

## Downtown Bellevue Regional and Local Planning Context

Downtown Bellevue is an important center of commerce and culture for the Central Puget Sound Region while also having a rapidly expanding residential population. Below is a summary of Downtown Bellevue’s role in the region and locally. Staff will supplement this with a more detailed presentation to the Commission on September 8.

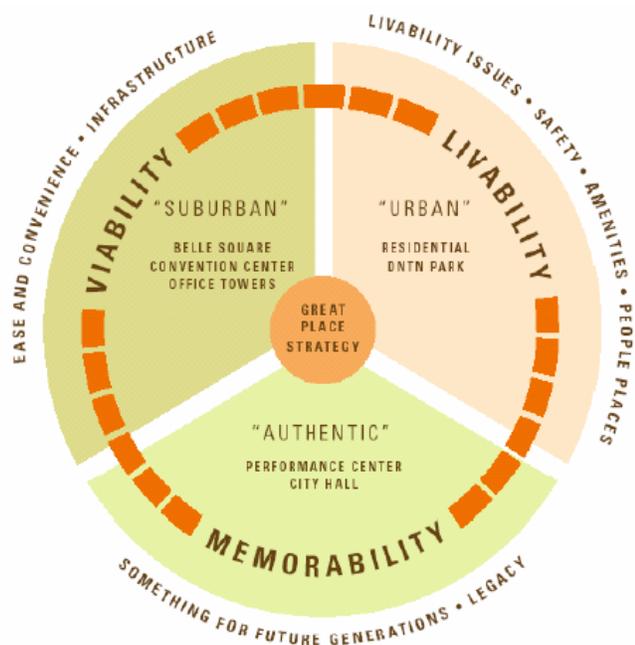
### REGIONAL CONTEXT

#### PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the metropolitan planning organization responsible for regional land use and transportation planning in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties. The recently adopted VISION 2040 is the region’s growth strategy, and Transportation 2040 is the region’s long-range transportation plan. Downtown Bellevue is a designated regional growth center within VISION 2040, and Bellevue as a whole is one of five metropolitan cities in the Puget Sound region. Designated regional growth centers have been identified for housing and employment growth, as well as for regional funding. Transportation 2040 identifies investments to support expected growth and to improve the overall transportation system, and it provides a financing plan. Projects within Transportation 2040 support the VISION 2040 growth strategy, and prioritization is given to projects that serve regional growth centers like Downtown Bellevue.

#### KING COUNTY – COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

The Washington Growth Management Act (1990) provides for large and fast growing counties to address growth management issues on a countywide basis. Countywide planning policies (CPPs) for King County were adopted and ratified by the cities in 1994. They provide a countywide vision and serve



as a framework for each jurisdiction to develop its own comprehensive plan, to be consistent with the overall vision for King County. Some of the goals of the CPPs are to limit urban sprawl, enhance open space, protect rural areas and more efficiently use human services, transportation and utilities. Under the umbrella of CPPs are locations, such as Downtown Bellevue, which are designated as Urban Centers. These are *“envisioned as areas of concentrated employment and housing, with direct service by high-capacity transit, and a wide range of other land uses such as retail, recreational, public facilities, parks and open space”*.

## **LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **DOWNTOWN SUBAREA PLAN**

In 2004, following the Downtown Implementation Plan process, Council adopted an update to the Downtown Subarea Plan. The Subarea Plan built upon the original Central Business District Subarea Plan adopted in 1979 and amended in 1993. The current Subarea Plan contains goals and policy direction on topics such as land use, urban design, transportation & circulation, edges & transitions, and parks, recreation & open space. The Plan also contains a project list that covers a range of desired transportation, parks, and urban design improvements.

A key piece of the Downtown Subarea Plan is the “Great Place Strategy”. It states that for Downtown Bellevue to remain competitive in the next generation, it needs to be a place that is viable, livable, memorable, and accessible. It must become the symbolic as well as functional heart of the Eastside Region through the continued location of cultural, entertainment, residential, and regional uses located in distinct, mixed-use neighborhoods connected by a variety of unique public places and great public infrastructure. In this context, viability is about quantity; about creating critical mass. Livability is about quality; about weaving an urban fabric rich in resources and quality of life. Memorability is about imparting an unforgettable experience from those having visited there. And accessibility is about maintaining and enhancing mobility for the range of users of Downtown Bellevue.

### **DOWNTOWN LAND USE**

Downtown Bellevue is approximately 3/4 of a mile square in size – 410 acres. The existing land use consists of a mix of office, retail, residential, hotel, cultural and institutional uses. The Subarea Plan calls for taller buildings generally located towards the center of Downtown. The map below shows the mix of land use types in Downtown Bellevue, with clusters of office, retail and housing.