

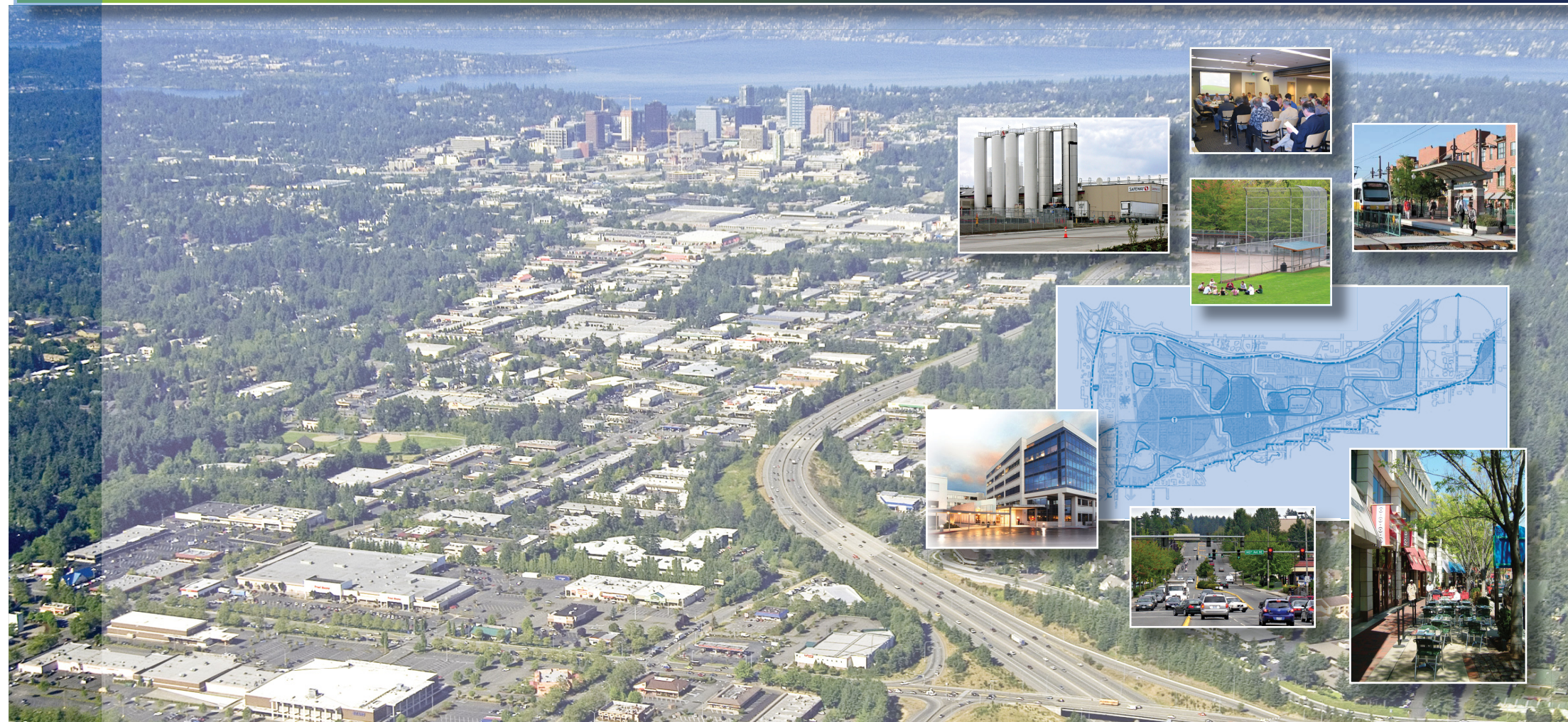


City of Bellevue



Bel-Red Corridor Project **FINAL REPORT**

September 2007



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BEL RED

corridor project

Steering Committee Recommendation

September 2007



Steering Committee



BEL RED
corridor project

Voting Committee Members

Mike Creighton (Co-Chair)

Terry Lukens (Co-Chair)

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Steve Dennis

Joel Glass

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Doug Mathews

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**Steering
Committee
Recommendation**

Section 1

Transmittal Letter

Dear Mayor Degginger and City Council members:

On behalf of the entire Bel-Red Steering Committee, it is our pleasure to transmit to the City Council the committee's recommendations for the future of the Bel-Red corridor. We are excited about the extraordinary potential of the Bel-Red area, and we believe the committee's recommendations set the stage for transforming the area into a model of sustainable development, where land use, transportation, environment and economy are closely linked.

