



# Bellevue Planning Commission

October 28, 2020

## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

### SUBJECT

Final Review Public Hearings: 2020 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

### STAFF CONTACT(S)

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### POLICY ISSUES

*The Comprehensive Plan is Bellevue’s foundational policy document which guides the nature and intensity of development in the City and sets out the community’s vision for the future, provides policies to guide city actions, and provides a framework to allow the city and community organizations to work towards common goals.*

*- Introduction and Vision, Comprehensive Plan*

*An amendment to the Plan is a mechanism by which the City may modify its land use, development or growth policies.*

*- Land Use Code (LUC) 20.301.120 - Purpose*

Staff recommends approval of three of the four privately-initiated 2020 proposed plan amendments and the one publicly-initiated 2020 proposed plan amendment. Together, these proposals cumulatively implement Comprehensive Plan policy to help communities to maintain their local, distinctive neighborhood character, while recognizing that some neighborhoods may evolve.

It is worth noting that all of the proposed plan amendments this year address housing capacity. Three of the four privately-initiated proposals are suggesting that Office designations represent housing redevelopment opportunity based on location. The C-1 city-initiated amendment provides an affordable housing focus and “bookend” opportunity to compare to the market capacity (generally) proposed by the privately-initiated amendments. See Attachment 1.

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTION <input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION ONLY <input type="checkbox"/>
Request	Summary Guidance	
1. Conduct a Final Review public hearing for each of the proposed amendments	Direct staff to first review and present the staff recommendation, then open the public hearing and accept public testimony. Close the public hearing.	
2. Conduct a study session following each public hearing to make a recommendation	Review the application, staff recommendation, public record, and testimony. Ask questions of staff, applicants or persons giving testimony; review the proposed resolution.	
3. Take action on a recommendation	The Commission uses a resolution to the City Council for the recommendation action. Direct staff on resolution content.	

Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), the Bellevue City Code permits property owners to propose site-specific Comprehensive Plan amendments, and for anybody to propose non-site-specific (i.e. text) amendments. The privately-initiated applications are accepted and reviewed annually; they are not part of a broader city initiative. Site-specific amendments approved by the City Council lead to rezoning, to ensure development regulations that are consistent with and [implement](#) the Comprehensive Plan. City Council-initiated amendments do address broader Comprehensive Plan policy implementation; for this year's C-1 Affordable Housing Strategy proposed amendment, it is boldly realizing the city's stated intent to increase specific household income housing supply.

These proposals are reviewed by the Planning Commission and acted upon by the City Council through the Final Review process set forth in the Land Use Code at [LUC 20.30I](#). Final Review evaluates the merits of proposed amendments included in the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program. Final Review evaluation and decision includes staff review, a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation by resolution, and City Council action by ordinance.

The East Bellevue Community Council held an October 6 courtesy public hearing on the NE 8th Street Partners and Glendale Country Club NE privately-initiated plan amendments, and on the C-1 Affordable Housing Strategy publicly-initiated amendment. Their comments, and those providing testimony at the courtesy public hearing, are included below in these applications' recommendations summaries.

The Planning Commission holds Final Review public hearings and makes recommendations. The City Council's subsequent action on those recommendations—conveyed by resolution—amends the Comprehensive Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

The Final Review Decision Criteria for a proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment are set forth in the Land Use Code in Section 20.30I.150. Based on a review and application of the criteria, and using a process as described in 2020 study sessions before the Planning Commission, Community Development staff developed Final Review recommendations.

Staff recommendations for the 2020 proposed amendments are in the Recommendations Summary (below.) The full reports are available [online](#) and in detail in the report materials provided to Commissioners along with the October 8, 2020, notice of Final Review public hearings. Such materials may also be requested in print.

### **100 BELLEVUE WAY SE 20-102643 AC**

#### **Summary Recommendation:**

This proposed plan amendment would amend the map designation on 0.87 acres from a split Downtown (Mixed Use) DNTN-MU and Office (O) to a single DNTN-MU at 100 Bellevue Way SE.

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a privately-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See Attachment 2.

