introduction
1. Introduction

The Eastgate/I-90 study area is located in the south central part of the city of Bellevue. The study area contains the Eastgate/I-90 employment corridor, one of the city’s five major employment centers. The corridor is home to approximately 24,300 jobs, or 17% of the city total (March, 2009). The corridor serves as a major gateway into Bellevue from the east, and enjoys such assets as accessibility, visibility, job diversity, and stable nearby residential neighborhoods.

This report was prepared as an initial component of the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project, which will evaluate land use and transportation alternatives for the Eastgate/I-90 employment corridor. The Project will result in updates to land use and transportation policies and regulations that will build on this area’s assets, provide a more coherent identity, improve its economic vitality and character, and ensure the area has an adequate transportation infrastructure and services to meet changing land use and community needs. It will explore opportunities created by the presence of major employers, Bellevue College, the Eastgate Park-and-Ride, neighborhood services, and other uses and natural attributes found within the study area. The Project is envisioned by CIP project CD-21.

This inventory report documents and describes existing conditions in the study area, and preliminarily identifies opportunities for, and challenges to, future change, in order to inform the Project. It provides an understanding of land uses, environmental characteristics, economics, utility and transportation infrastructure, and other existing characteristics of the study area. It will help ensure that environmental and other considerations are an integral part of the development and evaluation of alternatives, consistent with the “SEPA/GMA Integration” provisions of the State Environmental Policy Act.

Figure 1. Metropolitan Context
2 study area
2. Study Area

The Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project addresses land use and transportation issues and opportunities in portions of three planning subareas: Eastgate, Richards Valley and Factoria. While the primary focus of the project will be along the I-90 corridor, any land use or transportation changes along this corridor could have impacts that extend into surrounding neighborhoods. Further, the Eastgate area contains a large area of unincorporated King County which will likely annex to Bellevue in the next few years. Three geographic areas are therefore identified to help clarify both the extent and limits of this project: Primary Study Area, Transportation Influence Zone, and Potential Annexation Areas. (See Figures 2 and 3)

2.1 PRIMARY STUDY AREA

This area is the primary focus of the corridor evaluation. It generally includes the commercial, institutional, and industrial properties along both sides of I-90, and contains portions of the Eastgate, Richards Valley, and Factoria planning subareas. The primary study area generally extends from I-405 to 161st Avenue SE and from SE 26th Street to SE 38th Street.

It contains a total area of 633 acres, 504 acres north of I-90 and 129 acres south of I-90. Any land use changes that would result from the corridor evaluation would occur within this area. In addition, the primary study area extends eastward along I-90 to and including the Lakemont Boulevard Interchange area for transportation analysis only, and also includes the Mountains to Sound Greenway corridor along I-90.

Figure 2. Study Area
2.2 TRANSPORTATION INFLUENCE ZONE

This broadly drawn area includes neighborhoods north and south of the primary study area, and captures key transportation relationships with the primary study area. This zone of influence is not intended to have a fixed boundary, but rather encompasses the general area where key transportation impacts and mitigation should be evaluated and considered. The extent of this zone will be further defined as more analysis is undertaken as the Project proceeds.

Though no land use changes are envisioned in this area, residents within the area may be particularly interested in or feel impacted by land use and transportation changes in the primary study area. While the south portion of Bellevue College falls in the primary study area, due to a greater concentration of college buildings and activities on the south portion and that area’s proximity to adjacent non-residential uses, the north portion lies outside the primary study area (but within the transportation influence zone) as it has a greater relationship to nearby residential areas.

2.3 ANNEXATION AREA

A large area of unincorporated King County lies south/southeast of the primary study area. Overwhelmingly residential in character, it is expected that this area will annex to the city of Bellevue in the next few years. Because of its proximity, it bears a geographical relationship to the primary study area. However, it encompasses a different set of issues that will be examined as part of the annexation process, which will be an effort that runs in parallel with the corridor evaluation.