

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

April 3, 2024  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Bhargava, Vice Chair Goepple, Commissioners, Cálad, Ferris, Khanloo, Lu, Villaveces

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE:

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Thara Johnson, Emil King, Janet Shull, Corbin Hart, Jesse Canedo, Department of Community Development; Matt McFarland, City Attorney's Office

COUNCIL LIAISON: Deputy Mayor Malakoutian

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER  
(6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Bhargava who presided.

2. ROLL CALL  
(6:31 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
(6:31 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Goepple and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
(6:32 p.m.)

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian took the opportunity to thank the Commissioners, the public and the staff for hanging in there at the Commission's previous meeting that went until 11:00 p.m. Everyone is working hard for the city.

5. STAFF REPORTS  
(6:32 p.m.)

A. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Comprehensive Planning Manager Thara Johnson took a few minutes to review the Commission's schedule of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

Thara Johnson informed the Commissioners that ARCH will be conducting an affordable housing 101 session at the Together Center in Redmond on May 1. The in-person event will include a tour of the Together Center.

6. WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS  
(6:36 p.m.)

Chair Bhargava took a moment to note that under Ordinance 6752, the topics about which the public may speak during a meeting are limited to subject matters related to the city of Bellevue government and within the powers and duties of the Planning Commission. Additional information about the new rules of decorum governing conduct of the public during meetings can be found in Ordinance 6752.

Given the large number of persons from the public wanting to provide comment, a motion to extend the oral communications period from 30 minutes to 45 minutes was made by Vice Chair Goepple. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cálad and the motion carried unanimously.

A. Written Communications  
(6:40 p.m.)

Thara Johnson noted that a fair number of written communications had been received and included in the Commission packet relating to Wilburton, the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and the tree code. A number of additional written comments were received following publication of the packet and those were forwarded directly to the Commissioners.

B. Oral Communications  
(6:41 p.m.)

Staff prioritized speakers who had not addressed the Commission at recent meetings.

Steve Cramer, co-founder of KG Investment Properties, spoke in support of the staff-recommended land use map. Staff and the Commission was thanked for the work over the years of planning the Wilburton neighborhood. KG Investment Properties owns a seven-acre site on 116th Avenue NE where the Grand Connection will cross through the site and connect with Eastrail within a quarter mile of two light rail stations. The company also developed the adjacent REI, Trader Joe's, Target and PCC centers to the south at the corner of NE 4th Street. With five grocery stores located from NE 4th Street to NE 8th Street and other national retailers already owning and occupying large sites in the neighborhood, Wilburton is poised to become a beacon of opportunity for high density, walkable, bikeable mixed use design in the decades to come. The staff recommendation comes after almost a decade-long process that was first formalized in the 2017-2018 Wilburton CAC vision report and it is exciting that the process is nearing the finish line. As a member of Eastrail Partners, Friends of the Grand Connection and the Wilburton Property Owners group, the company has a huge passion for trail-oriented

development like the Highline in New York City and the Atlanta Beltline. The Wilburton neighborhood will not ultimately look like the picture on page 5 of the packet. A trip was taken recently along with other public and private stakeholders to study the best-in-class bike and pedestrian networks in mixed use neighborhoods, along with state-of-the-art sustainable district energy projects, in Copenhagen. Eastrail is almost 40 miles long, but only in the Wilburton section will it pass through a unique dense urban walkable, bikeable, live/work/play neighborhood that is based on an amazing design that will promote 18 hour/seven-days-per-week community-based activities for all. The staff's mixed use height and density approach is what will create the opportunity for a world-class neighborhood that capitalizes on the unparalleled transportation infrastructure investment. KG is working with the city and King County to create a sustainable district energy system as part of the development that will harvest thermal energy from the King County sewer main adjacent to the KG property and the Eastrail to provide heating and cooling throughout the newly created neighborhood, saving over 10,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year, eliminating 7.2 million pounds of carbon emissions per year, and saving over nine million gallons of water per year.

Kendall Anderegg, a long-time Bellevue, CEO of Mutual Materials and past chair of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, noted that Mutual Materials has been located at 605 1189th Avenue NE since the 1960s and has watched the city grow up around the site. The site is adjacent to Eastrail, East Link and the future end of the Grand Connection. Support was voiced for the changes recommended by the staff and the Future Land Use Map for the Wilburton area east of the Grand Connection, Eastrail and along 120th Avenue NE. The area is within a quarter mile of light rail stations, within a block of Eastrail, adjacent to the Rapid Ride bus line, at the terminus of the Grand Connection, and within easy access to I-405. The mixed use designation provides the flexibility needed to create the long-term vision of a sustainable urban neighborhood the city imagines. In the transit oriented development area, the ability to live, work and play is achieved best through mixed use zoning. It allows for residential development which with incentives and market demand will enable the area to create the supply needed for the city to meet its housing goals. While housing is a current need, the mixed use designation also enables the community to be flexible to future market conditions over the 20-year lifespan of the proposed Comprehensive Plan. The highrise designation creates the opportunity to allow for the density that makes sense in proximity to transit and the planned ped/bike improvements. Highrise zoning enables the density to be created with a smaller ground footprint, allowing for public use spaces that will enhance Eastrail. Without the highrise designation, developers will have to use the entire footprint of a site to get the density needed to make economic sense. Supporting the staff recommendation for the area is an opportunity that should not be squandered.

Debbie Lacy, founder and executive director of Eastside for All, a local non-profit organization that advances racial equity in East King County, said one of the top priorities is housing that is affordable, safe and healthy. Bellevue's April 2023 air quality and land use planning report included recommendations to apply broadly to the city's policy and planning processes. The first recommendation outlined is to apply an equity lens during all planning processes for land use adjacent to high-volume roadways. That centers environmental justice and addresses the cumulative health impacts to people of color, low-income communities, and other historically underrepresented groups that would benefit the most from increasing residential capacity across the city. Bellevue's Racially Disparate Impact Analysis report in June 2023 stated that residents of Wilburton, Factoria and Eastgate neighborhoods are more likely to live in areas with high environmental

health risks. The Commission was urged to take into account the risks and impacts on community members, all of whom deserve healthy housing. Residential building within 500 feet of high-volume freeways should not be allowed. While there have been some mitigation strategies mentioned to deal with air pollution, but their effectiveness remains unsubstantiated, and over the long term will be costly and difficult to maintain. The areas close to the freeways should be left for commercial buildings, not houses. Mandatory inclusionary zoning should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Percentages of required housing at different AMI levels can be part of functional plans and future policies, but without clear guidance in the Comprehensive Plan Bellevue runs the risk of weakening its ability to meet its affordable housing goals. The leadership by the Commission, the city can ensure healthy homes for low- and moderate-income wage earners and create the inclusive community Bellevue strives for. The city should be proactive in shaping policies that disrupt patterns of racial and environmental inequities, and should remove barriers to positive health outcomes.

