

City of
Bellevue



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 5, 2012

TO: Chair Turner and Members of the Planning Commission

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SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update

Every seven years Bellevue is required to update its Comprehensive Plan to ensure its continued compliance with the state Growth Management Act. This update for Bellevue, as with other cities in King County, is required to be completed no later than June 2015. Staff anticipates receiving City Council direction to formally launch the update process later this year or early next year. This study session will introduce the update process and provide an overview of the current Comprehensive Plan. No action is requested at this meeting.

More than meeting a state requirement, Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan has been a fundamental part of the community's vision for the future since the beginning of the city. The current plan last underwent a major review in 2004 and was originally adopted in 1993. The first plan for Bellevue was published in 1952, shortly before the city incorporated. Following the city's incorporation in 1953, the City Council's first act, Ordinance Number 1, established the Planning Commission.

The Comprehensive Plan sets the vision for how the community seeks to grow and accommodate change over time. Bellevue plans for people, their safety, places to live and recreate, for jobs and a strong local economy, schools and colleges, and a healthy environment. It is the city's responsibility to provide for public services and facilities that meet the needs of the community. The Comprehensive Plan is a tool that allows the city to forecast future growth and the demand for services, and plan for how to meet those demands. It is also the city's foundational policy document that provides direction for city regulations and investments.

During the Comprehensive Plan update process, staff will collect and analyze data, such as recent Census figures, new information from annexation areas, and other information about how the city has changed since 2004. Following the initial period of background data collection and research, the city will engage the community in its thoughts about the future of the community. While a specific public outreach plan has not been crafted yet, this process will likely include a mix of board and commission presentations, public open houses, neighborhood meetings, and Council briefings. Using the data collected and public input, staff will work with the Planning Commission to define options for the update and to prepare drafts. It is anticipated that the

Commission’s formal review of new drafts, including a public hearing, will occur in early 2014 with final adoption by Council in late 2014.

The update will need to include, at a minimum, recognition of new population and job growth, recently annexed areas, new forecasts and targets, and consistency with changes in state law that have occurred since 2004. At the Council’s discretion, the update may include significant policy review of key topics. The update is also an opportunity for members of the community to suggest changes to policy and land use maps.

General schedule for the Comprehensive Plan update

2012	2013	2014
Review of existing Comp Plan		
Data collection		
	Analysis and development of alternatives	
	Community outreach	
	Draft potential amendments	
	Community outreach	
		Public hearing
		Community outreach
		Council adoption

The focus of this study session on June 13 will be to review the components of the Comprehensive Plan with emphasis on the Community Vision statements as a means to provide the Planning Commission with a basis for thinking about the upcoming update process. The Comprehensive Plan includes a number of state-required chapters, called “elements.” It also includes a number of other chapters that are specific to Bellevue. In addition to citywide policies, the Comprehensive Plan includes subarea area plans for each part of the city, and transportation facility plans that identify specific transportation projects. A copy of the community vision portion of the Comprehensive Plan is attached (Attachment 1).

Additional study sessions will be scheduled this fall to continue review of the current Comprehensive Plan and to begin review of new data as it is collected and tabulated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Vision

MEETING THE CHALLENGES FOR TOMORROW

Bellevue 2025

Imagine the Year 2025

The following is a mental picture of Bellevue’s ideal future, assuming the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan are successfully realized.

A “City in a Park”

Bellevue’s open space network reinforces its reputation as a City in a Park, providing abundant access to the natural environment, continued development of community parks, and newer neighborhood and mini-parks. An extensive waterfront park opens Meydenbauer Bay to Downtown and other parts of West Bellevue and, on the other side of the city, a major park provides swimming and boat access to Lake Sammamish. The city’s open spaces are linked with trails and greenways that provide wildlife corridors, pedestrian routes, neighborhood connections, and access to magnificent views of the lakes and mountains.

A dedicated steward of environmental quality, where key natural features are preserved and restored

Bellevue takes the lead in promoting a quality, sustainable urban environment. Growth is occurring without harm to environmentally sensitive land and water resources. Many wetlands, riparian corridors and shorelines are protected in their natural state; others are being restored so they provide higher quality fish and wildlife habitat. As a result, more salmon are found in local creeks and streams, fish are spawning in several locations. The urban forest is recovering, and in many parts of Bellevue the tree canopy is increasing. These gains have been achieved through a combination of city programs, incentives, education, and regulations.

A model of superior urban design and “people places”

Commitment to urban design has helped make Bellevue a city of distinction, with “people places” that nurture a sense of community and neighborhoods that retain their unique character despite growth



Sidewalk cafes and retail shops bring local residents and business people to Old Bellevue.

and change. Key historic features are preserved, linking us to our past. Bellevue has completed the annexation of land within its urban growth boundary, and all development now occurs under the city’s design and environmental protection guidelines.

A community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods

High quality neighborhoods make Bellevue a “great place to live.” Individual homes are well maintained, as are the public facilities that serve the residents. Remodeling and upgrading have made older neighborhoods attractive to young families, while respectful development has enabled these neighborhoods to retain their character. At the other end of the spectrum, new, higher density neighborhoods thrive in the Downtown and in mixed-use areas like Factoria.



The Crossroads Park serves a diverse community.

