



MEMORANDUM

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TO: Chairman Carlson and Members of the Planning Commission

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SUBJECT: Forming our Future – the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update
Review of the draft work program

We've been asking the community about their thoughts on the future of Bellevue and using their ideas to identify issues to address in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan update. Using public comment, technical analysis, and legal requirements as a basis, staff has assembled a draft work program to guide the update, which will be the focus of the April 24, 2013, study session. The draft work program is included as Attachment 1.

This Planning Commission study session provides an additional opportunity to hear from the public their vision for the future and what issues most need to be considered during the plan update. While no formal recommendation is required at this stage, the Planning Commission's review of the draft work program will be helpful prior to the City Council's consideration in May.

BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Plan is the holder of the community's vision for the future of Bellevue, it sets policy that directs city actions and decisions, and it guides city investments in infrastructure. The plan addresses a wide range of topics, including land use, housing, transportation, parks, economic development and human services. The plan consists of four key components:

- The Community Vision statement illustrates the city we hope to become
- "Elements" of the plan include goals and policies that guide city actions
- Subarea Plans for each of fourteen geographic areas in the city
- Transportation plans that contain potential transportation projects

The Comprehensive Plan provides the overall policy structure that helps ensure consistency between the city's various functional or system plans, such as the Bellevue Parks and Open Space Plan, as well as coordinating them with the city's plans for growth. The Comprehensive Plan includes broad, citywide policies that frame fundamental management of land uses and city resources.

On January 24 the city held a Joint Boards & Commissions Forum to discuss the scope of the Comprehensive Plan update. The forum was an opportunity for the city's boards and commissions to come together and share their ideas for the future of the city. With participation of the majority of board and commission members, the forum provided an introduction to the update talking about

how the city has changed over the last ten and twenty years, including increased diversity, economic and population growth, and environmental threats. It also noted how people care about their community and neighborhoods, and how they value the parks, schools, services, opportunities, arts, culture, character, and other attributes of the city. Board and commission members were formed into discussion table where they were asked what their vision is for Bellevue 10, 20 or more years into the future, for communities, for business, for the environment, and for families.

The experience of the city's boards and commissions give them insight into the emerging needs of the Bellevue community. As the city works on the update, their participation and contribution will be critical to making sure that the plan anticipates the changing needs of the community and provides policy direction to meet those needs.

Additionally, the East Bellevue Community Council hosted a public event at the Crossroads Community Center to hear from the public their ideas about the city and its future. Over 40 people attended the event. Participants spent considerable time engaging each other, those Community Council members and city board and commission members that attended, and city staff in discussing their vision for the future of Bellevue. It was interesting to note the issues brought up were similar to those discussed at the January 24 Joint Forum.

Staff has also met with stakeholders and conducted other outreach, including meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and Bellevue Downtown Association, and articles in the *Bellevue Reporter*, *It's Your City* newsletter and *Neighborhood News*. A project website is posted at:

<http://www.bellevuewa.gov/comp-plan-update.htm>

Overall, citizen and commission comments about the plan and the future of the City have been very positive. Many expressed how much they like living or working in Bellevue and there was an interest in finding a way to both preserve what people love about Bellevue while looking for opportunities for improvement.

Comments have been wide ranging and some areas of emphasis include:

- Economic development, including specifically the support for smaller and growing businesses, and businesses that provide local, neighborhood services. Several people saw a need for more attention to neighborhood shopping centers.
- Environmental stewardship, including how the city might address some environmental issues such as water quality on a broad scale, and how the city can retain its great natural setting even as the city continues to become more urban.
- Culture and diversity were recognized as something that has changed dramatically over the last two decades and is seen as an asset that the city can better leverage.
- Housing affordability was identified as a barrier to attracting new families and something that should be addressed to support economic development
- Mobility was identified as both an economic issue – needing to be able to support people trying to get to jobs, services, and stores – and as a desire to have options other than driving across town, such as being able to walk to local services.
- Partnerships and collaboration were also identified as important for the city, with many recognizing the value Bellevue School District, Bellevue College, community associations

and others bring to the community and that the best solutions will be completed in collaboration with partners.

DRAFT WORK PROGRAM

Staff's initial assessment of the current Comprehensive Plan is that we don't need to start over. The current Comprehensive Plan stems from a long history of planning in Bellevue that dates back to when the city was first incorporated. Not only has the current plan been serving the city well, it also provides a connection to the historic direction of the city.