Nicky Stuck spoke on behalf of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce's PLUSH Committee, which represents hundreds of stakeholders within the Eastside's real estate community. The work of the Commission to set the course for the coming decades is appreciated. Planning for adequate density, effective traffic mitigation and proper adherence to state regulations through the preferred alternative is essential to growth management. The PLUSH Committee fully supports the staff's Wilburton recommendation, which is rooted in mixed use designations, not only fosters market flexibility but also paves the way for dynamic sustainable development. The Commission was urged to act on the proposal, and to direct staff to move forward with a public hearing on May 1 for the Wilburton CPA.

Brady Nordstrom spoke behalf of the Eastside Housing Roundtable, a broad coalition of local employers, non-profits, business organizations, housing advocates, and private and non-profit housing developers. Housing at all income levels is core to the success of the city as it plans for the future. The organization generally supports the preferred alternative relative to housing and the proposed Wilburton TOD Future Land Use Map. There is flexibility in the approach for reaching the full capacity and density. That will help to address affordability and the locating of homes where they are needed the most. Density is popular according to a recent Bellevue survey in which more than half of the respondents voiced support for dense development in the transit corridors and near I-405. Capacity is not equivalent with the development that will be seen over the next 20 years. The worst-case scenario impacts in the EIS are not the most likely impacts. Due to current unfavorable economic conditions, financing for a lot of development in the short term is not available. A large portion of the overall housing capacity exists in the form of middle housing and ADUs in line with state requirements. By supporting mixed use development in other areas of the city, the pressure take be taken off some of the low-density residential areas. The traffic impacts in the EIS are generated from the worst case scenario, so in reality they will not be at the same level. Some 89 percent of those who work in Bellevue commute into the city, contributing to the overall levels of traffic. Mixed use is popular because people want to live close to the goods and services they use. The Commission was thanked for centering affordability through the plan. Housing affordability is clearly a big issue.

Dan Landis, vice president of development for the King County Housing Authority, owner of almost 3000 units of affordable housing and provider to over 500 households in Bellevue with Section VIII assistance, voiced appreciation for the fact that the city has helped fund

the efforts. The city's efforts to create affordable housing through the incentive program are to be recognized. However, the efforts have not been enough to create affordable housing options for all of Bellevue's residents and workers. More housing generally and more affordable housing specifically is needed. According to the census data tabulated by HUD, between 2000 and 2020 the number of households in Bellevue grew by 28 percent. Over the same period, the number of households who paid more than half of their incomes for housing costs grew by 34 percent. By 2020, 44 percent of all residents within comes below 80 percent of area median income paid more than half their incomes for housing. Bellevue's incentive zoning programs have not produced the level of affordable housing units that neighboring communities with mandatory inclusionary housing provisions have produced. The Comprehensive Plan update is a great opportunity to upzone for more housing, but also an opportunity to institute mandatory affordability by capturing a portion of the added value from the upzone for new affordable housing.

T.J. Woosley, a commercial real estate broker, with a business located in Wilburton, voiced support for the staff recommendation and the densities that will take advantage of the transportation infrastructure. The proposed height limits, high densities and mixed use designation will help the market dictate what needs to be done at different properties at different times throughout the planning horizon. Speaking specifically to existing uses, the Commission was urged to leave in the code that all existing uses will be permitted, and not as legal nonconforming uses. The properties will redevelop at their proper market times.

Jesse Simpson, government relations and policy manager for the Housing Development Consortium (HDC), an organization that brings together over 35 housing providers, community service organizations, advocates and allies across the Eastside with strong focus on Bellevue. The city's commitment to exploring effective policy solutions to advance housing affordability is appreciated. The HDC is willing to partner with the city in addressing the deep housing needs by increasing the availability of affordable homes for Bellevue residents. The efforts of the staff and the Commission to shape the Comprehensive Plan and make a real difference regarding housing affordability are to be lauded. It clear a lot of thought has gone into the Housing Element. It is no secret that Bellevue has a housing crisis. Building an inclusive and functioning Bellevue for the future with middle and working class people able to live near jobs and amenities will require building more multifamily homes for rent and for sale. The geographic scope of Midrise Mixed Use zoning should be made as large as possible, and the maximum amount of flexibility should be incorporated in terms of the development regulations. Allowing for more homes in Bellevue is the environmentally sustainable thing to do. Increasing density near transit means creating a city where people can live, work and play without relying on cars, reducing greenhouse gases emissions and alleviating traffic congestion for people commuting from long distances outside the city. The unique opportunity presented by the substantial increase in development capacity should be emphasized. A portion of the generated value should be captured for affordable housing through inclusionary zoning programs that have proven successful in neighboring cities.

Ryan Donahue, chief advocacy officer for Habitat for Humanity of Seattle, King and Kittitas Counties, urged the Commission to always push to go further and farther when it comes to affordable housing. The Commissioners and staff were thanked for the work that went into the planning documents and on the recommended alternative. The recommendation for bold density and residential capacity in the plan creates the flexibility that Bellevue needs now and will need into the future. Bellevue is a beautiful city and there is a reason

why people want to live in the city, but creating the future must be done intentionally. The proposed alternative will help make that happen. The Commission was urged to considering mandatory inclusionary zoning with a well calibrated fee in-lieu program that applies across the entire city. There is a simple equation for creating affordable housing: money plus zoning equals housing. The proposal gets the zoning part right. What is needed is the money part to get the units developed.

Pearl Leung spoke on behalf of Amazon and voiced appreciation for the tremendous amount of work and thoughtful consideration the city and the Commission have put into the Comprehensive Plan update and the Wilburton Vision Implementation. Amazon believes that all people should have access to housing they can afford. Unfortunately, that has not been the experience of many across the Puget Sound region. To address the housing crisis, more housing supply is needed. Amazon supports the staff-recommended policy changes in the housing and human services elements as well as the preferred alternative to best position Bellevue in continuing its legacy of well-managed growth that prioritizes a high quality of life and community. Amazon also supports the staff-recommended Future Land Use Map for the Wilburton TOD area. The Commission was urged to move forward with the recommendation in order to advance to the next step of the process, the Wilburton Land Use Code amendments. It will be important to allow for sufficient time for public engagement on the LUCA without incurring further delays. The Wilburton TOD area will become one of the most connected neighborhoods in the state, with abundant opportunities for mixed use growth and affordable housing near transit. Putting more housing capacity near jobs and transit as recommended in the preferred alternative will help mitigate traffic impacts. TOD connects communities to jobs and services and promotes local community and economic development while reducing commute times and the associated expenses. Amazon supports smart TOD that brings families closer to more opportunities and services. Through its housing equity fund, Amazon committed a hundred million dollars to developers working with Sound Transit to build affordable housing near light rail, including \$25.8 million for 233 new affordable homes at the Spring District station. The staff-recommended Future Land Use Map for the Wilburton TOD area and the preferred alternative in the Comprehensive Plan update will provide the flexibility the city will need as it grows.