### **Summary Public Comment**

Only the applicants spoke to the application at the July 8 public hearing. One additional comment was received from the applicant at the September 23 Planning Commission meeting. In general, these comments emphasized that the subject property is located at a key southern gateway into the Downtown and with uniform zoning, will foster a transformative gateway and support the City Center South neighborhood as well as the larger Bellevue community. The Comprehensive Plan calls out the City Center South neighborhood as a true mixed use neighborhood, and a mixed use development on the subject property would help to provide much-needed housing conveniently located near the rapidly growing Downtown. Finally, he noted the unique location of the subject property ameliorates potential issues given that within a five- or ten-minute walk the site is served by light rail, bus, bike lanes, the Grand Connection and the transit center.

### **Summary Planning Commission Comment**

Various, commissioners at the September 23 study session noted general support for the proposed amendment as a way of increasing capacity and bringing about a more dynamic gateway to the southern part of the city. The Commission also asked about meaningful traffic impacts and the possibility of trip reductions due to the mixed use designation. They affirmed that the boundary would not be moved southward as a result of giving both sides of the split equal due under the zoning code; affirmed that a precedent is not being created regarding changed circumstances, and queried an understanding of how much split-zoning remains in the city.

### **SAFEGARD SELF STORAGE 20-102660 AC**

#### **Summary Recommendation:**

This proposed plan amendment would amend the map designation on five parcels totaling 6.4 acres from Office (O) to Community Business (CB) and known as Safeguard Self Storage.

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a privately-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See Attachment 3.

### **Summary Public Comment**

Only the applicants spoke to the application at the July 8 Planning Commission Threshold Review public hearing. One additional public comment was received from the applicant at the September 23 Planning Commission meeting. In general, these comments noted the site lies adjacent to Crossroads Park and has an obvious relationship with the park. Also adjacent to the site are several public facilities that are within the park, including Youth Eastside Services, Bellevue Youth Theater, water spray playground, Crossroads skate park, Crossroads Park picnic pavilion and Crossroads Community Center. The site is also close to the Crossroads Shopping Center and an easy connection between the two could be made via the trail system that exists in the park.

The intent is to create on the site a walkable mixed use neighborhood that will benefit the community. The park open space could be extended into the development, and future residents on the site could be connected to the park through pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Neighborhood-serving retail uses and potentially live/work housing would be located along the northern boundary of the site. Opening the site to the park and the surrounding neighborhood will support the shopping center and other nearby

businesses. Full-time residents will enliven and keep eyes on the park, contributing to the safety and vitality of the area.

### **Summary Planning Commission Comment**

Commissioners inquired about how much ground floor commercial development of the site could support; whether a minimum amount of commercial would be required under CB if the development were predominantly residential; whether the loss of office capacity is a concern; how a development idea proposed at the plan amendment stage could actually be held to being realized; why the applicant chose CB; and whether a development agreement could require affordable housing.

### **NE 8th Street Partners 20-102741 AC**

#### **Summary Recommendation:**

This proposed plan amendment would amend the map designation on a nearly one-acre site from Office (O) to Multifamily-High (MF-H) and known as NE 8th Street Partners.

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a privately-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See Attachment 4.

#### **Summary Public Comment**

Four persons including the applicant and agent spoke affirmatively to the NE 8th Street Partners application at the July 8 Planning Commission Threshold Review public hearing. The sole public comment at the hearing note that the proposal would align with existing multifamily in the area and would be congruent with everything around it.

The applicant noted the site has great potential to provide high-quality housing consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and growth of the city.

The applicant's agent noted the site is well served by transit, including by the Rapid Ride Line B and that the site presents an excellent opportunity for infill transit-oriented development housing.

The applicant's attorney noted that, designated office in the '80s, the site has been isolated from the rest of the commercial core in the neighborhood. The significant investments in transit along NE 8th Street and the incoming operation of light rail means a multifamily designation will be the best fit for the properties.

#### **Summary Planning Commission Comment**

Commissioners inquired about policy incentives such as increased density in exchange for creating pedestrian trips within a certain neighborhood or within a certain distance from a neighborhood as a way of avoiding vehicle trips; consideration of this area for arts center treatment like that around the proposed 130<sup>th</sup> Street station; and why staff believes the policy question should be around business retention given that the small site is close to business zoning to the east on 140th Avenue NE, and on the Bel-Red corridor.

**East Bellevue Community Councilmembers** at their October 6 courtesy public hearing commented on the potential dimensional aspects of realizing the proposal, of alternatives available to the community

regarding the displaced businesses, and whether ground floor retail is allowed by the proposed plan change.

The applicant's agent spoke to the community council regarding the impacts of site redevelopment to multifamily.

