

Downtown Livability Initiative



Advisory Committee Meeting #2

June 19, 2013

6:30-9:30 pm



Draft Advisory Committee Schedule

June 19, 2013 (subject to revision)

MAY 2013 →

5/10: AC Packet
5/15: AC Mtg #1 - Orientation (2 hrs)

JUNE

6/12: AC Packet, pt. 1
6/13: AC Packet, pt. 2
6/19: AC Mtg #2 – Review Draft Audits (3 hrs)

6/27 (5-7pm) & 6/28 (8-10am): Open House/
Focus Groups – Feedback on Draft Audits

JULY

7/10: AC Packet
7/17: AC Mtg #3 – Finalize Audits & Identify
Draft Range of Alternatives (4 hrs)

7/25 (4:30-7pm): Open House/Focus Groups –
Feedback on Draft Range of Alternatives

AUGUST

NO AUGUST COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER - tentative

9/11: AC Packet
9/18: AC Mtg #4 – Approve Range of
Alternatives for Analysis (3 hrs)

OCTOBER - tentative

10/9: AC Packet
10/16: AC Mtg #5 – Part 1: Review Alternatives
Analysis (3 hrs)

10/29 (8-10am, 5-7pm): Open House/Focus
Groups – Feedback on Analysis/Preferred Alts

NOVEMBER - tentative

11/13: AC Packet
11/20: AC Mtg #6 – Part 2: Review Alternatives
Analysis, Direction on Preferred Alts (4 hrs)

DECEMBER 2013 - tentative

12/4: Open House/Focus Groups – Feedback
on Analysis/Preferred Alts

12/11: AC Packet
12/18 Mtg #7 - Finalize Committee's
Recommendations (3 hrs)

Open House/Focus Groups

Upcoming Sessions: 6/27 (5-7pm) and 6/28 (8-10am)

Note: RESCHEDULED to 7/9 (5-7pm) and 7/10 (8-10am)

- Held at key milestones; morning & afternoon time slots
- Events open to all stakeholders/community members
- Web materials, email to interested parties, press release

SAMPLE AGENDA

8:00-10:00: Series of Stations (open & staffed entire time)

8:30-8:45: Overview Presentation by Staff

8:45-10:00: Facilitated Focus Groups (each one recorded with notes written up)

All comments compiled prior to next Advisory Committee Mtg.

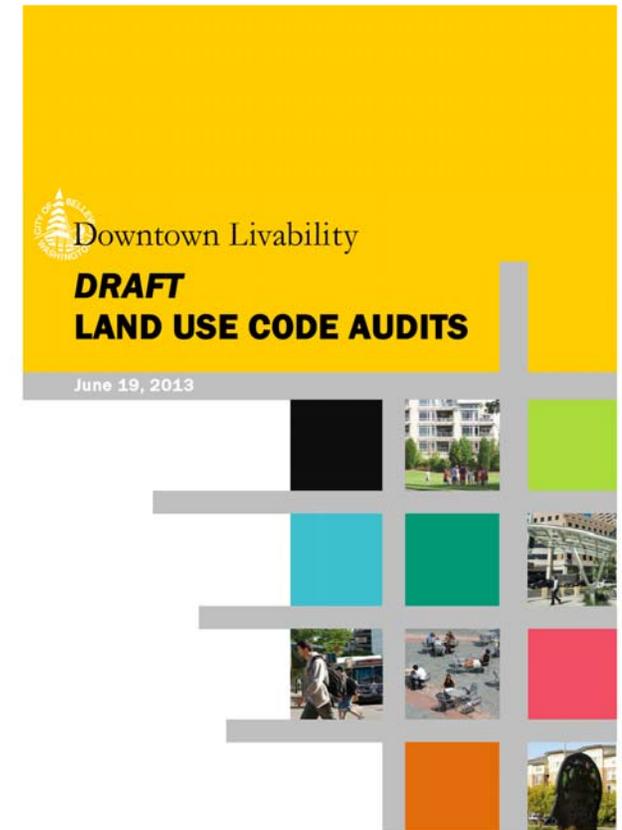
Draft Land Use Code “Audits”