Elizabeth Maupin, an Issaquah resident and homecare aid who serves people across the Eastside, including in Bellevue, spoke about the intersection of poverty, disability, housing and transit. The poor are the least likely to own a car and the most likely to use transit. Among the poor, the disabled are the most likely to be dependent on public transit and the least able to take on extra employment to keep up with rising rents. It is very important to prioritize affordable housing near transit. Ground level housing is needed for those with mobility issues. Mandatory inclusionary zoning is the way to make it all possible. People without cars for whatever reason need things that can only be delivered by vehicle, so affordable housing developments do need to have some visitor parking available. Old people need homecare aids to be able to get to them, and where there is no parking that becomes a real issue.

Alchil Tara said Indian American Community Services is a safe place for domestic violence survivors. What is needed in Bellevue are ladies hostels where healing can happen in sister communities. The speaker said the desire for her children to have a safe place and a better education is what is behind the desire to live in Bellevue. Single parents in domestic violence situations need affordable housing that can become homeownership situations.

Jeremiah Oponblanks, a sophomore at Interlake High School, shared with the Commission having experienced housing issues last year and being homeless for about five months and was eventually transported to a youth shelter in Seattle given that there were no options in Bellevue. After months in the shelter the opportunity arose to locate with a new family in Bellevue. All the relocating had a negative impact on school classes and grades. The lack of a men's youth shelter in Bellevue is a huge issue and more options are needed. There also needs to be more mental health and occupational options for youth in Bellevue along with support systems in shelters.

Mike Nykreim, a Newport Hills resident, reminded the Commission that there were originally 13 growth management goals; now there are 15. Goal 2 is reduce sprawl. Goal 4 is planning for housing to accommodate affordability at all economic levels; the goal also encourages the preservation of existing housing stock. The speaker allowed being partly responsible for some of the city's sprawl having developed a few hundred lots in the 1970s. There is a need to look for density wherever it can be accommodated, but that is supposed to be done along with preserving the existing housing stock. At the time of co-authoring of the city of Kirkland's comprehensive plan in 1995, promises were made about moving the Urban Growth Boundary, but that has never been done. The boundary is eight miles away and every day tens of thousands of people commute up to 60 miles to work in Bellevue. None of the plan goals will ultimately be reached, and the neighborhoods will not be protected, unless the boundary is moved. The city's Comprehensive Plan should get back to the original plan. The safety valve of moving the Urban Growth Boundary is needed.

Richard Lee noted being the child of two immigrant parents who came to Bellevue from Cleveland where the entire family slept in the same room because buying a house was expensive and hard to do. The family made it through, however, yet housing and buying a house in Bellevue is still a problem faced by many. The lack of housing leads to the pervasive problem of homelessness for adults and especially for teens. Nationally, 4.2 million teens are homeless. The Commission was urged to include in the Comprehensive Plan a plan to build a teen homeless shelter for the future success of Bellevue, to solve the issue of homelessness for teens, and help those who are in need. According to the National Center for Homelessness, it is clear that especially for teens, homelessness creates more and more problems for the future. Kids like Jeremiah cannot focus on their education and will find it difficult to succeed in the future. If the city cares about the future of Bellevue, it must care first about the people in the city. Bellevue must be a city that accepts its citizens for who they are. Creating homeless shelters and facilitating them is the only solution. Houston was able to solve its homelessness problem by creating more shelters for the homeless. San Diego focused on arresting the homeless and kicking them out of the city, which has only made the issue worse. There is a moral obligation for citizens and leaders to help those who are in need. Redmond, Kirkland and Bellevue cooperated to create homeless shelters, and the same needs to be done to help homeless teens. Building a teen homeless shelter is the next step.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***  
(7:31 p.m.)

7. PUBLIC HEARING – None  
(7:37 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendments: Future Land Use (7:37 p.m.)

Planning Director Emil King briefly recapped the CPA/LUCA schedule, noting that time was first spent refining the policies and discussing the Future Land Use Map. All the work is leading up to a May 1 public hearing, following which the Commission will either at that meeting or on May 8 make a recommendation to the City Council for action in the June timeframe. The Land Use Code amendment will follow the Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Strategic Planning Manager Janet Shull said the CPA work directly relates to the work to be done on the LUCA. While the Future Land Use Map designations are discussed as part of the CPA, the focus during the work on the LUCA will center on land use districts or zoning.

Since the CPA work was launched in April 2022 by the City Council, the Commission has held a number of study sessions focused on the vision, the policies and the staff-recommended Future Land Use Map. The vision for the Wilburton TOD is predicated on the work done by the 15-member Wilburton CAC that met for over a year beginning in 2017.

The future land use designations that are under consideration are Urban Core, Highrise Mixed Use, Highrise Residential Mixed Use, Highrise Medical Office, Midrise Mixed Use and Midrise Mixed use. The staff-recommended Future Land Use Map was shared with the Commissioners indicating the general areas for each of the land use designations. On another map, the Grand Connection, Eastrail and light rail stations were overlaid on the Future Land Use Map for reference and context. It was stressed that no zoning changes are proposed for the existing wetland area and the area just to the north of it where there is an existing small-scale development and electric substation.

Janet Shull noted that questions were previously raised about the potential shade and shadow impacts resulting from the proposed Future Land Use Map. The Commissioners were shown images representing likely shadow conditions at approximately September 10 at 3:00 p.m. and at full buildout to allowed height and bulk on every site. It was noted that there would be no shade or shadow impacts on the Bellevue Botanical Garden to the east. It was further noted that there would be shade and shadow impacts to the Eastrail. The consultant NBBJ has been exploring some potential development that is better informed by the general thinking for the Land Use Code amendments and the design guidelines that are still under development. Their work applied assumptions about the building typologies that could occur and considered things like access to buildings and the need for open space and was used to illustrate what the area could look like given the potential design parameters.

Addressing the questions asked previously by the Commission about how the transit station walksheds overlay, Janet Shull pointed out that the area where the Grand Connection interfaces with the retail is where the best access to transit will exist, though the entire TOD area will be within a half mile of a transit station and the B Line.

Most of the Wilburton TOD area is covered with impervious surfaces. The green areas exist along the rail corridor, along Sturdevant Creek, the wetland area and Lake Bellevue. Policy language has been developed to address the lack of green space in the area and support having more green space.



Turning to the area proposed for the Medical Office designation, Business Development Manager Corbin Hart said due to Bellevue's high residential growth target, the projection is that there will need to be about 1.1 million square feet of medical office demand. Much of the projection is based on historical growth in the Bellevue medical office sector and general population growth. Additionally, Bellevue serves as a regional medical service hub for the wider Eastside. Overlake Hospital's core service area spans from North Bend to Kirkland. Bellevue is also an employment center and there is a need to have adequate capacity for a diverse array of employment opportunities. The local industries are unique in the sense that they provide a wide range of opportunities among educational levels and income levels, and focusing on sciences and healthcare will help Bellevue diversify its economy. There has been private-sector interest expressed in Bellevue for the uses, and three property owners have specifically advocated for the designation. A number of developers are exploring the viability of life sciences in various parts of the city, but the current code presents some barriers in terms of dimensional standards and allowable uses that may make the project nonviable. The upper boundary of life science development was set at two million square feet, which for reference would be only about 20 percent of Seattle's life science sector.