However, the current plan is now nearly ten years old. Much has changed in recent years and it is important to update the plan to remain a relevant tool to guide city actions and decisions. In addition to listening to the boards, commissions and the public, planning staff reviewed and evaluated each of the existing Comprehensive Plan chapters and talked with staff across the city organization regarding their expertise on specific issues and use of the plan. Staff also reviewed checklist templates prepared by the state Department of Commerce for GMA consistency, and by the Puget Sound Regional Council for implementation of Vision 2040, the regional growth plan. Based on these reviews and early assessments, the draft work program, included as Attachment 1, identifies a list of issues to be considered in the Comprehensive Plan update.

The Comprehensive Plan update is anticipated to include:

1. Amendments required because of changes to the state Growth Management Act, other state laws, and regional planning documents
2. Amendments that bring the plan up to date and extend the planning horizon year to 2035
3. Amendments to keep the plan relevant to the community, City Council and staff, and that reflect city actions since the last update and Council direction from current and recent projects
4. Those amendments sought by individual citizens, subject to the direction of the City Council

The work program helps guide the boards and commissions and staff during the update process. It helps prioritize among issues and ensure that the overall work program is manageable with the time and resources available. The work program is not a list of the actual amendments themselves.

Following Council's approval of the work program, staff will work with the Planning Commission and other members of the city's boards and commissions over the coming months to further analyze the plan and develop the actual plan amendments, using study sessions and continued public participation.

At this study session staff seeks the Planning Commission's review of the proposed work program to ensure that it captures major themes identified by the community. At future study sessions later this year staff will present gap analyses and recommendations for changes that build on these initial update discussions.

TIMING

The city is providing a two-year window for updating the Comprehensive Plan. This will allow time to hear from the community and craft a relevant and effective plan that meets their expectations.

General schedule for the Comprehensive Plan Update

2012	2013	2014
Review of existing Comp Plan		
Data collection		
Council initiation		
Scoping		
	Analysis and development	
	Draft and review potential amendments	
		Public Hearing
		Council adoption
Community outreach		

Ongoing and continuous public engagement will occur throughout the update. While one set of engagement has occurred to help develop the work program, in no way has it concluded. The city will continue to use multiple tools of public engagement, ranging from the formal, such as a public hearing, to the more innovative, such as new uses of Web technology.

NEXT STEPS

Planning commissioners helped identify issues during the Joint Form in January and may identify or emphasize additional issues at this Commission meeting. The Planning Commission is not required to make a formal recommendation on the work program.

The City Council is currently scheduled to review the draft work program at a study session on May 13 (this schedule could change depending on the Council’s agenda). In preparation for that Council study session, staff will continue to review and assess the draft work program using comments from the Planning Commission, members of the public, and other stakeholders.

The Council’s final work program will provide guidance to the boards, commissions and staff to continue with the update process. The City Council study session will also be an opportunity for the Council to establish project principles, provide guidance for additional public engagement, and other direction for the update process.

At future study sessions for the Planning Commission, as well as other boards and commissions, staff, consultants and expert speakers will present technical information.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft 2014 Comprehensive Plan update work program
2. List of Comprehensive Plan element reviews

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Work Program for the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update

Bellevue's current Comprehensive Plan is serving the City well. It establishes a clear, vibrant Vision for the year 2025 and supports the City's general land use pattern of focusing growth in Downtown and other commercial areas, while protecting residential neighborhoods. However, much has changed since the last major update was adopted in 2004. The City witnessed a boom of Downtown development and annexation of the Eastgate area. Several significant plans were completed, including those for Bel-Red, Wilburton, Crossroads and Eastgate/I-90. Additionally, the nature of the community continues to change, becoming more diverse and older. And while the City has made significant strides in meeting the goals of the current plan, some issues continue to present challenges, such as meeting objectives for housing affordability and addressing the needs of households of all economic segments.

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The table below provides an outline of the primary categories of review for the update and the types of amendments that may be anticipated. A range of early public engagement activities and initial staff analysis of the existing plan helped identify a number of key areas of review:

Economic development

Bellevue has historically been seen as a good place for business and the Comprehensive Plan strongly supports business and economic development. The update is an opportunity to incorporate the Council's current economic strategies and ensure that other elements of the plan are aligned with the City's economic priorities. It will be important for the update to reflect the economic growth that has occurred since 2004 and to link the City's economic development strategies with land use, housing, environment, transportation and other policies. In addition to the City's overall economic health, early outreach identified the need to support start-ups and small, local businesses and the economic viability of local commercial and neighborhood centers. The update will also address the recently updated Regional Economic Strategy.

