



**Planning Staff Report**

DATE: May 8, 2008

TO: Chair Robertson and Members of the Bellevue Planning Commission

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SUBJECT: Bel-Red Comprehensive Plan Amendments (08-114836-AC) and Land Use Code Amendments (07-138331-AD), and Medical Institution Land Use Code Amendments (08-114835-AD)  
May 28, 2008, Public Hearing

**I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

The proposal would adopt a new Subarea Plan, land use regulations and zoning for the Bel-Red area. The Subarea Plan envisions the area transforming over time from the current light industrial and commercial uses to new vibrant neighborhoods and thriving businesses 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.

Much of the area west of 134th Avenue is proposed to be rezoned from light industrial to new zoning categories that support higher density, office, retail and residential uses focused around envisioned transit station locations, including “nodal” areas immediately east of the Overlake Hospital and Group Health campus, between 120th and 124th Avenue, and at about 130th Avenue. Most of the area west of the BNSF rail corridor would be rezoned to support medical office uses, recognizing their proximity to the Overlake Hospital and Group Health campus. The site of the planned Children’s Hospital facility is proposed to be rezoned to Medical Institution; related Land Use Code amendments are proposed to the Medical Institution regulations.

While the eastern portion of the Subarea is proposed to be rezoned as part of this planning effort, the new zoning category for the commercial area along NE 20th Street would be similar to the zoning in place today. The new zoning for the community business area generally north of Bel-Red Road and east of 134th Avenue would be similar to the Community Business zoning in place today with increased emphasis on mixed use development. A relatively small area on the far eastern side of the study area between 156th Avenue and Bel-Red Road and adjacent to Redmond’s Overlake Village area is proposed to be rezoned to support higher density mixed use residential development.

This staff report describes the proposal in greater detail, provides an overview of the process to review these amendments, and responds to the amendment decision criteria.

More information about the Bel-Red project and copies of past documents are available for public review at the Bel-Red Web site at [http://www.bellevuewa.gov/bel-red\\_intro.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/bel-red_intro.htm). The staff contact for the project is Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Planning Manager, [pingham@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:pingham@bellevuewa.gov) or 425-452-4070.

## **II. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends adoption of the new Bel-Red Subarea Plan replacing the existing Bel-Red/Northup Subarea Plan outright and adoption of related Comprehensive Plan amendments, including modification of the Crossroads and Wilburton/NE 8th Street subarea boundaries, and amendments to the Transportation Element and the Glossary; adoption of Land Use Code amendments including new Bel-Red regulations, design standards and design guidelines; amendments to the Medical Institution regulations; other related Code changes, and adoption of new zoning districts for the Bel-Red area. This proposal satisfies the Decision Criteria for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (see Section VII) and the Decision Criteria for a Land Use Code Amendment (see Section VIII).

## **III. REVIEW PROCESS**

The Planning Commission is seeking public comments on the draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan, regulations and other related amendments. The current set of draft documents is the culmination of work by the Bel-Red Steering Committee over a two year process, work of five of the City's boards and commissions, and input from members of the public, property owners and businesses. While dialog with and direction from the Planning Commission aided the development of the Subarea Plan and draft regulations, these drafts have not been fully endorsed by the Planning Commission. Following the public hearing the Planning Commission is anticipated to continue its discussion and refinement of the draft Plan and Code language. Continued input from the public, business and property owners, neighborhood groups and other stakeholders will help the Planning Commission review the drafts proposed by staff.

A public hearing before the Planning Commission on the draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan, regulations, and related amendments is scheduled for May 28, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. at Bellevue City Hall, room 1E-113.

In addition, other public involvement opportunities are planned, including a public open house on May 15, 2008, from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m., followed by a presentation to six of the City's boards and commissions. Targeted meetings with business and property owners, as well as neighborhood groups are also planned.

## **IV. BACKGROUND**

As one of Bellevue's major employment areas, Bel-Red includes more than 1,100 businesses and nearly 17 percent of the City's total employment. In recent years, however, the area has been in transition. Several large employers have moved out of or have greatly reduced

operations in the area. For example, Safeway, the area's largest operation has shifted most of its distribution operations out of the area.