■ Purpose of Audits

- Identify what is working well and where there is room for improvement
- Help diagnose issues and opportunities on which to focus

■ Theme

- Reviewing what exists/looking for ways to improve – not building new system from scratch



Part 1. Design Modules

Staff overview of:

- Amenity Incentive System
- Building Height and Form
- Design Guidelines
- Pedestrian Corridor and Public Open Spaces
- Vision for DT-OLB District

Advisory Committee Discussion

Amenity Incentive System

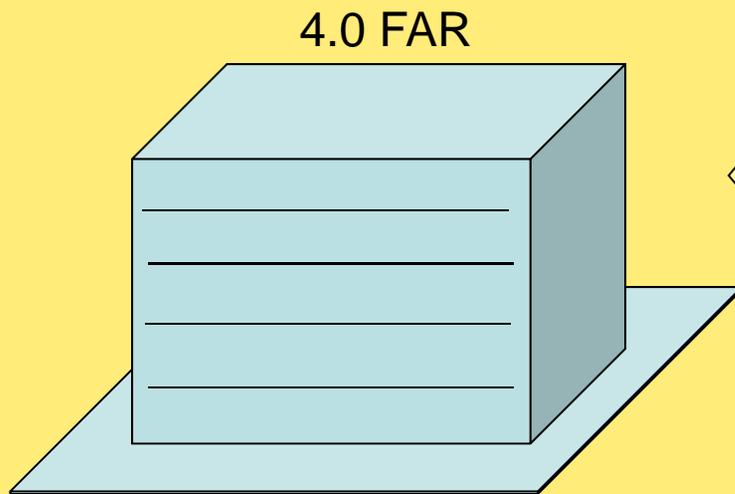
Key policy issue: How should the Amenity Incentive System be updated to meet evolving market conditions and integrate newer thinking about desired Downtown amenities?

Existing Code

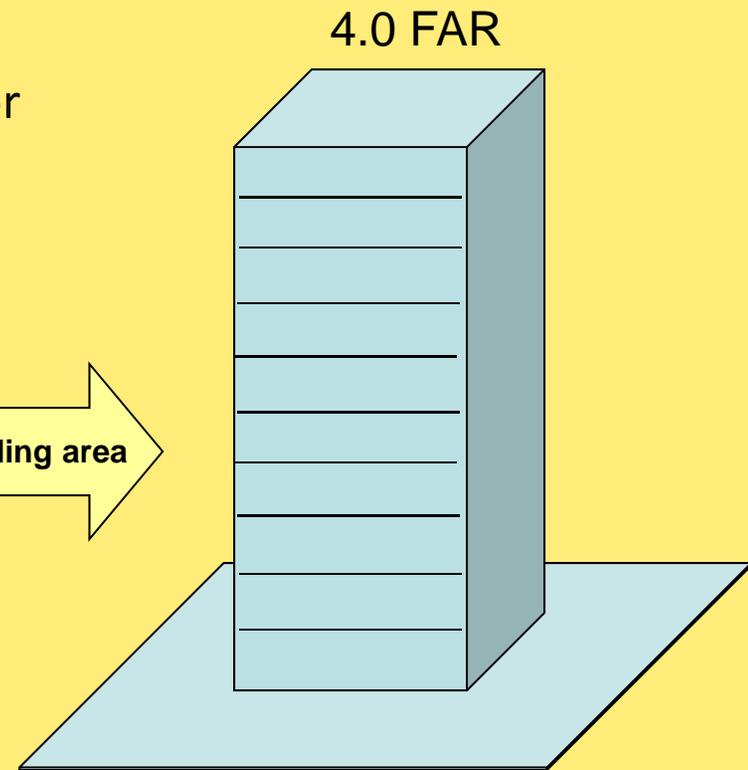
- FAR and height above the “basic” is earned through Amenity Incentive (bonus) System
- All development must provide a minimum level of amenities from short list of 12
- To earn “bonus” FAR and height, developer chooses from complete list of 23 amenities
- Bonus FAR/height is a ratio that captures the additional development value vs. the cost of providing the amenity
 - (Example: developer earns 100 sf of floor area for 1 lineal foot of storefront)