Environmental stewardship

While the City has a strong set of environmental policies that reinforce the City's Vision as a "City in a Park" with urban development set amidst high quality natural areas, a number of changes have occurred since 2004. The City started the Environment Stewardship Initiative and the state established a long-range goal for reducing greenhouse emissions to respond to the threat of climate change. In early outreach, citizens indicated that preserving and enhancing natural areas is becoming more critical as the City and region continue to grow. They identified future opportunities, such as access to a BNSF bike trail and to lakes Washington and Sammamish as ways to further the City's vision as one with great natural areas. In the update it may be important to look at how environmental issues are addressed, not just within the Environmental section of the

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Work Program for the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update

plan, but throughout the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the interaction land use, transportation, utilities, and economic development all have with the environment.

Community health

Public health has become a national concern, especially the health of the county's youth. Health involves many factors and increasing research over the last decade has pointed to the role land use, access to recreation (especially walking), and access to healthy foods play in obesity and health. While Bellevue generally provides good access to food choices and recreation, the Seattle-King County Department of Health advocates that cities review how local policies can and should affect community health.

Culture and diversity

Bellevue has become one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the state with nearly 1/3 of residents foreign born. Diversity is even greater for families with children. Meanwhile, the City is also growing older with a wave of population just entering retirement. The Comprehensive Plan update is an opportunity to assess how the City responds to the changes in the community, whether to facilitate 'aging in place' or to reflect the value of a diverse and vibrant culture. The update process also needs to take diversity into account and seek ways to provide access to all segments of community.

Neighborhood centers and community gathering

Bellevue survey data has consistently shown that people love their neighborhoods. Many residents in our early outreach emphasized a need to preserve the qualities of their neighborhoods. People expressed concern about the health of some neighborhood centers and talked about the need to build a stronger sense of community. People asked for more gathering places ("third places") and a way to stimulate neighborhood businesses services, not just those Downtown. The update is an opportunity to review economic, land use and transportation policies that support both preservation of neighborhoods and ways to strengthen neighborhood centers and opportunities for community gathering. This may build off the work completed for Crossroads, Wilburton, Factoria and Eastgate that supports working towards mixed use development that creates greater opportunities for housing and local services within the City's commercial centers as well as work to maintain neighborhood centers.

Mobility

Early outreach comments made it clear that the community envisions a City where it is easy to get around. People talked of making Bellevue a better place for walking and bicycling through such techniques as increased weather protection for sidewalks and separated bike routes, and they identified a desire for improved transit as ways to access stores and services without having to always use a car. Transportation was also identified as an important component to support businesses and economic development. The update is an opportunity to assess the state-of-the-art for measuring transportation level of service and to look at mobility comprehensively. The City completed a Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan update in 2009 and an update of the Transit Master Plan is underway. Light Rail Best Practices resulted in a number of Comprehensive Plan amendments in 2008 that helped establish the vision for integrating light rail. The update will organize and consolidate these different efforts to ensure that we have a consistent, clear picture of future mobility for Bellevue. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan has several overlapping and out-of-date transportation project lists. Ideally, these lists create a long-range vision for the City's transportation network that lead to development of the City's 12-year TFP (Transportation Facility

Plan). The Comprehensive Plan update can consolidate and update the transportation project lists to improve support for future TFP updates.

Partnerships and collaboration

Bellevue has a long track record of collaborating with the community. To function at the high level the community expects requires collaboration and partnerships with the community, businesses, organizations, and other cities and agencies. Comments during early outreach emphasized the opportunity to better coordinate and partner with the Bellevue School District and Bellevue College, whether for access to recreation or to stimulate learning that supports our economy. The Comprehensive Plan has the ability to be a tool that identifies and coordinates partnerships to help align initiatives inside and outside City Hall. With a common Vision for the future, City departments can be better coordinated and work more effectively. This update can strengthen the relationship of the City’s Vision and its policies to near-term actions, and create a stronger nexus between the City’s Vision and the City’s biennial budget.

