabilities;
- or

- any minimum parking standards below the above.

Importantly, the Interim Official Control sets a ceiling for the minimum required parking, but it does not mean that a residential development near frequent transit service cannot provide more parking than these standards. An applicant may still choose to provide additional parking beyond the minimum required parking standard based on market conditions.

In addition, the Ordinance provides for vesting to the Interim Official Control for complete land use applications on the date of submission of the complete application. This vesting provision only applies to land use applications in review and/or submitted during the period that this Interim Official Control is in effect. Because this is an interim official control, this vesting provision will provide necessary predictability for projects that are in the planning stages.

C. EBCC Jurisdiction

The EBCC jurisdictional area contains primarily residential Land Use Districts. As shown in the frequent transit service map in Attachment B, there are various sites within the EBCC jurisdiction that may accommodate housing development and be eligible to take advantage of these reduced required minimum parking.

III. Comprehensive Plan

LUC 20.30J.135 establishes the decision criteria for an application to amend the text of the Land Use Code. Those criteria, and the relationship of these proposed amendment to them, are discussed below:

A. The amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and

Finding: The City of Bellevue has adopted several policies that support reduced parking minimums for certain housing developments located near frequent transit service:

Comprehensive Plan Policy H-17: *Evaluate the housing cost and supply implications of proposed regulations and procedures.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-1: *Direct Most of the City's growth to the Downtown regional growth center and to other areas designated for compact, mixed use development served by a full range of transportation options.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy L-3: *Promote a land use pattern and an integrated multimodal transportation system.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy L-6: *Encourage new residential development to achieve a substantial portion of the maximum density allowed on the net buildable acreage.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy L-15: *Provide, through land use regulation, the potential for a broad range of housing choices to meet the changing needs of the community.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy T-1: *Provide, through land use regulation, the potential for a broad range of housing choices to meet the changing needs of the community.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy T-7: *Ensure that land use changes near high capacity transit stations are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, recognizing that:*

1. *Transit may support more intense development around some stations; and*

2. *Transit supportive design and orientation may be implemented without changes to land use intensity.*

Comprehensive Plan Policy H-17: *Evaluate the housing cost and supply implications of proposed regulations and procedures.*

When Council adopted the Interim Official Control on May 18, Council again expressed a strong interest to encourage housing development, including affordable housing. The Interim Official Control supports many interconnected Comprehensive Plan policies related to land use, housing, and transportation. The Interim Official Control encourages housing development to occur near frequent transit by reducing cost and constructability barriers, as well as provides opportunities for increased transit ridership.

B. The amendment enhances the public health, safety or welfare; and

Finding: The amendment will enhance the public health, safety and welfare of people by encouraging housing developments in the City. The amendment reduces development costs and provides greater predictability with respect to the City's parking requirements for housing near frequent transit and transit corridors. Such cost efficiencies and predictability serve to increase the housing stock availability within the City, and fostering the construction of affordable housing around light-rail stations and transit stops, and mitigating the stagnant or delayed housing construction due to the COVID-19 emergency.

C. The amendment is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Bellevue.

Finding: The amendment is not contrary to the interests of citizens and property owners as it will assist in creating more housing developments in the City. The amendment addresses housing affordability and availability in Bellevue, in direct response to AHS and the COVID-19 emergency, as well as to timely conform the LUC to state requirements.

III. Action requested of the EBCC

The EBCC is requested to adopt Resolution No. 576 approving City Council Ordinance No. 6513. Notice of the Public Hearing was published on June 22.

Staff will be present at the June 30 public hearing to answer any questions you may have. If there are questions before this meeting, please contact Trisna Tanus, 452-2970 or at ttanus@bellevuewa.gov, or Eric Engmann, 452-4241 or at eengmann@bellevuewa.gov.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Ordinance No. 6513
- B. Frequent Transit Service Map