Floor Area Ratio

- FAR Definition: Measurement of total floor area in building compared to site area
- Items such as structured parking (above or below grade) not included in FAR



5 floors at 24,000 sf each = **120,000 total sf**
120,000 total sf / 30,000 sf site area = 4.0 FAR



10 floors at 12,000 sf each = **120,000 total sf**
120,000 total sf / 30,000 sf site area = 4.0 FAR

Amenity Incentive System

Contributions to Downtown Livability

What's working well?

- Residential development—Downtown fastest growing neighborhood in Bellevue
- Underground parking—in vast majority of new developments
- Pedestrian-oriented frontages—in nearly every recent Downtown project
- Plazas—widely incorporated as outdoor spaces (predominantly) or enclosed spaces
- Pedestrian Corridor—has been coming along with adjacent new development
- Other amenities contributing to Downtown vitality

Room for improvement?

- Potential added emphasis on active spaces—for ages 8 to 80
- Potential to incentivize major identity/memorability features for Downtown
- Some livability features (weather protection) developed in sporadic manner
- Potential to incorporate newer thinking into the amenity system (e.g. Great Streets)
- Potential to incorporate green building/sustainability features

Amenity Incentive System

Economic

What's working well?

- Every Downtown development has been contributing a level of urban amenities
- Any changes need to carefully consider how this may affect development economics, and the balance between public benefit and economic return

Room for improvement?

- System has not been “calibrated” in 30 years
- Two features (underground parking, residential use) appear to be built regardless of the bonus system
- Other bonus features rarely or never used, and a large number of excess FAR points generated
- No built-in adaptability provisions to ensure the system maintains a balance over time

Building Height and Form

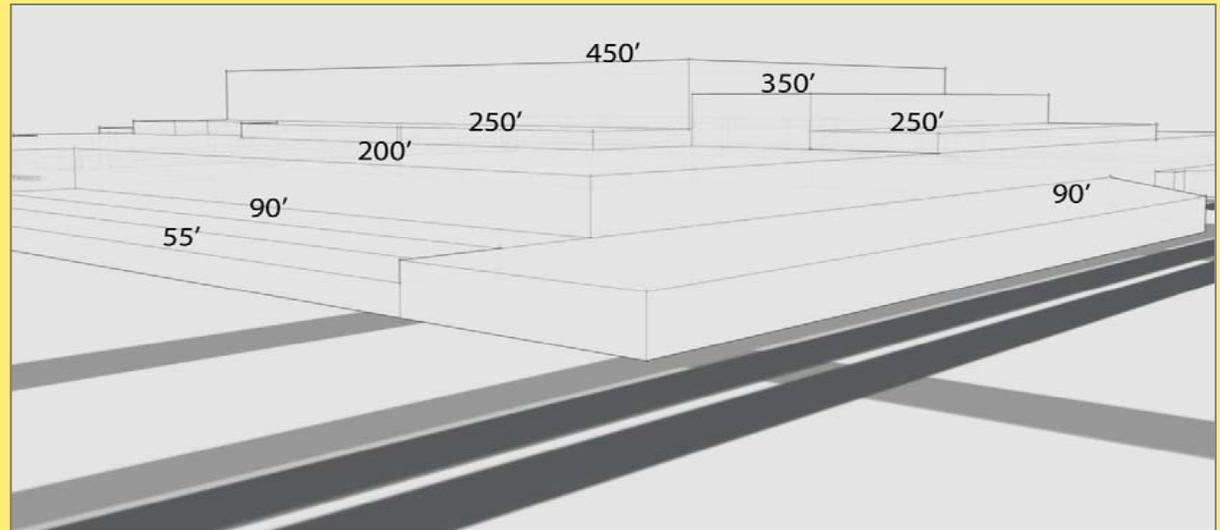
Key policy issue: Should building heights and their urban form be modified to better achieve Downtown vision?