Topic/Component	Description of Updates	References
General updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update out of date data, facts, figures and references • Review for consistency with Countywide Planning Policies, regional plan and state law • Review for internal and external consistency 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040
Usability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review language for clarity, precision and usability • Make the plan more accessible to the general reader • Reduce redundancy and remove out-of-date policies • Ensure that policies are at the “policy level” 	
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess community Vision and update as appropriate 	
Introduction & Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance readability, such as with an executive summary • Review policies on citizen engagement, including the aspect of culture and diversity, and related to city master planning processes 	
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update population and employment forecasts and targets • Update/add information regarding growth strategy that focuses on Downtown and other commercial centers • Improve support for neighborhood and mixed used centers and recognize Downtown as a residential neighborhood • Review land use designations, including commercial and multifamily 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040 Early outreach

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate updated needs assessment with City's regional partner ARCH • Update policies on housing needs consistent with Countywide Planning Policies • Review how policies support changing demographics 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Early outreach
Capital Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update consistent with current system plans • Review need for additional civic facilities based on growth • Review guidance to CIP process • Review how to support and integrate partnership opportunities 	GMA
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates for consistency with system plans for City-managed utilities • Updates related to plans for non-city-managed utilities 	GMA
Stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate NPDES-related stormwater policies that emphasize low impact development; integrate with land use, transportation and other policy areas 	NPDES
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider multimodal strategies to support land use, economic development, environmental and community objectives • Assess state of the art for measuring concurrency and mode split and consider additional policy direction • Update and consolidate transit sections consistent with Transit Master Plan update • Review/update consistent with current light rail direction, including policies related to access to station areas • Consolidate/update existing multiple long-range transportation plans consistent with the Transportation Facilities Program (TFP) 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040 Early outreach
Station Areas Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate project, that may result in Comprehensive Plan amendments to be folded into overall update 	Station Area Planning Project

Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update economic data • Updates based on current economic strategy discussions and updated Regional Economic Strategy • Recognize significant/growing economic areas, including retail, high tech, medical, tourism/hotels, entertainment, auto sales, and small business development • Address ways to attract “knowledge workers” • Address connections to higher education • Improve “nimbleness” in responding to situational instances (linked with Land Use) 	Bellevue Economic Strategy Regional Economic Strategy Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040 Early outreach
Community Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review across Comprehensive Plan to address issues of healthy communities, such as walkability 	Countywide Planning Policies
Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update recognizing changes in city demographics, including needs related to seniors, public health, and homelessness 	
Diversity/Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update demographic data • Integrate Bellevue Diversity Initiative • Review issues related to culture, ethnicity and age across the Comprehensive Plan 	Early outreach
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate city’s Environmental Stewardship Initiative strategies • Address state/regional climate change goals • Review across Comprehensive Plan to incorporate greenhouse gas reduction and mitigation strategies • Review city objectives for ecosystem restoration and improving water quality 	Bellevue Environmental Steward Initiative Countywide Planning Policies Early Outreach State goals
Parks, Open Space & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update consistent with POS system plan • Review long range goals to preserve, expand park system, including the need for parks serving developing areas, such as Downtown and BelRed • Update Community Services policies 	GMA
Urban Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider updates related to the Downtown Livability project and other planning studies 	Downtown Livability Project
Annexation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now has limited importance; reduce and merge into Land Use Element 	

Downtown Subarea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate potential policies amendments, projects and updates to the land use designations that result from DT Livability and DT Transportation Plan projects 	Downtown Livability Project Downtown Transportation Plan
Eastgate/I-90 Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update portions of the Eastgate, Richards Valley, and Factoria subarea plans to include the Eastgate/I-90 project recommendations 	Eastgate/I-90 Project
Subarea Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a schedule for updating individual subarea plan on a rotating schedule beginning in 2015 	
Glossary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor updates 	
Shoreline Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated under separate SMP process 	SMP Update project

Comprehensive Plan Chapter Reviews

Chapter or Element	Description	PC Review
Introduction	This the first chapter the public sees. It sets the historic context for the Comprehensive Plan and at the same time holds the future oriented Vision 2025 statements. The Vision is the foundational part of the plan, establishing the vision for what the community wants to be like in the future.	6/13/12 4/10/13
Citizen Participation	This element follows the Introduction and lays out policy for how the public engages and influences city planning.	4/10/13
Land Use	This element addresses the general location and distribution of land uses within the city and provides the framework for other plan elements that guide other aspects of land use.	2/13/13
Housing	The goal of this element is to maintain the strength, vitality, and stability of single family and multifamily neighborhoods and to promote a variety of housing opportunities to meet the needs of all members of the community.	3/13/13
Capital Facilities		
Utilities		
Transportation		
Economic Development		
Environmental		
Human Services	This element's goal is to create a community in which all members have the ability to meet their basic physical, economic, and social needs, and the opportunity to enhance their quality of life.	3/13/13
Parks, Open Space and Recreation		
Shoreline Management Program		
Urban Design		
Annexation	This element uses its policies to manage the city's growth through annexation. This has historically been significant. Now, with annexations nearly complete, it has less relevance.	4/10/13
Glossary		