With regard to the residential uses that would be allowed in the typology, Corbin Hart said the primary focus would be on assisted living and senior living, allowing Bellevue residents to age in the community they live in proximate to medical services.

When addressing the Medical Institution demand, the specific reference is to Overlake Hospital, Kaiser and large hospitals locally and regionally. The city has in the past worked with medical institutions to either expand or locate new operations in Bellevue. One specific example is Seattle Children's which two years ago was looking to create a new campus within the region, and Bellevue was a prime focus. Unfortunately due to the different zoning typologies across the city, there was no applicable site that would not require a major Comprehensive Plan amendment. Ultimately the organization opted for a site in Renton near Valley Medical Center.

Janet Shull said the staff recommendation for Highrise Mixed Use was intended to better articulate development flexibility and respond to the existing commercial uses that are already in the two areas. The Commission has heard support for the approach by some who own property in the areas. As things transition over time, the mixed use designation seems to make sense. The Highrise Mixed Use and Highrise Residential Mixed Use both accommodate much greater housing opportunity over what currently exists, which is almost none. There is the ability to include provisions in the Land Use Code that either require or incentivize housing. True TOD living focuses on the 18-hour community where folks can live and work proximate to each other. The mixed use designation allows for greater opportunity to have residences near places of work.

Commissioner Lu noted that the Lake Bellevue wetland area extends to the southeast of the lake which is earmarked for the MU-M designation. Janet Shull said staff recommended Midrise Mixed use around Lake Bellevue in recognition of the existing constraints. Lake Bellevue is a designated wetland even though it is called a lake and as such there are associated development restrictions and mitigations.

Commissioner Lu referred to S-WI-3 and asked if the MU-L designation would be compliant with HB-1110. Janet Shull said the MU-L would not be applied in the Wilburton TOD area, though it would be applied elsewhere in the city.

Commissioner Lu noted being generally a fan of the Medical Office designation as proposed. If venture capital can be viewed as a prelude to future growth, it should be recognized that there is

a lot of current investment in laboratory space and hard sciences, things that will require a specific land use designation. There also is a skillset fit between tech and medical, something that is evident in San Francisco and the Bay area.

Commissioner Khanloo voiced the understanding that the Highrise Mixed Use, Highrise Residential Mixed Use, Highrise Medical Office, Midrise Mixed Use and Midrise Mixed Use designations all allowed housing, but that the housing associated with Highrise Medical Office was different in some way. Janet Shull explained that the Wilburton vision establishes a vision for many types of housing. The distinction with the Highrise Medical Office, which is still in development, is that the housing would be senior housing, assisted living, and housing for folks for whom it is appropriate and beneficial to be near medical facilities.

Commissioner Khanloo commented that when shadow studies are done, the time of day shown is usually 8:00 a.m., noon and 5:00 p.m. Janet Shull said the study did include other times of day. The 3:00 p.m. time was chosen as something typical of what could be expected throughout the day before the sun starts to go down. Emil King agreed to review the full shadow study with Commissioner Khanloo offline. Janet Shull voiced the understanding that 3:00 p.m. was the latest time of day used for the study.

Commissioner Cálad suggested that for a number of reasons Wilburton will be considered to be the Manhattan of the state of Washington given its prime location. The fact is those who would occupy housing units in the Highrise Medical Office will have limited incomes due to disabilities or their age. It does not make sense that such people would be able to afford to live in the housing units. Corbin Hart said it is unlikely that assisted living housing units will be sited above state-of-the-art life sciences laboratory spaces. Typically the housing units would be developed on different parcels within the area.

Chief Economic Development Officer Jesse Canedo said there is an excellent example of a highrise assisted living facility is being developed on Main Street. It will accommodate residents with a mix of incomes.

Commissioner Cálad said throughout the conversations it has been stated multiple times that mixed use is the way to go, and that the market should be allowed to meet the market demands. It is concerning that the area is being considered just for medical offices when in fact the market may need something else. The question asked was what incentive investors might have to invest in medical facilities in other places. The rapid change over the last few years is evidence that the city may not be forecasting the future needs of the city correctly. When Microsoft decided to pull out of Bellevue, it created a huge problem for the city. Unless there is guarantee that there will be investments made in line with the proposed Highrise Medical Office, the intent voiced by the current property owners may not mean anything. Jesse Canedo said the issue raised concerning Microsoft is exactly the reason why the Highrise Medical Office designation needs to be maintained. Life sciences medical facilities are hard to relocate. There is a clear benefit to encouraging the development of some additional industry in the city that is stickier, that is hard to just relocate overnight. The market is allowed to dictate in most of the city, including in Wilburton. The recommendation is to designate a small portion of Wilburton to have a focus on medical-related and life sciences industries. Medical services will continue to be needed for all Bellevue residents and the residents of the Eastside.

Commissioner Cálad said it is possible that investors seeking to build life sciences developments may see the designated area as being too small. In that case, there should be opportunities to invest those uses in other areas of the city. Corbin Hart pointed out that while the current

discussion is focused on the Wilburton area, there is more of the typology in the BelRed process, creating more of that capacity. Citywide, there are some specific elements that are specifically conducive to life science and medical uses. The uses require very large floorplates, higher mechanical height and specific use designations that for a lot of different and unrelated reasons are not allowed across the city. By tailoring the specific use to the classification, the city can get around some of those barriers to make sure there is a space for them.

Commissioner Villaveces said the quality of public space in any city is determined by the edges of the spaces. Central Park in New York is a good example. The Wilburton walkshed map does not really reflect the proposed land use map. The space around the transit station should capitalize on the most amount of density because that is where the highest number of people will be. Instead, the Urban Core is in one corner, then there is highrise and then near Lake Bellevue is midrise. Measuring from the place where Grand Connection connects with Eastrail to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is about 2100 feet. There could be an opportunity to create more density right against the Eastrail, dividing the block and carrying the density along Eastrail. The medical office land use raises concern with regard to the concentration of uses. Medical office uses are not destination uses. The medical office use also does not lend itself to a lively street-level activity. The location of the Highrise Mixed Use adjacent to I-405 could easily support the medical office use. The proposed Highrise Medical Office borders Eastrail and is not a completely compatible use.

With regard to environmental issues, Commissioner Villaveces said one thing that is missing is any mention of Mt. Rainier. Eastrail between the Wilburton station and the Grand Connection has a geometry that is suited to offering views of Mt. Rainier. Potential view corridors should be considered.

Commissioner Ferris said the medical office piece is one of the closest parcels to the station. The focus all along has been on putting the highest density closest to the station. To take advantage of the density, it will be necessary to go with highrise development, but highrise is the most expensive form of construction. Developers seeking to develop medical office space likely will not want to build highrise because of the cost. The space so close to the station should be utilized to its best capacity, and other places in the city should be identified for medical office uses.

Jesse Canedo said one of the reasons Children's Hospital was so interested in the corridor was access to the site via multimodal transit. The users of hospitals and medical facilities often arrive by public transit. The proximity of the site to Overlake Hospital is also a big draw. There are other projects currently at the conversation phase, and they want to be next to Overlake Hospital and to have the institutional compatibility. In markets across the world, life science/bioscience/medical uses have been shown to be compatible with highrise development.