The area's physical characteristics reflect its past light industrial and commercial use pattern. The transportation network is sparse and discontinuous with little in the way of a street grid, particularly in the area's west side. Six streams flow through the area. Most are highly impacted by past development, although some still provide natural functions and the opportunity for restoration of salmon habitat. There is one major recreational facility in the area's 900-plus acres, Highland Community Center, but there are no substantial neighborhood parks or trails.

Bel-Red is geographically located between Downtown Bellevue and Redmond's Overlake area. In the summer of 2005, the city retained Leland Consulting Group to prepare a market/economic study of the Bel-Red area. Based on evaluation of land use and development patterns and stakeholder interviews, Leland forecast that the area could anticipate a strong future demand for office and housing, and a less strong (but still increased) demand for retail and hotel uses. The upper range of the forecasted demand was 4 million square feet of additional office space, 500,000 square feet of additional retail space, and 5,000 housing units. They also concluded that new warehouse/industrial uses were unlikely to locate in the area in the future due to already high and rising land prices.

Meanwhile, Sound Transit, the regional transit provider, began considering extension of light rail transit service from Seattle to Downtown Bellevue and on to Overlake through the Bel-Red area. The planning effort for Bel-Red presents a unique opportunity to plan land uses and transit services in coordination with each other.

## **V. STEERING COMMITTEE PROCESS**

The Bel-Red Steering Committee completed a two year planning process that evaluated multiple future alternatives for the Bel-Red area. The Steering Committee process included a large amount of public input and examination of a great deal of technical information.

Guided by their charge from the City Council, the Committee developed a land use vision for the area where significant portions reflect a more mixed use (housing/office/retail) composition that supports the city's economic development strategy. This land use pattern would be supported by a more robust, integrated, and multi-modal transportation system; would support future light rail or other high capacity transit extensions and service in the area; and would include parks, open space, and environmental amenities that the area currently lacks. The open space strategy is particularly significant in that it would enhance the head-waters of many of Bellevue's streams and reestablish many of the ecological functions that these areas have lost.

The Committee envisioned that some of the areas outside of the transit nodes, such as the commercial area along NE 20th Street, would retain their mix of uses and character. This decision was based on the conclusion that Bel-Red should continue to provide many of the small service and retail uses that serve the surrounding neighborhoods and community.

Specifically, the Steering Committee sees the area as distinguished by the following attributes:

- A thriving, diverse economy.
- Vibrant, diverse neighborhoods.
- A comprehensive, connected parks and open space system.
- Environmental improvements.
- A multi-modal transportation system.
- A sense of place.
- Appropriate scale of development.
- Timing of development.
- Sustainability.

The Steering Committee's vision and preferred alternative is discussed in more detail in the Steering Committee's Final Report dated September 2007.

## **VI. PROPOSAL**

### **Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

#### New Bel-Red Subarea Plan

Staff reviewed the Steering Committee's recommendation with several of the City's boards and commissions between October 2007 and February 2008, including review of the first draft of the new Bel-Red Subarea Plan distributed in January 2008. The City held an open house on January 31, 2008, to encourage public review of that draft plan. Four of the City boards and commissions presented their policy recommendations 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 May 28.

The proposed draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan captures 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.

#### New Public Infrastructure

To support the planned new uses and development intensity, new public infrastructure is required. New streets, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and access to transit and regional

transportation systems is needed to provide access and mobility options to the new residents and businesses that will locate in the Bel-Red area. The draft Subarea Plan calls for new transportation improvements that provide local access, connectivity to other parts of the city and the region, and that enhance citywide mobility by increasing east-west connectivity and access between Downtown Bellevue and Overlake. In addition to the new transportation facilities, the draft Subarea Plan calls for new parks, open space areas, and restoration of stream corridors, recognizing that improvements to the public environment are needed to make the area attractive for new residential and retail neighborhood activity. A keystone project that will incorporate transportation, open space, and recreation components is the new NE 15th/16th Street that will connect from NE 12th Street on the west side to 136th Place on the east. This street will be the primary boulevard that ties together the Bel-Red neighborhoods.

The draft Plan includes lists of public transportation, parks and open space projects that 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 the 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. The new NE 15th/16th Street, in particular, has received extensive design work.