As the Council is aware, the committee has been working the past two years on processing a great deal of technical information, considering a large amount of public input, and developing future alternatives and then a preferred alternative for how we believe the Bel-Red corridor should develop in the future. Consistent with our charge from the City Council, we were guided by the project principles established by the Council at the beginning of the project; we solicited and deliberated upon input from the general public; and we carefully considered the perspective of each member of the committee in arriving at our recommendation. Each member of the committee participated actively in the process, and each member was instrumental in developing the recommended vision.

As outlined in the attached report, the committee's vision for the corridor is that the land use pattern would change in portions of the corridor to reflect a more mixed use (housing/office/retail) area that supports the City's economic development strategy by establishing office and housing development opportunities not found elsewhere in Bellevue. This land use pattern would be supported by a more robust, integrated, and multi-modal transportation system; would support future light rail extensions and service in the corridor; 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 restore the 'headwaters' of many of Bellevue's open streams, and reestablish many of the ecological functions that these areas have lost over the last 50 years.

Much of the area east of 134th Ave NE and the area north of NE 20th will remain largely as is between now and 2030. 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.



As the Council and community review the committee’s report, we would like you to consider several key themes embedded in our conclusions:

■ **The Bel-Red area should be an extraordinary and unique place:**

As outlined in our vision statement, we believe that the Bel-Red corridor has the opportunity to be an area unique within Bellevue, and within the Puget Sound region generally—an area that combines vibrant neighborhoods, a strong economic base, a multi-modal transportation system, and environmental/open space amenities. Positioned as it is between Downtown Bellevue and Microsoft, this area offers unparalleled opportunity for high-quality office and residential development. The City should expect the best that the private sector can offer for its redevelopment.

■ **Bel-Red redevelopment and change should improve the entire city:**

One thing that is very important to the committee is that as Bel-Red changes and redevelops, what happens within the corridor benefits not only property owners and businesses/residents within its boundaries, but also surrounding neighborhoods and the entire city. These types of broader amenities include riparian corridor improvements that would benefit the entire Kelsey Creek system; connecting the area to the broader city and its system of regional parks and open space; and connecting the area to surrounding neighborhoods through an enhanced and integrated bicycle and pedestrian network.

One area that deserves additional mention in terms of overall improvements is housing. The committee has felt strongly all along that housing should be added to the corridor as a way to help enliven the area, create new neighborhoods and allow for new housing types, provide a new location in Bellevue to accommodate residential development, and support transit. We also believe that this area provides a unique opportunity for affordable and/or workforce housing. While we

realize that this is a citywide challenge, Bel-Red provides opportunities that may not be found in other parts of the city to locate more affordable housing types in close proximity to jobs, services, and transit.

■ **Bel-Red should be a model of environmental sustainability:**

Environmental sustainability was one of the Council’s framework principles, and was an issue that the committee considered throughout our work. Sustainability, as we understand it, is not just about improving the natural environment, although we believe that to be a critical part of the overall vision. It also means having land use patterns in place that support transit and other forms of transportation, and allow people to live in close proximity to jobs and services; having connected sidewalks and bike paths; adding more green space in the corridor; and encouraging low impact development techniques in private construction and public infrastructure. We understand that Bellevue as a whole is moving towards advancing additional environmentally sustainability practices, and we believe that Bel-Red can provide an exciting pilot area to test many relevant ideas.

■ **The plan is more than just a “rezoning” exercise:** During the course of our work, many questions have arisen from both property owners and surrounding neighborhoods about how the area might be rezoned in the future as a result of this planning effort. While we understand the concern, and acknowledge that the Planning Commission and City Council will be devoting careful consideration to amendments to the Land Use Code, this plan is about much more than zoning. It is about providing new neighborhoods for future Bellevue residents, supporting the city’s overall economy, improving overall transportation mobility (both to and within the corridor), and adding parks and environmental amenities that improve both the



area itself and the rest of the city. This will require an array of public and private investments, catalyst projects, and other strategies in addition to the application of new zoning.