Commissioner Ferris agreed with the reasoning voiced but stressed the uniqueness of the site and the possibility of seeing it go to waste. Children's Hospital chose to build in Renton and it is not likely that another similar user will come in seeking to use the space. If that happens, the site could end up sitting idle instead of providing housing.

Vice Chair Goepple agreed with the comments made by Commissioners Calad and Ferris relative to the Highrise Medical Office space in the area so close to Wilburton station. The proximity and the opportunity for additional density and housing in that space is really important. It is concerning that the housing proposed for the space is focused on assisted living and senior living, a use the market is already providing in the area. The opportunity to have a dense, rich urban environment next to the stations is very important. The kind of example in

Seattle's Pill Hill is not the kind of development envisioned for Wilburton. It would be very good to have a designated medical office area in the city, but the area closest to the stations should be focused on the potential for dense development in support of broader mixed uses.

With regard to Highrise Mixed Use versus Highrise Residential Mixed Use, Vice Chair Goepple asked what the staff think might be the outcomes in terms of housing production in those areas. Janet Shull allowed not having a crystal ball but said the modeling done for the EIS looked at roughly 40 percent residential and 60 percent non-residential or office/commercial. Ground floor uses tend to be retail or commercial and anything above it has a 50/50 chance over a 20-year period of seeing either residential above or office above. With the mixed use residential designation, the modeling looked at something closer to 90 percent residential, essentially everything above the first or second floor as residential. In all of the alternatives analyzed in the DEIS and in the preferred alternative there were significant opportunities for housing.

Vice Chair Goepple asked if there is anything the Commission could do to help address things like dimensional standards and uses for life sciences, opening the door to other areas in the city to host the use. Corbin Hart said there is a wider conversation under way as part of the work on economic diversification. Not every part of the city is right for life science uses, and where such uses are allowed there will need to be alignment with the Comprehensive Plan policies.

Chair Bhargava commented that Wilburton is unique and has tremendous potential. It behooves the Commission to think carefully when considering the land use strategy. Three key elements are Eastrail, the Grand Connection and the light rail stations, each of which needs to be built around effectively. Density around the stations has come up in prior discussions, but there still is a need to identify opportunities to create additional intensity of uses. The medical office area is one area for which the opportunities should not be lost.

Chair Bhargava allowing not understanding why Highrise Mixed Use and Highrise Residential Mixed Use should be so debatable. If it is not restrictive, and mixed use provides the needed flexibility, it should simply be stated.

Chair Bhargava also expressed some concern about the urban wall envisioned to be created all along the perimeter. At the appropriate time, the Commission should think carefully about what the perimeter is should like and how it will feel from an urban design standpoint, less from a numbers point of view and more from an aesthetic and design point of view.

Turning specifically to the issue of medical office, Chair Bhargava said the rationale has not been clearly presented. The presentation suggested that a population of 115,000 translates into a demand for 1.1 million square feet of medical office. There is already existing medical office uses within the region, and some of that demand has been eaten up already. If there are dimensional or other constraints existing in the current Land Use Code, steps should be taken to unblock them in ways that will create high levels of flexibility for medical office where it is deemed to be the highest and best use. The need to maximize residential capacity around the transit stations cannot be ignored. Flexibility will be the key.

Corbin Hart said there are two kinds of medical office uses. Small medical office uses such as doctor and dentist offices are allowed in mixed use developments. However, life science labs and medical institutions have much different development requirements, particularly around floor plate sizes to accommodate connectivity for transporting patients and accommodating HVAC systems and specific utilities requirements. The current code does not want to allow for

extremely large floor plate general office buildings for specific reasons, such blocking site lines and creating shadows. The medical office use is technically allowable, but it is generally not feasible across the city. That is the logic behind designating a specific area that is more flexible to accommodate the use.

With regard to allowable uses generally, Corbin Hart said the city does not currently allow 100 percent lab space in general commercial districts; lab space must be less than 50 percent of the total square footage, with the remainder being general office space. From the point of view of the developer or the user, that makes the project an odd mix. Chair Bhargava suggested the answer in that respect is to simplify the process, allowing for the total building to be used for a lab.

Commissioner Cálad expressed a desire to learn more about how and why the code does not allow certain things.

Commissioner Cálad allowed being biased in favor of life science being a dominating industry and asked what other strategies are in place that allow for diversifying employment outside of technology and life sciences. Jesse Canedo said the city is currently working with Life Sciences Washington and other regional stakeholders to determine what can be done to incentivize through the Land Use Code and partnerships to bringing additional industry to the city, including life sciences, manufacturing and interactive media. One step to be taken later in the year will be updating the economic development plan. Bellevue has been flexible over the years in allowing the city to develop, which is evident in the Downtown. That level of flexibility allowed for the development of a lot of office in the Downtown and less housing. That is one reason behind the desire to retain the medical office designation in place.

Corbin Hart said the intent is not to build a sector out of nothing, rather to build on the city's strengths, which includes a very highly educated workforce and a high quality of life. Much of the region's life science workforce actually lives in Bellevue or on the Eastside generally, and that is something to capitalize on. Advanced manufacturing commercial space, which includes satellite development and fabrication, is one area being looked at.

Commissioner Villaveces asked if there have been any discussions about Lake Bellevue being a park. Janet Shull said there have been such discussions in the past and they are continuing. The vision developed in 2018 mentioned it, and there are parks policies that mention it as well. Draft policy presented for Wilburton also supports looking for additional opportunities to acquire access or to encourage future development to have better access to the lake. One reason there has not been a call for having more density around the Wilburton station is tied to the recognition of the environmental constraints and the challenges associated with highrise developments given the soil conditions and required setbacks. In general, the area east of Eastrail is considered as the transition to the much lower density of the residential area up the hill, which is in line with the Wilburton vision.

Commissioner Villaveces said it would be helpful to see the plans in the larger context. It might even help make the argument in favor of the medical office block.

Commissioner Lu remarked that tech development always seems to tap into venture capital and private equity investments. Outside of that, the three largest investment areas are industrials, life sciences and climate. Of those three, life sciences has the most overlap in terms of talent with the existing tech pool. Medical office is a bit of a misnomer and should be expanded to life sciences or laboratory to allow for more flexibility. There is a uniqueness in terms of being collated with medical and health professionals when it comes to innovation. During Covid, it was nearly

impossible to find space in which to stand up a testing lab. Indeed, there never will be space for such facilities, especially in a city center and high demand areas, until there is an area intentionally zoned for it.

Commissioner Khanloo noted being unsure of being able to walk from the Downtown to Wilburton among all the tall buildings and the resulting wind tunnels. It is certainly going to be breezy along 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. For the same reason the Grand Connection may not be a joyful experience. Emil King said staff would willingly meet with Commissioner Khanloo to discuss the experience of walking in and around the Downtown. It also would be helpful to show the broader context when putting out of the public hearing draft to better inform the public.