The transportation projects have been reviewed and are recommended by the Transportation Commission, with the exception of NE 15th/16th Street. The Parks and Community Services Board and the Transportation Commission both are interested in better understanding the plans for the NE 15th/16th Street, which is proposed to be a center piece project for the area with a light rail right of way, separated pedestrian and bicycle paths, integration with adjacent land uses, and park space, as well as a 4/5 lane arterial street. The parks and streams projects have been reviewed with the Parks and Community Services Board and the Environmental Services Commission. The Environmental Services Commission endorsed the environmental projects listed in Table 3 of the draft plan and supports the parks projects, noting that some of parks projects include areas that will benefit stream restoration. The Parks and Community Services Board has indicated general support for the array of parks projects being contemplated; at this time they have not made a formal recommendation.

#### Land Use Map

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 on-the-ground realities such as parcel boundaries, topography, location of stream corridors and existing uses. The map applies “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.

Recognizing that the Plan and regulations may need to be adjusted to keep up with changing conditions, to increase its effectiveness, or to better match actual development that occurs, the plan includes a policy that calls for examining the implementation of the plan about five years after its initial adoption.

#### Crossroads and Wilburton/NE 8th Boundary Amendments

In addition the new Subarea Plan, the draft 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 consistent with the Steering Committee vision to adjust the transportation level of service (LOS) standard from D (.9) to E+ (.95). This proposed LOS standard supports the land use vision for the area and a strong emphasis on developing alternatives to the single occupant vehicle – in particular, transit and non-motorized commute options. LOS E+ is consistent with other urban/mixed-use MMAs (mobility management areas) in the city, including Downtown, Factoria and Overlake. Boundary changes to MMA 4 are proposed to correspond with the proposed boundaries of the Bel-Red Subarea, redesignating it as MMA 12, and to create a new MMA 4 from the remainder of the old MMA 4 to encompass the Wilburton area.

### **Land Use Code Amendments and Zoning Map**

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. Preliminary draft Land Use Code (LUC) sections include those unique to the Bel-Red Land Use District that address:

- General section of the Bel-Red code
- Review required
- Phasing of required improvements
- Permitted uses
- Existing conditions – which addresses existing light industrial and service uses and sites
- Dimensional requirements
- Incentives
- Parking standards
- Landscaping
- Design standards
- Auto sales

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 be part of the land use regulatory framework; these are proposed to be located in a separate stand-alone document. Structurally, this would be similar to the organization of the development regulations that apply to Downtown. The actual regulations are unique to Bel-Red.

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.

### Zoning and Neighborhood Districts

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. This will be processed as a change to the Land Use Code including review according to the Land Use Code Amendment criteria. While some 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.

The nodal development pattern in Bel-Red concentrates land use in the vicinity of potential future transit stations. Development in the nodes could reach a maximum intensity of 2.5 FAR (floor area ratio). Maximum building heights would vary by development node, with heights up to 150 feet near the center of the nodes and up to 125 feet in the perimeter. Development outside of nodes would generally be up to 1.0 FAR and up to 70 feet. Some areas outside the nodes, such as the transition area south of Bel-Red Road will have a more limited maximum development potential and a lower maximum height. The maximum heights and development intensities will typically be allowed through participation in an incentive system and design review. Otherwise, lower base heights and intensities will apply.

The combination of FAR and height limits is intended to provide opportunity for development flexibility and result in varied building forms throughout the area. Unlike other land use codes that anticipate building out to the edges of a building envelope defined by setbacks and height limits, the limit of FAR, rather than the building envelope, will define the massing of buildings. The heights and setbacks are proposed to be relatively less restrictive to provide greater design flexibility.

### **Medical office area in vicinity of Overlake Hospital Medical Center**

This is an area directly adjacent to Overlake Hospital Medical Center and the Group Health Ambulatory Care Center, by far the largest medical complex on the Eastside. In addition to these institutional uses, the area is characterized by a wide range of medical office uses that complement the medical campus. Proposed MO-1 zoning for the area immediately east of the Overlake Hospital and Group Health campus would allow for office uses with an emphasis on medical office. Heights may reach 150 feet and FAR up to 2.5.

MO, Medical Office, zoning to allow for medical office uses is proposed in the area north of Overlake Hospital and Group Health campus and NE 12th Street and west of the BNSF rail corridor. A FAR up to 1.0 is proposed for the MO zone.

