

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Bel-Red Subarea Plan, Rezone, and Land Use Code Amendments.

STAFF CONTACT

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POLICY ISSUES

Should the City adopt a new Subarea Plan, land use regulations and zoning for the Bel-Red area that envision a transformation from current light industrial and commercial uses in the area to new vibrant neighborhoods and thriving businesses all served by an integrated system of multi-model transportation choices, parks and open space, and restored stream corridors that connect to the greater city and the region following a public hearing and formulation of a recommendation by the Planning Commission?

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

Council review of substantive Bel-Red issues is not expected at this briefing. The purpose of the Study Session is to provide the Council with copies of the draft Bel-Red amendments as they are released to the public and to inform the Council of upcoming public engagements including a public hearing scheduled for May 28, 2008, with the Planning Commission. There will be an upcoming Council discussion on the design for NE 15th/16th Street on May 27. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission will continue its deliberations and refinement of the draft amendments. The Commission is expected to forward its recommendation to the Council later this year. At that time the Council will have the opportunity to review and act on the Commission's recommendation.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Bel-Red Vision

Following a two-year planning and public engagement process, the Bel-Red Steering Committee recommended a new vision for the Bel-Red area in September 2007. In October 2007 the Council provided direction to five of the City's boards and commissions to develop planning policies and other strategies to implement the Bel-Red Steering Committee

recommendation for the Bel-Red area. Over the course of the last several months the City's commissions have reviewed and discussed Bel-Red issues specific to their areas of expertise.

In January, staff distributed the first draft of a new Bel-Red Subarea Plan to the commissions and the City held an open house to encourage public review of the draft plan. The draft Subarea Plan captured the Steering Committee's new vision for Bel-Red in policy, projects and maps to guide future City actions and public investments. Approximately 80 people attended the January open house and provided a range of comments on that draft.

The boards and commissions continued their review of their individual topic areas of the draft plan during their January and February meetings. Four of the City boards and commissions presented their policy recommendations for Bel-Red to the Planning Commission on February 27, 2008. Those recommendations, along with feedback from the Planning Commission, were incorporated into a revised draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan. This revised draft Plan is the subject of the public hearing scheduled for later this month.

In addition to the Plan, staff has worked with the Planning Commission to draft development regulations and zoning for the Bel-Red area that include standards for uses, building form and site development, and development incentives. Through the guidance of the Subarea Plan, development regulations, and zoning, the city influences private development and actively pursues public projects and investments that, in combination, help make the vision real.

While these draft documents were developed with the guidance and feedback of the boards and commissions, the Planning Commission has not yet endorsed the drafts and is still in the midst of its review process. In particular, key questions remain open about how the plan is to be implemented, including the incentive system and phasing requirements. The Planning Commission is seeking input from the public as well as business and property owners on the overall plan and key implementation topics to help develop their recommendations.

Public Review

With the completion of an initial set of drafts of the new Subarea Plan, Land Use Code amendments, zoning, and related amendments, the City is now actively engaging in a series of public outreach and involvement activities.

- On May 28, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. at Bellevue City Hall, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Bel-Red drafts. In addition to formal notice of the hearing, the City is conducting broader public and stakeholder engagement to let people know of the hearing and to provide alternative ways to comment.
- On May 13 City staff is conducting business and property owner panel discussions.
- On May 15 from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. the City is holding a public open house on Bel-Red, in conjunction with the City's Spring Forward Expo. A presentation to six of the City's boards and commissions will follow the open house at 6:30 p.m.

Additional presentations will be made to interested groups, such as a presentation to the Bridle Trails Community Association scheduled for May 22. The draft documents will also be distributed and announced through a variety of means, including the Bel-Red Web site. All of this public outreach will help the Planning Commission further refine these proposals and their final recommendations.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

New Bel-Red Subarea Plan

The draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan captures all of the areas of the Steering Committee's vision and policy direction. The plan provides the framework policies and maps that will guide future City decisions, support amendments to the Land Use Code, planning for public projects, and other implementation items. The general policies of the plan incorporate the overarching themes of the Bel-Red Steering Committee's recommendation for the future of the Bel-Red Subarea: sustainability and environmental restoration, attraction of new businesses without forcing displacement of existing ones, transit oriented development, and a phased approach to development. It also refers to implementation strategies and incentive mechanisms that can help achieve this vision. Other sections of the Subarea Plan address specific topics, including land use, urban design, environment, parks and open space, housing, arts and culture, transportation, interjurisdictional coordination, implementation, and neighborhood districts.