A motion to extend the meeting to 10:00 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cálad and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Cálad commented that the work done by the Fred Hutchison Cancer Center in Seattle has saved many lives. Bellevue should make it possible to locate similar amazing facilities so that even more lives can be saved.

Emil King noted that three main points had been made by the Commission regarding the Highrise Mixed Use area, the need to maximize density around the light rail stations, and the issue of Highrise Medical Office. For purposes of the public hearing, the recommendation was to retain the map as presented while acknowledging the concerns voiced, and showing the broader context of the 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE corridor. If it is the desire of the Commission to make changes, it should be done in advance of the public hearing.

Commissioner Ferris commented that clearly the Commission wants to see more life sciences. The only skepticism is in regard to specifically locating it as proposed.

Emil King said one option would be to change what is shown on the map as Highrise Medical Office to Highrise Mixed Use and for staff to include something in the staff report the rationale for the change.

Commissioner Khanloo noted having asked for examples of best practices but said none had been presented. It has not been shown that the best solution is to have a designated area for life science uses. If that is the best approach, it should be explained why it should be in Wilburton and not Crossroads or somewhere else.

Chair Bhargava suggested the bottom line is that the Commission is pushing for flexibility.

There was consensus in favor of moving forward to the public hearing on May 1.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***  
(9:04 p.m.)

B. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Policy Changes in the Housing and Human Services Elements  
(9:11 p.m.)

Senior Planner Hannah Bahnmilller stated that some substantive edits are proposed to the Housing Element policies. Overall the housing policies have grown from 40 to 74. The major changes in the staff recommendation include a number of policy updates and additions to address

new housing requirements at the state, regional and county levels. The Comprehensive Plan work occurs within the regional planning framework and is aligned accordingly. The guidance set at the county level is referred to the Countywide Planning Policies, which are ratified by local jurisdictions. There were a number of significant expansions to the Countywide Planning Policies in the last round of updates, including a greater focus on meeting the housing needs at zero to 30 percent of area median income, as well as a new focus on addressing racial disparities and displacement. The staff-recommended policy updates are aligned with those changes.

Continuing, Hannah Bahnmitter said additional significant changes were incorporated to address amendments to the state Growth Management Act that require the cities to plan for and accommodate housing at all different income levels. Collectively, the requirements flow from HB-1220 and actions by the state related to middle housing. Other changes were incorporated to align policies with recent housing work completed by the city, including the city's Affordable Housing Strategy, the Housing Needs Assessment, the Racially Disparate Impact Analysis, and the Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

During the Phase 3 engagement work there has been a continued level of support voiced for housing. Strong support has been offered for middle housing opportunities as well as more affordable housing across the city. Much has been said about creating inclusive communities in which all residents can thrive. Some have pointed out the need for a greater focus on aging in place, and the need to protect neighborhood character.

On the topic of housing equity, Hannah Bahnmitter a number of the changes proposed are related to the need to align with the Countywide Planning Policies and to address equity and social justice. The change to HO-9 is a mitigation measure from the DEIS.

The majority of the proposed changes to the policies in the section on supply and diversity are intended to align with the Countywide Planning Policies and/or amendments to the GMA related to increasing the supply and diversity of housing within the community.

Two policies were added to the supply and diversity section as mitigation measures from the DEIS. One additional policy was a recommendation from the Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

The affordable housing section has substantial updates, the majority of which are to align with the Coal Creek Parkway. Others seek to clarify policy intent, and to support future housing work. Other changes in the section are related to recommendations from the city's internal housing work and relate to recommendations in the DEIS, the Racially Disparate Impact Analysis, and the Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

The smallest section is focus on housing for unique needs. Of the four policies in the section, one was amended to align with the Countywide Planning Policies, and two were updated to clarify policy intent.

The majority of the policy updates to the preventing homelessness section were made to address the full range and spectrum of activities needed to prevent homelessness, and to align with the Human Services Element.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

(9:20 p.m. to 9:24 p.m.)

Commissioner Lu suggested the language of HO-1 seems subjective and open to interpretation.

The language should be more detailed and tightened in terms of the intent of the policy. A similar comment was made with regard to HO-3. While the spirit of HO-6 is clear, the language is backward looking, which could create a compliance burden on the city that could result in additional cost going forward. The language of HO-10 should be strengthened. The word “wide” should be added to HO-13 between “development for a” and “range of household types” to be more inclusive of the outer edges of household types.

Commissioner Lu asked if the entirety of HO-17 needed for compliance with HB-1337. Emil King said the language of the policy is indeed intended to be in compliance with HB-1337. Commissioner Lu said it would be helpful to have clear policy language that ensures compliance with the state mandate. Additionally, the phrase “subject to specific development, design, location and owner occupancy standards” should be retained.

Commissioner Lu referred to Old HO-4 and voiced the understanding that the city does not allow for short-term rentals in a lot of the neighborhoods but does not highly enforce the restriction. Retaining the policy could be used to monitor and regulate short-term rentals. Short-term rentals take away from the housing stock and the availability of long-term housing. Chair Bhargava referred Commissioner Lu to HO-28.

Commissioner Lu called for stronger language in HO-24. As used, “promote” is weak.

Commissioner Khanloo suggested the word “encourage” in HO-1 is weak and should be strengthened to something like “ensure.” With regard to HO-4, the question asked was if it would serve only at the policy level or as part of the implementation plan. It is understandable that Old HO-3 should be removed given the references to neighborhood character, but the policy could be retained if another phrase were to be used. The notion of preserving neighborhood identity should not be lost. Commissioner Khanloo agreed that HO-24 should use “ensure” over “promote.”

Commissioner Cálad called attention to HO-12 and asked what the policy envisions that is different from what is already on the books. Emil King said the policy was added to ensure compliance with the Countywide Planning Policies. The Countywide Planning Policies specifically mention working with faith-based communities, considering surplus properties the city owns, and working with existing and new major employers on getting affordable housing in the city.

Commissioner Cálad commented that the city has many initiatives aimed at helping people with housing issues in various capacities. The problem with HO-12 is that there are so many efforts that address the issues separately rather than cohesively. In addressing homelessness, housing units are needed, but so is job training and medical services. The language of the policy is too broad and not very strategic. There needs to be a system in which all of the factors can work together. Emil King offered to look through the rest of the Housing Element to see if there are policies that talk about coordination that might apply to HO-12, or to consider modifying the policy to get at the coordination piece.

Commissioner Villaveces referenced HO-13 and suggested the key word is “incentives.” The incentives will somehow need to translate into additional square footage. The incentives will need to be irresistible to developers for making more money while delivering affordable housing units. There are a lot of incentives for building green and for building affordable housing, but many of them either make development prohibitively expensive or a very lengthy process, which translates into no one taking advantage of them. There is a need for affordable housing at all



levels. For one sector of the population, the biggest barrier to home ownership is a downpayment; many can afford to rent or pay their mortgage, but do not have the up-front funds. There should be a mechanism offering a rent-to-own path to ownership. A company in New York uses credit scores to determine rental worthiness, and that leads to dramatically lowering the cost of capital for renters wanting to become homeowners. The policy also mentions efficiency studios, but the city should be very careful with them as they often create a race to the bottom. Streamlining the permitting process should strongly be supported.