Medical Institution, or MI, zoning is proposed for the Children's Hospital site northeast of NE 12th Street and 116th Avenue. This is an area appropriate to accommodate the needs of a major medical institutions and related uses in buildings that provide a high quality of design that recognizes this area as a prominent community landmark.

#### **Node at 122nd Avenue NE**

The OR-1 and OR-2, Office Residential-1 and -2, zoning in this area located on the west side of the Subarea where it is to be served by a future transit station will allow for a mix of office, housing and retail uses, with office as the predominant use. Potential height in the center of this node may reach 150 feet, and up to 125 feet in the perimeter. Housing and retail uses are encouraged to be part of the mix of this neighborhood, to avoid a sterile office-only area and to create a balance of activities. Parks, open spaces, and recreational opportunities are envisioned as part of this urban environment.

#### **Node at 130th Avenue NE**

The RC-1 and RC-2, Residential Commercial-1 and -2, zoning in these area located near the middle of the Subarea will allow for a mix of housing, retail and services, with an emphasis on housing, and including a pedestrian-oriented retail area along 130th Avenue NE. Potential height in the center of this node may reach 150 feet, and up to 125 feet in the perimeter. With its focus on residential uses, this area represents a key opportunity to develop a range of housing types and densities.

#### **Node at 156th Avenue NE, near the Overlake transit station location in Redmond**

The RC-3, Residential Commercial-3, zoning in this area on the edge of Redmond's designated Overlake neighborhood, and within the walkable area of the planned Overlake transit station at 152nd Avenue NE, will allow for a mix of housing and retail uses in this area. Maximum heights are proposed to be 70 feet, with a limit of 45 feet applied to the portion of the area within 50 feet of 156th Avenue to ensure an appropriate relationship to the street and a transition to the lower intensity zones to the east.

#### **Retail along the central portion of the NE 20th Street corridor and the Area south of NE 12th Street and contiguous to Lake Bellevue**

Bel-Red specific GC, General Commercial, zoning will allow for retail and commercial uses in this area, with a FAR maximum of 1.0 and a maximum height of 45 feet. This zoning would be similar to the GC zoning in place today. Little significant land use change in these areas is contemplated.

#### **Area south of Bel-Red Road**

ORT, Office Residential Transition, zoning will allow for a mix of office and housing in this area, with low-intensity buildings serving as an appropriate buffer between the uses north of Bel-Red Road and the single-family residential neighborhoods to the south. While office should remain a focus, housing in this area is also a suitable transition use.

A maximum FAR of 0.75 and a maximum height limit of 45 feet are proposed.

**Mixed Use Retail/Housing Areas** (area just west of 148th Avenue, area near Highland Park and Community Center, and the triangular area south of NE 12th Street, east of 120th Avenue NE)

RC, Residential Commercial, zoning is proposed to allow additional development of retail uses in these areas, together with mixed use development that incorporates housing. A maximum FAR of 1.0 and a maximum height limit of 70 feet are proposed.

**Housing Emphasis Areas** (area north of the Metro east base along the south end of NE 20th Street, north of the West Tributary, and an area north of Lake Bellevue)

R, Residential, zoning will allow housing development in these areas, taking advantage of view corridors to the south and west, as well as potential improvements to the West Tributary stream corridor. A maximum FAR of 1.0 and a height limit of 45 feet are proposed.

### Phasing and Timing of Development

The plan for Bel-Red is a long range plan intended to guide development and city decisions over several decades. Redevelopment in the area won't happen all at once or immediately following the adoption of the plan. Fulfillment of the vision may be a 50 or more year process. To focus the plan on the reasonably foreseeable future, the plan is targeted toward a 20 year planning horizon, or to about 2030. By 2030, we anticipate development of a net increase of about 4.5 million square feet of commercial uses and about 5,000 new residences.

As commercial and residential development occurs in the Bel-Red area, the draft Plan also anticipates development of the public infrastructure system, including new streets, parks and open space. To ensure that these new infrastructure components are provided as redevelopment takes place, the draft Code provisions include three phasing requirements.