Existing Code

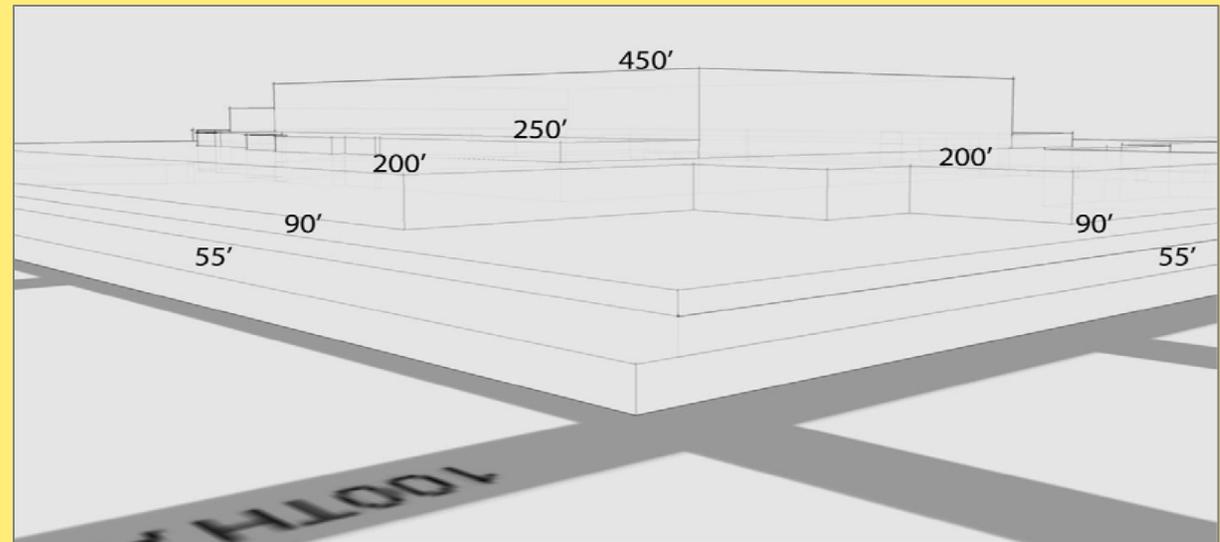
- “Basic” and “Maximum” heights apply in each land use district
- Wedding cake form: 40 ft/55 ft in “A” to 450 ft in Core
- Heights above “basic” require bonus from Amenity Incentive System
- Allowed heights are typically greater for res. vs. com. buildings
- Heights and floor plate related—
 - Maximum residential floor plates above 80 ft = 12,000 sf
 - Maximum office floor plates above 80 ft = 24,000 sf
 - Results in taller, more slender residential towers

Building Height and Form

Building Envelopes for Residential Structures – looking NW from Main Street/I-405



Building Envelopes for Residential Structures – looking SE from 100th Ave NE/NE 12th St



Building Height and Form

Skyline Form and Memorability

What's working well?

- Skyline reinforces dynamic Downtown identity

Room for improvement?

- Reads more like single-level, mesa-like profile rather than “wedding cake”
- Additional height might reinforce desired form and generate additional amenities



