



DATE: November 9, 2020

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Award for Excellence in Planning: Wilburton Commercial Area Study

Planning Award

On October 30, the Wilburton Commercial Area Study was recognized through the Planning Association of Washington and Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association joint awards program for 2020. The Wilburton Visioning effort received an award for Excellence in Planning in the Comprehensive Planning for Large Jurisdictions category. A total of seven efforts across the state were recognized in different categories.

The jury that selected the Wilburton Commercial Area Study as an awards recipient was “very impressed with the comprehensive nature of the outreach program, including a technical committee, a citizen’s committee, and a property owners’ group... adding depth to the feedback the project team received.”

Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee

In October 2016, the Bellevue City Council appointed a 15-member Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide guidance in developing the vision for the Wilburton Commercial Area. The CAC, composed of members of City boards and commissions, residents, business owners and other stakeholders was tasked with developing and evaluating concepts related to land use, transportation, and urban design for the Wilburton Commercial Area. Bellevue Councilmember Jeremy Barksdale served as a co-chair of the CAC (when on the Planning Commission) along with Lei Wu from the Transportation Commission.

The Committee meetings were held monthly from January 2017 through April 2018, complemented by online survey, open houses, workshops, and interest group discussions. The CAC articulated a preferred planning framework for a vibrant urban neighborhood that promotes multi-modal transportation options, capitalizes on the investment in light rail, increases opportunities for housing and workspace options, and creates a defining urban environment with the Eastside Rail Corridor Trail (now known as “Eastrail”).

The Vision

In partnership with the CAC, the project team (consisting of City of Bellevue staff, NBBJ, Leland Consulting Group, EnviroIssues, BERK Consulting, Fehr & Peers, and Jacobs CH2M) created a transformative vision for an inclusive, authentic neighborhood featuring the following:

- Wilburton's location, as a central commercial and mixed-use neighborhood, easily accessible from all of Bellevue.
- Workforce housing development, retail opportunities, and quality of life amenities that leverage continued Downtown and BelRed investment.
- Increased walkability and transit-oriented development associated with Sound Transit's expansion of the East Link light rail.
- Recreation and open space connected to community assets such as the Wilburton Botanical Garden, Grand Connection, and trail-oriented development along the Eastrail Trail.

Going Forward

Based on future direction from Council, staff will continue with the technical analysis and community engagement to build upon this visioning effort that will ultimately lead to policy and code amendments for the Wilburton Area.