One of the phasing regulations limits the development in the medical office node (MO-1, the 122nd Avenue node (OR-1 and OR-2) and the 130th Avenue node (RC-1 and RC-2) to 0.5 FAR (floor area ratio) intensity until a funding mechanism for an initial phase of infrastructure is in place. This would allow development to continue at levels of intensity similar to or slightly above today's current intensities, while ensuring that the more intense development that will be allowed doesn't get too far ahead of the development of the public infrastructure. Reliance on concurrency – a typical tool for linking transportation capacity to growth – is not sufficient. Under concurrency, early development could occur, but then would be forced to stop until transportation infrastructure caught up, essentially delaying the question on how to fund the infrastructure until a later date. Financing of the public infrastructure system is being considered by the City Council. Potentially, the first phase funding mechanism may be in place at or near the time of adoption of the draft Plan.

A provision of phasing included in the Land Use Code is that development in Bel-Red shall be subject to the provisions of BROTS, as originally executed to cap commercial development at a total of 12.2 million square feet through 2012, or as thereafter amended or superseded.

Additionally, phasing regulations will synchronize land use development with the provision of high capacity transit service. New commercial development is proposed to be limited to 4.5 million square feet until high capacity transit is in place.

#### Development Incentives

The Bel-Red Subarea Plan includes an ambitious vision that will require significant investments in transportation projects, new parks and open spaces, environmental improvements, and other public amenities. These improvements will be realized through a combination of public capital investment, development standards (or requirements), development incentives and other public and private strategies. It is recognized that this combination of tools approach is needed due to the extent of the planned public infrastructure and affordable housing objectives. The use of incentives is based on a concept that additional development rights will provide developers sufficient value to offset the cost of providing some of the public amenities and infrastructure as part of their developments.

Development incentives, commonly referred to as a “density bonus,” would allow greater building intensities and height in the node areas up to a 2.5 FAR above a base level in exchange for the provision of a public amenity or amenities from a pre-defined list. The list includes a range of large and small public amenities that, depending on the amenity, could occur either as part of a development (on-site), off-site in certain circumstances, or through a fee-in-lieu system. The common thread is that all items on the list would both provide a public benefit and be potentially implemented through a Bel-Red land use incentive.

#### List of Bonusable Amenities

- Workforce/affordable housing
- Stream restoration
- Parks and open space
- Natural drainage features
- Public access to privately developed plazas
- Active recreation areas
- Community/non-profit space
- Child care services
- Arts/cultural district uses
- Public art/sculpture
- Public restrooms
- LEED™ certification
- Regional transfer of development rights

#### Medical Institution

Children’s Hospital representatives requested that the Medical Institution (MI) District be expanded to include property that they are purchasing north of NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side of 116<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. The request was to apply the MI zoning designation to the Children’s site and to provide dimensional and use flexibility that is necessary for Children’s to accommodate an ambulatory health care center (AHCC) on their property. In this regard, the request is similar in nature to the flexibility requested by Group Health Cooperative when

they decided to collocate their AHCC on the Overlake Campus. Much of the work done by the Planning Commission in 2005 in response to the Group Health request is still relevant and will be used to guide consideration of this current request by Children's.

The rationale for zoning this site MI is supportable for the following reasons. First, the site is located within the Bel-Red study area. As such, development assumptions made in the Bel-Red Corridor Project EIS can be used to disclose environmental impacts anticipated to result from the necessary non-project actions that would include Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code and zoning changes. Second, consolidation with the Bel-Red amendments is likely the best approach to address the Children's Hospital objectives.

### **Design Guidelines**

The urban design goal for the Bel-Red area is to achieve a design character that results in aesthetically beautiful, distinctive, and long-lasting places that evoke a strong sense of Bellevue and the Northwest, and a dynamic public realm that encourages social interaction. The work currently underway to implement a new set of development standards and design guidelines is an essential piece to implementing the Bel-Red vision. Design review in the Subarea is proposed to be required for most projects (except in the MO and GC zones) that exceed a development intensity of 0.5 FAR. This allows a base level similar to today's current maximums where the code's dimensional, use and design standards would still apply and providing a more streamlined review process for smaller projects, such as expansions of existing uses. It also is consistent with the intent that as development includes a mixture of residential and commercial uses and increases intensity beyond current levels there should be greater attention to the urban design elements of sites and buildings.