Neighborhood shopping centers have redeveloped to meet the needs of nearby residents, and all Bellevue neighborhoods are now linked to schools, parks, and commercial areas by a complete pedestrian system of sidewalks and trails.

A city that meets the housing needs of all citizens

The diversity of housing types and densities reflects the variety of needs in the community and Bellevue’s changing demographics. The city has options for families with children, couples, singles, and seniors. Some of these options are innovative, such as transit-oriented development, cottages and other small-lot single family housing, and accessory dwelling units. Bellevue’s support of regional efforts to create affordable housing has paid off, and people who work in Bellevue can afford to live here. Affordable housing options are available for retail and personal service workers, a significant part of Bellevue’s workforce, and for residents with low incomes or special needs.

A regional economic center with a strong and diverse economy

Bellevue’s economy is dynamic and resilient, due in part to its highly educated workforce. Firms employ people in such fields as technology, health care, finance,

law, professional services and international trade. Attracted to the quality of life in this community, energetic and talented workers create a culture of innovation and new companies offer solid family-wage jobs. Retail employment continues to be another strong focus, and tourism is an expanding industry as entertainment and cultural amenities flourish.

A city with a great Downtown — viable, livable, and memorable

Downtown Bellevue is the hub of the Eastside’s economy, with a vibrant mix of office and retail employment, arts and cultural attractions, hotels, and housing, linked to the Puget Sound region by regional freeways and the High Capacity Transit system. More than 60,000 people work here, and almost 14,000 live in high quality apartments and condominiums. Vital residential neighborhoods surround the core and, in the southwest corner, Old Bellevue thrives as a unique area with a strong sense of Bellevue’s past. The entire Downtown is pedestrian-friendly, and is humming with activity in a variety of public places, including the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor and Bellevue Way’s “grand shopping street.” Restaurants, theaters, museums, nightclubs, a major performing arts center and other attractions bring Downtown alive 18 hours a day.



Mixed-use developments offer additional housing choices for residents.

The Eastside’s transportation hub, offering an array of mobility choices

The city’s transportation system is based on moving people and goods rather than moving cars. Auto dependency has been reduced by convenient and workable alternatives, including connections to the High Capacity Transit system, frequent neighborhood transit service, enhanced use of carpools, and an integrated pedestrian and bicycle system. Emphasis is on balance, not on the use of one mode to the exclusion of others. Both land use and transportation work together to provide mobility and to shape a high quality urban environment, less dominated by the auto and more sensitive to air quality, energy conservation, and protection of livable neighborhoods.

The center of arts and culture for the Eastside

Supported by strong leadership in both the public and private sectors, Bellevue has a national reputation for the visibility and strength of its arts and cultural offerings and the capacity of its cultural institutions. Unique and dynamic cultural districts have emerged in Downtown, Crossroads, and Eastgate/Factoria, which enhance the vitality of these mixed use neighborhoods.



The Bellevue Arts & Crafts fair draws more than 300,000 visitors to Bellevue each July.

Based on these attractions, and its ability to celebrate its ethnic and cultural diversity through the arts, Bellevue is known as a “must visit” place in the region. This enhances the city’s attractiveness to workers and residents of all ages seeking creativity and innovation.

A community that cares for people and families in need

Bellevue is a community that cares for and nurtures all of its people. The city plays an active role in shaping and supporting a system of human services which not only assists people in times of need, but also promotes the development of healthy individuals and families. The city is a recognized leader in engaging both public and private partners throughout the region to respond to the changing needs of its people, including youth and seniors and individuals with special needs. Overlake Hospital provides “state of the art” medical care.

A safe and secure community

Bellevue residents continue to feel secure and safe, as the city places the highest priority on protecting the community and preventing crime. Preparedness remains a major focus to assure that the city can respond effectively in an emergency.

A city served by outstanding community facilities and services

Public infrastructure is in excellent shape. The city has built new streets, sidewalks, utilities and other facilities as needed, and has restored much of its older infrastructure. All of this has been done in a way that is sensitive to and helps reinforce the character and quality of the city's neighborhoods. Bellevue has financed these maintenance, restoration and construction projects by carefully prioritizing needs, making the most efficient use of limited funding, and in some



The Eastgate Park & Ride garage provides parking for transit users along I-90.

cases finding innovative new funding sources and partnerships. The Bellevue School District has a national reputation as one of the best public school systems in the country. Bellevue Community College educates workers in the latest job skills and enriches Eastside residents with its continuing education offerings.

A leader in meeting regional challenges

Jurisdictions across the Eastside and the Central Puget Sound region have realized they must work together more effectively if the region is to make headway on such pressing issues as transportation, water supply, and environmental protection. Bellevue is recognized and valued as a leader in finding common ground and effective solutions to these interjurisdictional issues. The region continues to work together on growth management, resulting in closer-in, transit-friendly development that is less expensive to serve with public infrastructure. Farms, forests and open space are protected, and a highly valued part of this region's character.

An active and engaged community

Bellevue enjoys high levels of civic engagement as community groups, businesses and individuals work with city staff to identify and achieve community goals. The city makes citizen involvement a high priority, and Bellevue residents feel an increasing interconnectedness and sense of community. People

get involved, volunteer, and vote. The development of more community gathering places facilitates public discourse and interaction. There is an increasing capacity in Bellevue neighborhoods to participate in matters of interest, to help shape the community, and to engage in problem-solving.



Citizens in Bellevue get involved.