### **GLENDALE GOLF COURSE NE 20-102772 AC**

#### **Summary Recommendation:**

This proposed plan amendment would amend the map designation on a 3.3-acre portion of the (currently undivided) 113.7-acre Glendale Golf Course Club NE site from Single Family-Low (SF-L) to Multifamily-Medium (MF-M).

Staff recommends not approving this proposed amendment because the application does not satisfy all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a privately-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See Attachment 5.

#### **Summary Public Comment**

Ten people provided affirmative testimony to the Glendale Country Club NE application at the July 8 public hearing. This latter testimony emphasized the intent of the Glendale Country Club in providing underutilized land to respond to housing demand while assuring the future financial success of the golf course in its role as a community asset.

The club's general manager commented at the September 23 study session, describing the history of the club, the reasons for the proposal to reinvest in the facilities so as to sustain an ongoing place for the golf course in Bellevue, and the club's past and ongoing role in the neighborhood and community.

The applicant architect noted that the site is located along NE 8th Street, which is a significant transit corridor that is populated with both multifamily residential directly adjacent to the site and a commercial node directly to the east. The vision of the club is for modest in-fill housing that fits with the neighborhood, and the proposal is consistent with the surrounding zoning.

The applicant attorney commented that the time is right to take the small underutilized section of the club's property and align it with the city's vision to support the club in continuing its use as a golf course, which is consistent with the Wilburton subarea policies.

#### **Summary Planning Commission Comment**

Commissioners voiced concerns about the environmental utility of the site for flora and fauna; that in thinking about wildlife and environmental corridors consideration is generally given to more than just a specific site; that the City Council specifically wanted the Commission to look for ways to find affordable housing opportunities during the review of the various Comprehensive Plan amendments as well as a concern regarding upzonings; and whether the Transportation Commission would have review authority.

**East Bellevue Community Councilmembers** at their October 6 courtesy public hearing commented on the potential buffers to other single family in the area; the change in proposed NE 8<sup>th</sup> access due to

feedback from adjacent condominium residents; and the impact on the community of a financially focused reason for the proposal.

The golf club's general manager and the applicant's attorney addressed the courtesy hearing, noting that the financial incentive for the proposal was to continue to assure the golf club and course's ability to remain an environmental part of the community, addressing storm detention upgrades so that the course could continue to serve as an environmentally sound land use. The attorney noted the overriding impact of Wilburton Subarea Policy 34 emphasizing the city's assurances of continued golf course presence in the community.

## **C—1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY 20-112885 AC**

### **Summary Recommendation:**

This proposed plan amendment would amend the Comprehensive Plan with Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) C-1 implementing policies to establish by-right incentives for qualifying properties for the purpose of producing permanently affordable housing.

Staff recommends approving this proposed amendment because the application satisfies all Land Use Code decision criteria for Final Review of a privately-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LUC 20.30I.150.) See Attachment 6.

### **Summary Public Comment**

Fourteen written communications had been received, including a notice from the Environmental Protection Agency and thirteen letters of support. Letters from local groups and businesses include Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH), Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, Housing Development Consortium (HDC), Microsoft, and NAIOP. Letters from individuals expressing support and urging the city to provide meaningful opportunity for affordable housing came from Emily Thompson, Allen Dauterman (Imagine Housing), Chris Buchanan (DASH), James McEachran, Eric Campbell, (Main Street Property Group), Dwight Schrag, and Hal Ferris (Spectrum Development Solutions) who served as part of the technical advisory group associated with the city's affordable housing strategy.

The executive director of Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH), and Vice-President of Transforming Age, spoke to her organization's role in and goals for redevelopment under the proposal noting the obvious case for their site redevelopment and their previous plan amendment journeys. The executive director asked the commission to consider the proposed CPA and was strongly encouraged to review all of the incentives DASH believes could make the project a reality with the C-1 amendment.

### **Summary Planning Commission Comment**

Extensive review and an explanation of the AHS and C-1's role in it were provided in response to commissioner inquiries. Staff outlined the equally extensive work of community engagement to multiple stakeholders (see below, Notice.) Commissioners also discussed the various aspects and role of HB 1377 on the proposal; the applicability of the proposal to all areas of the city for redevelopment; and the technical aspects to be addressed in the suitability analyses. Commissioners asked about the impacts of the proposed amendment to schools and to school sites.