## **VII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT DECISION CRITERIA**

The decision criteria for a Comprehensive Plan amendment are set forth in the Land Use Code, Section 20.30I.150. Based on the criteria, Department of Planning and Community Development staff has concluded that the proposed amendment merits **approval**. This conclusion is based on the following analysis:

### **B1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other goals and policies of the city, the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), the Growth Management Act and other applicable law; and**

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other goals and policies in these planning documents for urban growth development.

#### **Comprehensive Plan**

The proposal for Bel-Red is consistent with the overall Comprehensive Plan, including common policy themes, such as encouraging redevelopment and economic development of existing areas, protection of single family neighborhoods, encouraging walking, transit use and other alternatives to single occupant vehicles, support for mixed use development, and interest in preservation and enhancement of open space, recreation

areas and the natural environment. Areas of the specific policy support from some of the individual sections of the Comprehensive Plan are listed below.

The **Land Use Element** provides broad support for the concepts included in the Bel-Red Subarea Plan including support for redevelopment of existing developed areas, the inclusion of residential uses in commercial areas, a range of housing choices, the provision of open space, and land use patterns that support walking and public health. Specific policies that support the Bel-Red Subarea Plan include:

**Land Use Element Policy LU-7.** Support inclusion of residential uses in commercial districts where compatibility can be demonstrated.

**Land Use Element Policy LU-13.** Reduce the regional consumption of undeveloped land by facilitating redevelopment of existing developed land when appropriate.

**Land Use Element Policy LU-15.** Encourage dedication of open space and preservation and restoration of trees and vegetation to perpetuate Bellevue's park-like setting and enhance the city's natural environment.

**Land Use Element Policy LU-18.** Adopt and maintain policies, codes and land use patterns that promote walking in order to increase public health.

**Land Use Element Policy LU-23.** Provide, through land use regulation, the potential for a broad range of housing choices to meet the changing needs of the community.

**Land Use Element Policy LU-31.** Encourage and foster economic development in areas designated for commercial uses.

Support for providing a range of housing choices and housing affordability is included in the **Housing Element**.

**Housing Element Policy HO-11.** Encourage housing opportunities in mixed residential/commercial settings throughout the city.

**Housing Element Policy HO-12.** Provide incentives to encourage residential development for a range of household types and income levels in commercial areas.

The **Transportation Element** provides support for development of a comprehensive transportation system that provide transportation choices by various modes of travel, including transit, cars, pedestrians and bicycles.

**Transportation Element Policy TR-1.** Integrate land use and transportation decisions to ensure that the transportation system supports the Comprehensive Plan Land Use vision.

**Transportation Element Policy TR-8.** Incorporate transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly design features in new development through the development review process.

**Transportation Element Policy TR-24.** Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements into roadway projects, and incorporate transit/high-occupancy vehicle improvements where feasible.

**Transportation Element Policy TR-25.** Provide for adequate roadway, pedestrian, and bicycling connections in newly developing areas of the city, promoting both internal access and linkages with the rest of the city.

**Transportation Element Policy TR-44.** Design arterials and streets to fit the character of the areas through which they pass.

**Transportation Element Policy TR-77.** Consider pedestrians and bicycles along with other travel modes in all aspects of developing the transportation system.

The **Economic Element** has a section that specifically calls for maintaining and revitalizing the City's aging commercial areas and Bel-Red is identified as an area needing attention.

**Economic Element Policy ED-26.** Where commercial areas are in decline, work with businesses and other stakeholders to identify corrective actions, which may include:

1. Planning for new uses and new urban forms, leading to proposals for changes to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning
2. Developing incentives and other strategies to promote reinvestment
3. Targeting investments in public infrastructure that may help catalyze new private sector investment

Enhancement of existing natural environment conditions is encouraged by the **Environmental Element**.

**Environmental Element Policy EN-16.** Facilitate the transfer of development potential away from critical areas and the clustering of development on the least sensitive portion of a site.

**Environmental Element Policy EN-19.** Provide incentives to private property owners to achieve specific habitat improvement goals, including retention and enhancement of native vegetation.