Building Height and Form

Public Views & Light and Air between Towers

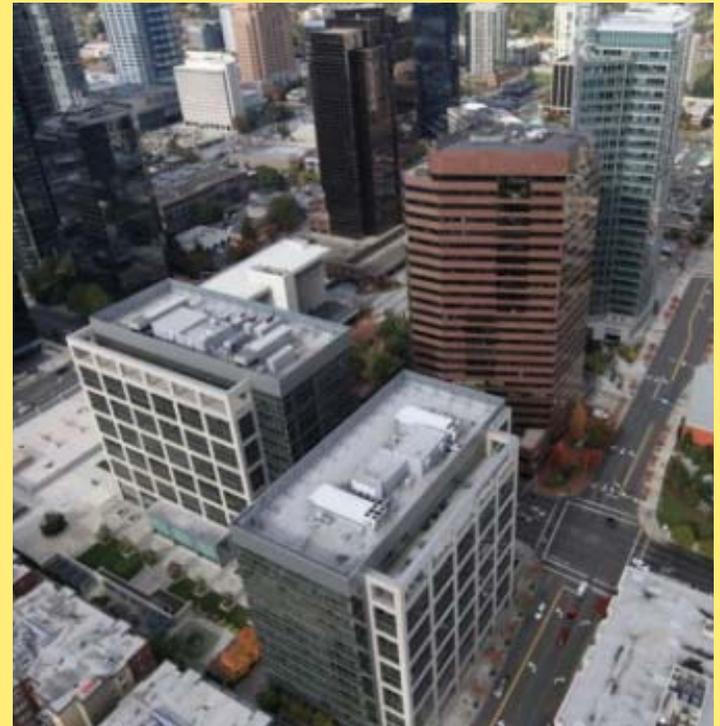
What's working well?

- Generally, current code has resulted in appropriate spacing and open space

Room for improvement?

- Building spacing and orientation will be issues for any changes in Perimeter

(More on public views in Design Guidelines module)



Building Height and Form

Flexibility to Respond to Market

What's working well?

- Numerous new developments in pipeline—suggests that current standards not out-of-sync with market

Room for improvement?

- Some market factors favor additional height
- Fresh look needed on Code differential between higher allowed heights for residential vs. nonresidential buildings

Building Height and Form

Transition to Adjacent Single Family Neighborhoods

What's working well?

- Downtown has a distinctive edge, and code restrictions have kept the perimeter's scale sympathetic to neighborhoods

Room for improvement?

- In some cases, edges show a “back side” to adjacent neighborhoods, without great connectivity
- New development could make the perimeter more accessible and attractive for neighbors



Building Height and Form

New Opportunities

- Consider additional opportunities to transfer FAR between Downtown districts, particularly if this results in extraordinary public benefit?

Design Guidelines

Key policy issue: How should design guidelines be refined to improve the livability and character of Downtown?

Existing Code

- Purpose of design guidelines is to guide development to get high quality, context-sensitive design with vibrant pedestrian environment
- Applied through administrative design review process
- Downtown-wide and district-specific design guidelines

Design Guidelines

Building/Sidewalk Relationship

What's working well?

- Downtown's streetscape improving with nearly every new project

Room for Improvement?

- Right-of-way designation map outdated given changing contexts
- Inadequate weather protection
- Too many large blank walls
- Some frontages lacking in detailing, quality of materials, permeability, utility integration



Design Guidelines

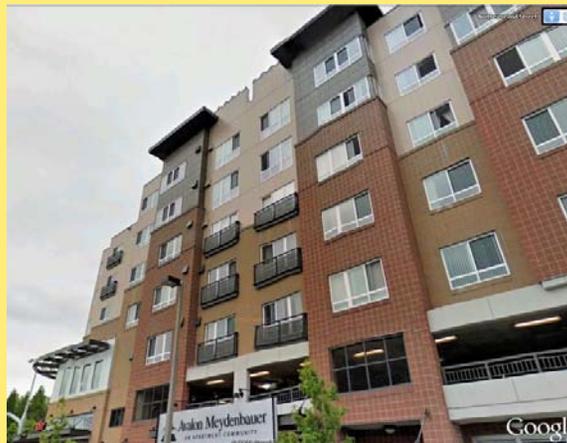
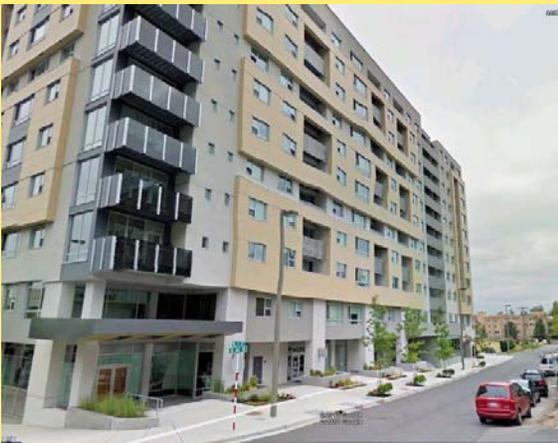
Building Materials

What's working well?