**East Bellevue Community Councilmembers** at their October 6 courtesy public hearing commented about the sudden interest in workforce housing in the city; the ambiguity of faith-based definitions; the

historic role of church sites in neighborhoods; seeing a concentration of affordable housing located in Crossroads and Lake Hills; an incremental approach to housing density increases rather than organic increases; the effect of this policy implementation on existing vacant property (Neighborhood Church reference) or on existing church property (Church of the Resurrection reference); a blanket concern that this would be happening more in the eastern half of the city; and a note that specific details are necessary to rebuild trust broken between the city and the community council.

### **2020 PLAN AMENDMENTS NOTICE**

The 2020 annual proposed privately initiated amendments were introduced to the Planning Commission with a February 26 study session, a June 10 study session examining the potential expansion of geographic scope for each of the privately-initiated applications, and a September 23 study session on the proposals included in the work program.

Notice of the 2020 applications was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on February 21 and mailed and posted as required by LUC 20.35.420. Notice of the July 8 Threshold Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on June 18 and included notice sent to parties of interest. Notice of the October 6 courtesy public hearing before the East Bellevue Community Council was published on September 28 in the Seattle Times. Notice of the October 28 Final Review Public Hearing before the Planning Commission was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on October 8. All notice included parties of interest. Owners and residents within the 500-foot noticing perimeter of the sites receive official notice, as do people signed up to receive such notices.

Public comments come in throughout the process. All written comments are included in the public record. Public comments are also posted on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments web site.

### **Effective community engagement, outreach and public comments in 2020**

Applicants, residents and communities are engaging across a variety of media in proactive public participation during the 2020 annual plan amendment review process. The city's early and continuous community engagement includes:

- ✓ Responsive early outreach to requests for information and to become parties of interest
- ✓ Responding in writing to each written public comment submitted and returning phone calls
- ✓ Expanded web page material for Comprehensive Plan Amendments with the review schedule, the applications list, and a "What's Next" timeline
- ✓ A February 26 "Introductory and statutory process review" Planning Commission study session
- ✓ A June 10 geographic scoping analysis Planning Commission study session
- ✓ Official Weekly Permit Bulletin notice as required
- ✓ A July 8 Threshold Review Planning Commission public hearing
- ✓ A September 9 Planning Commission study session on the Affordable Housing C-1 amendment
- ✓ A September 23 Planning Commission study session on the proposals included in the work program.
- ✓ Summary of outreach conducted for the proposed plan amendment Affordable Housing Strategy Action C-1 from July to October 2020:

### Community Meetings

- *Affordable Housing Town Hall (on-line)*. On September 24, 2020, community members were invited to discuss and provide feedback on Action C-1 of the Affordable Housing Strategy. Sixty participants signed in at this meeting.
- *C-1 Lunch and Learn Stakeholder Forum (on-line)*. On September 3, 2020 the city hosted a stakeholder forum with invited representatives from the faith community, local non-profit housing groups, and others with technical background in housing, financing, development and affordable housing issues. There were 125 RSVPs and 57 people attended the meeting.

### City Council Meetings

- City Councilmembers received a July 20, 2020 briefing on the C-1 proposal, then initiated a 2020 work program comprehensive plan amendment for an incentive-based approach for increasing affordable housing potential on eligible land consistent with AHS Action C-1.

### Planning Commission Meetings

- The Planning Commission received a briefing from staff on the C-1 proposal at their September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and were provided with an overview of the proposed work program and approach to community outreach and engagement.
- A public hearing with the Commission on the 2020 amendments is scheduled for October 28.

### Web-based Outreach

- *Engaging Bellevue Website*. The project website, <http://www.engagingbellevue.com> invited sign-ups for email updates about project progress, announces workshops and community meetings, provides meeting materials, and allows visitors to post comments and questions.
- *Social Media*. Public engagement information was posted to the Engaging Bellevue website, Twitter, Facebook, and NextDoor.

### City Publications

- An article providing project overview and Town Hall announcement was published in the September *It's Your City*.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. City chart of 2020 Comprehensive Plan amendment applications
2. Planning Commission resolution for 100 Bellevue Way SE
3. Planning Commission resolution for Safeguard Self Storage
4. Planning Commission resolution for NE 8th Street Partners
5. Planning Commission resolution for Glendale Golf Course NE
6. Planning Commission resolution for C-1 Affordable Housing Strategy