**Environmental Element Policy EN-24.** Prioritize efforts to preserve or enhance fish and wildlife habitat through regulations and public investments in critical areas with largely intact functions and in degraded areas where there is a significant potential for restoring functions.

**Growth Management Act**

The proposal is consistent with the Growth Management Act. The draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan encourages and supports denser, mixed use development that allows development to locate and concentrate in urban areas creating an alternative to urban expansion into rural areas. The Subarea Plan also supports providing housing near jobs, alternative modes of transportation, and improving housing affordability and choice.

**Countywide Planning Policies**

Countywide Planning Policies for King County are organized by topics in nine separate chapters. The framework policies in each chapter are implemented through local plans and regulations. Evidence of the consistency of the proposal with the framework policies is as follows:

- I. **Critical Areas** *The proposal will not affect the implementation of regulations dealing with critical areas. Proposed incentives will help protect and restore stream corridors within the Bel-Red area.*
- II. **Land Use Pattern** *The proposal is consistent with the implementation of the desired urban land use pattern by increasing the opportunity for nodal, denser development within an existing urban area.*
- III. **Transportation** *The proposal is coordinated with regional transportation systems, including designating higher density “nodes” near planned transit station locations, new arterial streets to enhance city-to-city traffic flows, new connections to SR-520, and an enhanced bicycle and pedestrian network with connections to regional trails.*
- IV. **Community Character and Open Space** *The proposal will not affect the implementation of regulations dealing with historic resources. The proposal will enhance the area’s urban design through new design standards and guidelines. It will also provide incentives that encourage community services, and open space lands and corridors.*
- V. **Affordable Housing** *The proposal includes policy support for greater housing affordability.*
- VI. **Contiguous and Orderly Development and Provision of Urban Services to Such Development** *The proposal calls for redevelopment of an existing urban area.*
- VII. **Siting Public Capital Facilities of a Countywide or Statewide Nature.** *Not applicable to this proposal.*

VIII. **Economic Development** *The proposal supports investment and economic development within the designated area.*

IX. **Regional Finance and Governance** *Not applicable to this proposal.*

**B2. The proposed amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city as identified in its long-range planning and policy documents; and**

The amendment addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire City. The City's interest is in maintaining the health of its commercial areas and encouraging reinvestment. The City also has an interest in planning for redevelopment in coordination with the planning for future transit service and creating development capacity that extends beyond the city's current 2022 growth targets. Geographically located between rapidly developing Downtown Bellevue and the Overlake neighborhood in Redmond, Bel-Red is uniquely positioned and provides an opportunity to support economic development in the City different from both Downtown Bellevue and other Bellevue commercial areas.

**B3. The proposed amendment addresses significantly changed conditions since the last time the pertinent Comprehensive Plan map or text was amended. See LUC 20.50.046 [below] for the definition of "significantly changed conditions;" and**

**Significantly changed conditions are defined as:** Demonstrating evidence of change such as unanticipated consequences of an adopted policy, or changed conditions on the subject property or its surrounding area, or changes related to the pertinent Plan map or text; where such change has implications of a magnitude that need to be addressed for the Comprehensive Plan to function as an integrated whole. *This definition applies only to Part 20.30I Amendment and Review of the Comprehensive Plan (LUC 20.50.046).*

The proposed amendments address the significant changes in and affecting the Bel-Red area, including:

- Declining employment in the Bel-Red area.
- Sound Transit's consideration of light rail transit through the Bel-Red area from Downtown Bellevue to Redmond's Overlake area.
- The designation of the Overlake area as a regional Urban Center and the update of the Overlake Village Plan.

The background and context that describe the changing conditions of the area is discussed in more detail in the Bel-Red Steering Committee's final report dated September 2007 and in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The conclusion is that while light industrial and commercial uses will remain in Bel-Red and contribute to the City's economy, significant changes in and around the Bel-Red area will drive demand for more office, retail, and housing, while demand will soften for industrial uses.

**B4. If a site-specific proposed amendment, the subject property is suitable for development in general conformance with adjacent land use and the surrounding development pattern, and with zoning standards under the potential zoning classifications; and**

N/A

**B5. The proposed amendment demonstrates a public benefit and enhances the public health, safety and welfare of the city.**

The proposal seeks to enhance the economic vitality of the Bel-Red area and the City by allowing and encouraging appropriate redevelopment, and through public and private reinvestment in a network of new transportation, parks and open space facilities that benefit the Bel-Red area and the City as a whole.