Commissioner Villaveces noted agreement with HO-17 and the notion of supporting attached and detached units with the ability to be rented or sold. With regard to HO-18, the question asked was if there had been any discussion about single-access point blocks, an approach that opens up a whole range of benefits ranging from lower carbon footprint to different unit mixes and the ability to develop small lots without land assemblage.

Commissioner Villaveces asked staff to give an example of innovative housing types called out in HO-22. Emil King said in drafting policy language the intent is always to keep things as open as possible to allow for innovative thinking. Some of the things that have happened in the past include net zero buildings in other cities, single family timber frame buildings, and modular middle housing.

Commissioner Villaveces voiced support for HO-24 but questioned how in fact the city will actually promote climate-friendly housing, and if the practice will be incentivized. With regard to HO-25, the Commissioner said there is no real way to know what housing costs; every person asked will give a different answer. The only way to control cost is to measure cost, and partnering with an organization like Master Builders Association could yield a housing cost baseline.

Commissioner Ferris noted that HO-6 talks about limiting exposure to natural and manmade environmental hazards and said it would be helpful to know what the impact would be if housing were to be limited near the freeway. With regard to HO-13, it was stated that while incentives are incredibly important, it has been shown repeatedly that they are not enough to really make a dent in the production of affordable housing. Mandatory affordable housing requirements should be included in cases where large capacity increase are created through upzoning. Monitoring and assessing the housing production as referenced in HO-21 is very important, but beyond just monitoring there should be a call to make recommendations for modifying the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code so any identified problems can be fixed, not just monitored. The reference to working with partners in HO-25 should apply to non-profit developers as well as the for-profit developers. A question was asked about whether or not HO-26 should include a reference to the fact that the development of a faith-based property for affordable housing is given a 50 percent density upzone and an additional story.

Vice Chair Goepple agreed with the comments of Commissioner Lu regarding HO-6 and suggested it could read "...city's housing policies and regulations advance objectives in an equitable manner." That would be more positive and forward looking. A typo was pointed out in the second line of HO-14 where "an" should read "and." With regard to Old HO-3, which is proposed to be struck out, the policy could be rehabilitated by removing "the character of" and replacing "established single family" with "established single family residential neighborhoods." The same approach could be used with Old HO-13.

Chair Bhargava suggested the intent of HO-3 is not clear. The policy calls for collaboration with those disproportionately impacted by housing cost, but says nothing about to what end. HO-5

should use a word stronger than “ensure.” The term “environmental racism” is not clear as used in HO-6. HO-9 should be revised to add “and marginalized populations” following the word “communities.” As voiced during public comments, the victims of domestic violence situations are sometimes left with very limited housing opportunities. HO-18 should move away from “promote” to “incentivize.” The same is true of HO-24.

Commissioner Cálad called for policy language in support of providing incentives for lower rents for teachers, police, fire and nurses in the city, and HO-13 may be the place to do so.

Commissioner Ferris said it is not lawful to set aside housing for certain populations. Housing must to open to everyone equally.

Emil King said housing for teachers and so forth falls under workforce housing.

Commissioner Cálad said there are programs in place that work with women who are victims of domestic violence to help rebuild their lives.

A motion to extend the meeting to 11:00 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lu and the motion carried unanimously.

Referring to HO-29, Commissioner Cálad said there are a lot of barriers for people to actually qualify for affordable housing. There is a clear need to collaborate with other organizations to simplify the process. With regard to HO-31, it was noted that property owners are also facing issues with squatters. Some squatters have no other options, so no one wins. A way needs to be found to provide more dignified places for those who are squatting to live. The word “explore” in HO-33 and HO-34 should be replaced with “create.”

Commissioner Villaveces referenced HO-49 and asked what a “faith-based” entity is. Emil King explained that a certain process is used to determine if a property is faith based, and agreed the term should be clearly outlined in the glossary.

With regard to HO-52, Commissioner Villaveces asked how the land bank idea would work and if it would include in-fill properties. Emil King explained that a land bank would be the umbrella of all the properties that might be included. They would not all need to be together.

Commissioner Ferris agreed HO-33 needs a stronger verb and concurred with “create” over “explore.” Very low and extremely low-income housing will not get developed without public funding. HO-34 should the notion of mandatory affordable housing where upzoning has occurred. HO-52 needs a stronger verb than “explore.” The policy could be used to encourage working with the county and in concert with other agencies to bank land that might otherwise go unused.

Commissioner Villaveces agreed with the need for strong wording in HO-33 and HO-34. Stronger wording is also needed in HO-53 in terms of shared equity ownership models. “Full range” should be added to HO-61 in front of the word “services.” Additionally, “and their communities” should be added to HO-74 between “residents” and “experiencing.”

Commissioner Khanloo asked if the strategies called out in HO-31 are in fact already in place or if they are still being developed. Emil King allowed that there are quite a few strategies in place but added that there is always room for improvement.

Commissioner Khanloo concurred with the need for stronger language in HO-33 and HO-34. More positive language should be used in HO-49 in regard to limiting the effectiveness of bonuses and incentives. Policies HO-52, HO-53 and HO-54 should all use a stronger word than “explore.” It was suggested “pursue” may not be the right word in HO-56.

Commissioner Khanloo asked what the intent is behind HO-59. Hannah Bahnmler explained that the policy is needed to align with the Countywide Planning Policies. There is some overlap with the programs mentioned under the previously identified displacement policy that addresses things like rental eviction and foreclosure assistance to help folks remain in their homes.

Referring to Old HO-39, which is to be deleted by virtue of being redundant with HO-61, Commissioner Khanloo pointed out that HO-61 in fact only focuses on the elderly, not also the disabled. HO-74 needs a word stronger than “encourage.”

Commissioner Khanloo asked if the issue of a youth shelter should be mentioned in a policy. Commissioner Ferris suggested the section on preventing homelessness would be the place to address a shelter for children and youth.

Vice Chair Goepple suggested changing “prevent” to “minimize” in HO-31 given that there will be instances in which displacement will occur. It is not realistic to say all displacement will be prevented. The same is true in HO-36. HO-33 should be stronger. HO-49 would be a better policy if it said something like “minimize the extent to which regulations and standards limit the effectiveness of bonuses.” The word “ensure” in HO-57 should be replaced with “support” because the city will not be able to realistically ensure a stable transition.

Chair Bhargava suggested that throughout the policies, in every instance where the words “explore” and “develop” are used, the intent is not completely clear. More action-oriented framing would be better. HO-61 should be expanded to include more than just seniors. The policy should cover anyone in the population in need of help and support. The language of HO-62 is weak in regarding universal design; the language should be much more aggressive.

Emil King summarized for the Commission the policies highlighted for revisions as HO-1, HO-3, HO-4, HO-5, HO-6, HO-9, HO-10, HO-12, HO-13, HO-14, HO-17, HO-18, HO-21, Old HO-3, Old HO-4, Old HO-13, HO-24, HO-25, HO-26, HO-29, HO-31, HO-33, HO-34, HO-36, HO-49, HO-52, HO-53, HO-54, HO-56, HO-57, HO-62, Old HO-39, HO-73, HO-74, and the global comment about using the words “explore” and “develop.”