In addition to the goals and policies of the draft Subarea Plan, the Plan includes lists of public transportation, parks and open space projects. Capital projects listed in the Subarea Plan provide a long-range vision for the infrastructure projects that will be needed in the area through 2030 and beyond. While projects are further defined as they "graduate" to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), projects listed in the Subarea Plan are specific enough to provide a clear understanding of the project's function, scope and location, adequate to incorporate these projects into the Bel-Red financial strategy, and adequate to reserve space for these facilities as development occurs. Extensive technical work has gone into defining and modeling these projects in order to meet these needs. One keystone project, the new NE 15th/16th Street, has received considerable design work. This project will be subject of an upcoming Council discussion on May 27.

The Bel-Red Subarea Plan includes a new Land Use Map generated by synthesizing the Steering Committee's preferred alternative map with a detailed analysis and evaluation of practical constraints and ground realities such as parcel boundaries, topography, location of stream corridors and existing uses. The map applies the node designations to parcels near the planned transit stations (rather than apply round node edges that would otherwise arc through parcels). Additionally, the map shows a proposed local street grid that will help create the pedestrian friendly, transit-oriented nodes and compact new neighborhoods envisioned in the Steering Committee's recommendation.

Crossroads and Wilburton/NE 8th Boundary Amendments

In addition to the new Subarea Plan, draft Comprehensive Plan amendments include changes to the Wilburton/NE 8th Street and Crossroads boundaries where adjacent areas are proposed to be added to or removed from the Bel-Red area. These include (1) moving the area around Lake Bellevue from the Wilburton/NE 8th Street area to Bel-Red, (2) moving the eastern area between Bel-Red Road, 156th Avenue, and NE 20th Street from the Crossroads area to Bel-Red, and (3) moving a small area on the south side of Bel-Red Road consisting of single family and professional office uses from Bel-Red to the Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea.

Transportation Element Amendments

Amendments to the Transportation Element are proposed to adjust the level of service (LOS) to be consistent with the Steering Committee vision and to modify the MMA (mobility management area) boundary to be consistent with the geographic area of the subarea.

Land Use Code Amendments, Design Guidelines, and Zoning

Staff proposes an implementation strategy for Bel-Red that would translate the policy guidance of the Subarea Plan into a set of development regulations and zoning specific to Bel-Red. Structurally, this would be similar to the organization of the development regulations that apply to Downtown. The actual regulations are unique to Bel-Red.

Most of the Bel-Red development regulations are located in a new Part 20.25D of the Land Use Code. This section includes nearly all of the regulations related to Bel-Red including those regarding phasing, uses, existing conditions, dimensional standards, development incentives, design standards, and other requirements. Design review guidelines would also be part of the land use regulatory framework; these are proposed to be located in a separate stand alone document.

Other changes are proposed for sections of the Land Use Code outside of Part 20.25D, such as related amendments to the general section, definitions, and references between the new Bel-Red code and existing sections.

Related to the new development regulations, the proposal calls for a legislative rezone of the Bel-Red Subarea to enable application of the new development regulations. Several of the proposed zones are similar to existing zones, such as the General Commercial area; other zones are new, higher density, mixed use zones that support the planned transit-oriented development near the transit stations.

Continued Planning Commission Review

Following a number of additional public engagement opportunities, including the major public hearing scheduled for May 28, 2008, the Planning Commission will continue its deliberations and refinement of the plan and code language. The Commission is expected to forward a recommendation to the Council later this year.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Diagram of Bel-Red Draft Documents

Copies of the draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan, related Comprehensive Plan amendments, Land Use Code amendments, zoning map, and design guidelines will be provided to the Council as documents separate from the meeting packet. They are also available to the public at the Service First counter and online at: http://www.bellevuewa.gov/bel-red_intro.htm

Attachment 1

Bel-Red Draft Documents

The proposed amendments for Bel-Red under consideration by the Planning Commission consist of three sets of documents: Draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan and Related Comprehensive Plan amendments; Draft Bel-Red Land Use Code Amendments and Zoning Map; and Draft Bel-Red Design Guidelines. The contents of these three documents are graphically depicted here.

Draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan and Related Comprehensive Plan Amendments

draft sections include:

- Draft New Bel-Red Subarea Plan, including policies, long range projects, and land use designations
- Wilburton/NE 8th Street map (boundary change)
- Crossroads map (boundary change)
- Transportation Element amendments for Bel-Red MMA boundary changes and LOS
- Glossary

Draft Bel-Red Land Use Code Amendments and Zoning Map

draft sections include:

- General statements
- Applicability
- Phasing of required improvements
- Permitted uses
- Existing conditions
- Land use charts
- Dimensional requirements
- Incentives
- Parking standards
- Landscaping
- Design standards
- Auto sales
- Zoning map

Bel-Red Design Guidelines

draft sections include:

- Character and site
- Pedestrian emphasis
- Architecture
- Lighting
- Signs