### **VIII. LAND USE CODE AMENDMENT DECISION CRITERIA**

The decision criteria for an amendment to the text of the Land Use Code and legislative map amendments are set forth in the Land Use Code, Section 20.30J.135. Based on the criteria, Department of Planning and Community Development staff has concluded that the proposed amendments merit **approval**. This conclusion is based on the following analysis:

**A. The amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and**

The Land Use Code text amendments, inclusive of the adoption of the Bel-Red zoning, are proposed as a means to implement the Bel-Red Subarea Plan and related Comprehensive Plan amendments. The Code amendments are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as discussed above under section VII.B.2., including encouraging redevelopment and economic development of existing areas, protection of single family neighborhoods, encouraging uses that support transit and other alternative transportation modes, support for mixed use development, and encouraging preservation and enhancement of open space, recreation areas and the natural environment. Areas of the specific policy support from some of the individual sections of the Comprehensive Plan are listed in Section VII.B.2 above.

**B. The amendment enhances the public health, safety or welfare; and**

The proposed Land Use Code amendments enhance the public health, safety and welfare by implementing a plan that provides for more housing and employment opportunities in the City of Bellevue, increases access for pedestrian and bicycles and other modes of transportation, provides additional recreational areas and connections to regional trails and parks, and encourages development that is less energy intensive and that will contribute to enhancement of the area's environmental features.

**C. The amendment is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Bellevue.**

Through a combination of rezoning, development of public infrastructure, and a development incentive system, the amendments enhance the value of Bel-Red properties while creating a new system of streets, parks, open space and other amenities that will be a benefit to both Bel-Red area property owners, businesses, residents and the City as a whole.

**IX. STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was issued by the City of Bellevue on July 19, 2007, which analyzed environmental impacts associated with the no action alternative and the preliminary preferred alternative for potential future land use and transportation changes and development anticipated through 2030 in the 912-acre Bel-Red study area. The FEIS may be viewed on the Bel-Red Corridor Project web site:

[http://www.bellevuewa.gov/bel-red\\_intro.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/bel-red_intro.htm).

**X. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT**

Notice of the application, staff report and public hearing was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin on May 8, 2008.

This proposal follows from a more than two-year public process that included a significant amount of public input and comment. Key comments received recently leading up to these drafts have included concerns about making the plan work for those that own property in the area. Some expressed concern about how existing businesses will be effected. Others want to ensure that the plan and regulations allow for the types and intensities of new development that they are planning. There is concern by some that a combination of new regulations, the cost of participating in the incentive system, and new fees that might be imposed separately from this proposal, will be such a burden that property owners won't be able to afford to redevelop. Staff has also heard from some that are interested in the specific uses, heights and intensities allowed for individual properties.

Several public engagements are planned for the month of May leading up to the public hearing scheduled for May 28, 2008. A public open house will be held on May 15. Meetings with business and property owners are scheduled for May 13. Additional presentations will also be provided to interested groups. Comments from those engagements will be made available, along with other comments received prior to or at the hearing, to the Planning Commission for its consideration.

A courtesy hearing with the East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC) on those amendments with EBCC jurisdiction and a general briefing to the EBCC on the entire set of Bel-Red amendments was held on May 6, 2008. The EBCC discussed the general nature of

the amendments and suggested minor improvements to the Land Use Code under consideration regarding household pets.

The draft Bel-Red amendments will be provided to the state Community Trade and Economic Development Department (CTED) on May 9, 2008, to initiate the state's 60-day review process.

## **XI. NEXT STEPS**

We request the Planning Commission to conduct and close the public hearing at its regular meeting on May 28, 2008, discuss the proposal, and ask questions of staff. It is anticipated that the Commission will continue its review, deliberation and refinement of the proposals at additional meetings following the public hearing, and will make a recommendation to the City Council later this year.

## **XII. ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Bel-Red Subarea Plan and related Comprehensive Plan Amendments
2. Draft Bel-Red Land Use Code amendments, including a draft zoning map and Medical Institution amendments
3. Draft Bel-Red Design Guidelines