Commissioner Ferris asked to include a specific reference to shelter for the youth.

Commissioner Cálad suggested that properties with one full bathroom and one bathroom with only a shower but includes full accessibility for the disabled should have equal value to properties that have two regular bathrooms. Something should be said in HO-62.

Chair Bhargava agreed with the point but was indicated being unclear as to how it would be manifest in policy. Emil King said a check will be made to make sure universal design is in the glossary, and work on expanding the language of HO-62 for purposes of clarity.

Chair Bhargava noted there had been comments made about the mandatory inclusion of affordable housing units, but allowed that the policies as drafted only call for incentives. Emil King said staff will review the policies to see how incentives are used in relation to upzone areas and will give consideration to whether there should be a mandatory approach. A lot of technical

work is underway on that topic, which will be discussed at future meetings with the Commission and the Council. The policies do not need to be specific as to one approach or the other; they should be left open until the analysis work is done and fully discussed.

Turning to a review of the Human Services Element, Thara Johnson introduced Department of Parks and Community Services assistant director Toni Esparza, and Human Services Manager Ruth Blaw, both of whom have played a vital role in developing policy recommendations and working with the Human Services Commission.

Thara Johnson explained that the Human Services Element is all about how the city provides support and funding for services that support everyone in the Bellevue community. The Human Services Commission makes funding recommendations on a number of different supporting services. The structure of the Human Services Element has been reorganized around the various city roles. Stronger language has been added to a number of policy areas along with stronger linkages to the Housing Element, and the policies have been aligned with the Human Services Strategic Plan.

Through the outreach efforts, a lot was heard from the community, particularly the youth, around human services. A lot of support was voiced for behavioral health and mental health, and the community pointed out there were no policies relating to veterans. When the entire draft of the element is brought back before the Commission, it will include policies that add older adults to the list of populations affected by poverty and discrimination.

There are four sections in the Human Services Element, the first of which focuses on the citywide human services system. The policies in the section were updated to use more inclusive language and to emphasize the full role of human services. References are also made to including marginalized populations.

The section that focuses on the city's role as facilitator and educator in the human services system includes policies that call for the creation of partnerships and educating human service providers, community members and other stakeholders. Some policy language was also added based on recommendations in the climate vulnerability assessment. Policies were also added to address low- and moderate-income residents, and those that are in need of becoming more informed.

The category of planner and funder addresses an important piece of the work of the Human Services Commission and the human services function. Policy language is included in support of including community assessments to inform human services funding recommendations. During the Covid pandemic, the city began allocating ARPA funds, so policies were added to align with that work.

Commissioner Cálad suggested that HS-1 should include religion included as part of historically marginalized community members. HS-3 should use the word "coordinate" instead of "engage." In HS-5, "coordinate" should be used in place of "encourage partnerships."

Commissioner Cálad asked for clarification regarding HS-11. Toni Esparza said the existing policy was updated to take into account that the city has a broad role for the entire community, including those who are most marginalized, in determining how to advance overall policy citywide.

Commissioner Cálad suggested HS-12 is too vague as worded. The word "support" should be

changed in policies HS-16, HS-17 and HS-18 to something stronger.

Commissioner Villaveces referred to HS-24 and HS-28 and suggested the language should include some emphasis on the youth.

Commissioner Ferris referred to HS-3 and suggested the “engaging the service providers” seems pretty weak. There is an opportunity for the city to act as a facilitator in educating service providers and connecting them with one another. Having a network of providers that are well connected and well informed is better than having people working in silos. HS-5 talks about encouraging partnerships but it should include a specific reference to working with the police and fire departments who often are the first to be engaged. HS-13 should include “and make recommendations.” A separate section with a couple of policies specific to youth should be added.

Commissioner Lu suggested stronger wording should be used for HS-25 regarding the youth participating in the community. “Culturally responsive” should be removed from HS-26 because it is too limiting. A policy should be added that covers cross-cultural interactions and exchanges. The city is hitting a point where there is a clear need for more cultural exchange and education.

Commissioner Khanloo proposed using “analyze” instead of “consider” in HS-12. Thara Johnson said the Human Services Needs Update, which is produced every two years, includes a lot of data.

Commissioner Khanloo said HS-19 it is not clear what is meant by “community agencies.” Toni Esparza said over the last few years a number of grassroots organizations have formed in response to the particular needs of their various communities. Both state and federal guidelines are followed by the city in regard where an agency needs to be in the process of becoming a non-profit, but there are some agencies that are small enough to not be required to have non-profit status in order to access funding. Where there is no non-profit provider to meet a specific gap, the city can elect to provide a for-profit provider with human services funding. In drafting the policy, there was a desire not to be too prescriptive by using the term “non-profit.”

Vice Chair Goepple noted the reference to “intersection” in HS-10, which implies two things, yet only one thing is listed. “The intersection of” could be removed. With regard to HS-28, the second part that references “best managed” leaves out some situations. The word “usually” should be included before “best managed.”

Chair Bhargava remarked on being stuck on HS-1 and the feeling that the additions have gone the wrong way. The language appears to single out people who will be disproportionately impacted by poverty and oppression. The policy language should be reconsidered. Commissioner Khanloo concurred.

Chair Bhargava asked if HS-4 means mental health and drug use by the term “behavioral health.” Toni Esparza said behavioral health is an all-encompassing term of both mental health and substance use disorder. Chair Bhargava suggested that if the term is not clearly defined, the policy language should be more specific. Thara Johnson added that the term is defined in the glossary.

Chair Bhargava suggested that HS-5 as revised is overly restricted to only the low- and moderate-income communities. HS-9 evokes a great idea but it should be focused on those with limited or low awareness of the availability of human services. HS-14 needs a more active

framing for “development strategies.” HS-20 uses language in the latter part that is overly specific to certain groups of people. HS-27 should include a reference to the youth.

Commissioner Ferris reiterated a call for having a separate section with policies regarding the youth.

Thara Johnson summarized the policies reference as HS-1, HS-3, HS-4, HS-5, HS-9, HS-10, HS-11, HS-12, HS-13, HS-14, HS-15, HS-16, HS-19, HS-20, HS-23, HS-24, HS-25, HS-26, HS-27 and HS-28.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(10:46 p.m.)

A. February 28, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khanloo and the motion carried unanimously.

B. March 13, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Goepple and the motion carried unanimously.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

(10:48 p.m.)

12. ADJOURNMENT

(10:48 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lu and the motion carried unanimously.

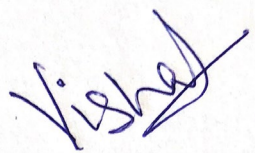
Chair Bhargava adjourned the meeting at 10:48 p.m.



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Thara Johnson  
Staff to the Planning Commission

04/26/2024  
Date



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Vishal Bhargava  
Bellevue Planning Commission  
April 3, 2024

04/26/2024  
Date

Chair of the Planning Commission