- Many buildings employ attractive & durable materials

Room for improvement?

- Almost no guidance on issue in current code/guidelines
- Extensive use of EIFS
- Use of concrete block and metal siding



Design Guidelines

Rooftop Design

What's working well?

- Some interesting roof forms
- Some new buildings with integrated “green” elements

Room for improvement?

- Most rooftops are utilitarian in design, lacking strong visual interest
- Mounting interest in quality of rooftops viewed from above
- Sustainable rooftop features/elements
- Usable rooftop space



Design Guidelines

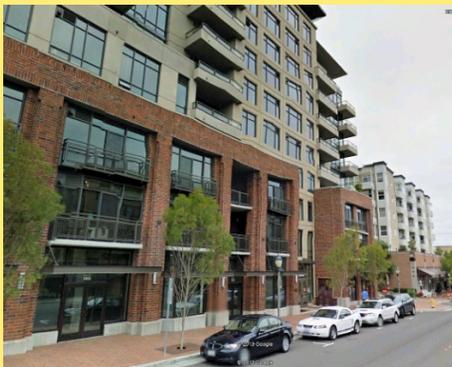
Façade Treatment

What's working well?

- Many new buildings have effectively integrated façade details & articulation treatments to add interest

Room for improvement?

- Some buildings lack human scaled details
- Many buildings look like large slabs (little or no articulation)
- Little or no code guidance on issues



Design Guidelines

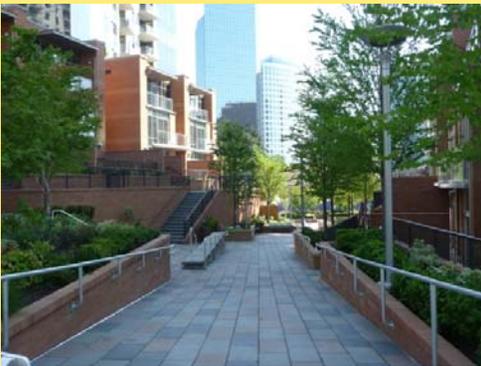
Pedestrian Circulation/Mid-Block Connections

What's working well?

- Ever-expanding network of attractive internal connections
- Many good examples to draw from (Civica, Key Center)

Room for improvement?

- Ways to successfully combine autos and pedestrians
- Code/guideline direction on good/bad design, phasing
- Integrating them into a larger, functional system



Design Guidelines

Public Views

What's working well?

- Mountain views from many major east-west streets
- Evolving skylines views from parks and public spaces
- Design guidelines reinforce protection of public views
- Skyline views from surrounding neighborhoods

Room for improvement?

- More guidance on the specificity and retention of public views from public spaces



Design Guidelines

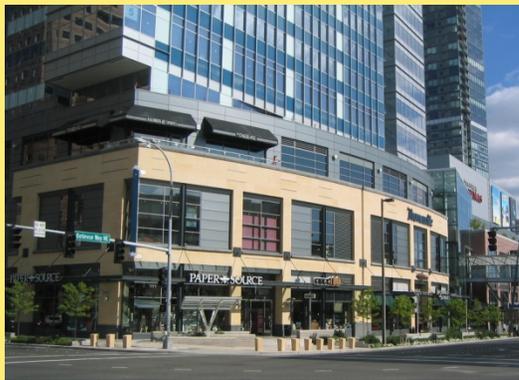
Reinforcing Neighborhood Character

What's working well?

- Old Bellevue
- Bellevue Way (shopping street)
- Ashwood Park neighborhood

Room for improvement?

- Many areas lack strong identifiable character
- Lack of design guidance to reinforce neighborhood identity



Design Guidelines

Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods

What's working well?

- Height stepbacks, setbacks, and limits along perimeter have created clear transition
- New neighborhood-serving uses and amenities

Room for improvement?

- Some areas have been bypassed by development
- Opportunities to enhance pedestrian connections and permeability
- No direction on edge condition along I-405