- **The plan is not just about accommodating light rail:** When we began this planning effort, one of the principles transmitted to us from the City Council was to look at high capacity transit as an opportunity to both enhance mobility and effect land use change within the corridor. We have spent considerable time looking at future light rail transit opportunities within the corridor, and evaluating different station options vis-à-vis alternative land use patterns. The recommended plan intentionally integrates land use and transportation, with a particular focus on potential transit stations that would be developed by Sound Transit as part of the East Link project. However, we believe that the overall land use pattern in the corridor has to make sense with or without light rail—and we believe that it does. There are many benefits to a more intense, mixed-use land use pattern than its compatibility with light rail. While light rail will be important in supporting the recommended land use pattern and the ultimate intensity of development, if it does not come to the corridor within the 2030 planning horizon, we believe that other types of transit can be implemented to support the land use vision. We also believe that transit should be improved within the corridor for the interim period before light rail is developed, and then to support light rail (through enhanced bus service) after it is operating.
- **The plan respects existing businesses:** While the committee sees change occurring over time within the corridor, we feel that it is very important to respect and acknowledge the rights of existing businesses in the

corridor to stay in the area. Many businesses in the area provide valued services that are important to Bellevue residents. We received a great deal of public testimony about existing uses, carefully considered how to accommodate these uses, and evaluated several alternative approaches to doing so. The plan provides flexibility for accommodating existing businesses, and also provides many places for new retail and services uses to locate within the corridor.

- **Implementation is critical, and requires a robust funding strategy:** The time horizon for this planning effort is 2030. We recognize the challenges inherent in achieving this vision between now and then. The recommended plan includes many significant investments in transportation, parks, and environmental improvements, and we recognize that a robust finance plan will be required. Much of the investment in infrastructure and amenities needed to transform the area will need to come from properties undergoing redevelopment. As a key part of the funding strategy, the committee supports the use of incentives, so that, in exchange for greater zoning intensities or building height, development would build more of the needed infrastructure and amenities than would otherwise be expected. We also believe that development should be phased in over time in conjunction with the infrastructure needed to support it, and that this phasing will need to be part of the overall implementation strategy. We also strongly believe that implementation of the Bel-Red plan will have to be carefully integrated with implementation of the Overlake neighborhood plan in Redmond. This will help ensure that any cumulative impacts of the two plans are identified and mitigated, and also that there is synergy between the plans in terms of light rail implementation, streetscape design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and other issues.

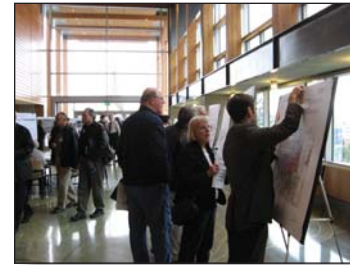
The Bel-Red Steering Committee is tremendously excited about the opportunities that Bel-Red offers for both the City of Bellevue and the greater region. Given its proximity to Downtown Bellevue and Overlake, and the amenities that can be created and enhanced within it, the Bel-Red Corridor presents a degree of potential that is rare in today's urban environment. We hope that the planning process we have just concluded has allowed a wider audience to envision that potential. We believe that this process has been careful and comprehensive, and that it requires an equally thoughtful, comprehensive implementation strategy. We urge the City Council and staff to make this a priority.

It has been a privilege to serve as co-chairs of this important committee, and we thank the City Council for this assignment. We look forward to seeing, and participating in, the future development of the Bel-Red area.

Sincerely,


 Mike Creighton
 Committee Co-Chair


 Terry Lukens
 Committee Co-Chair



Section 2

Introduction/ Planning Context

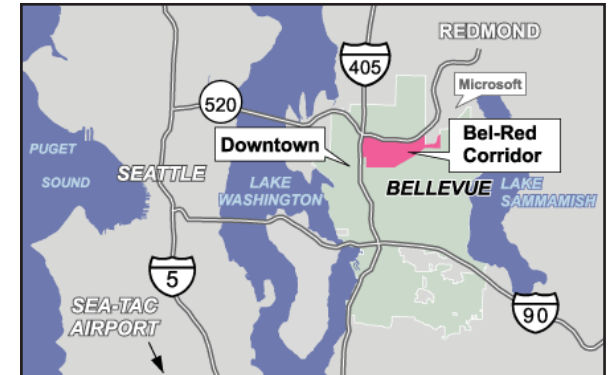


While an important employment center, the Bel-Red corridor has been an area in transition, given its proximity to Downtown Bellevue and the Microsoft campus in Overlake. The Bel-Red Corridor Project seizes an opportunity to capitalize on the corridor's strategic location, the city of Bellevue's economic strength, and the potential for light rail transit to serve the area.

Planning Context

As one of Bellevue's major employment areas, the Bel-Red Corridor includes more than 50 percent of all land in the City zoned for light industrial use; over 1,100 businesses; and nearly 17 percent of the City's total employment. In recent years, however, the corridor has been an area in transition. Several large employers have moved out of or have greatly reduced operations in the area. For example, Safeway, the corridor's largest landowner, has shifted most of its distribution operations out of the area and sold about half

Bel-Red in the Region



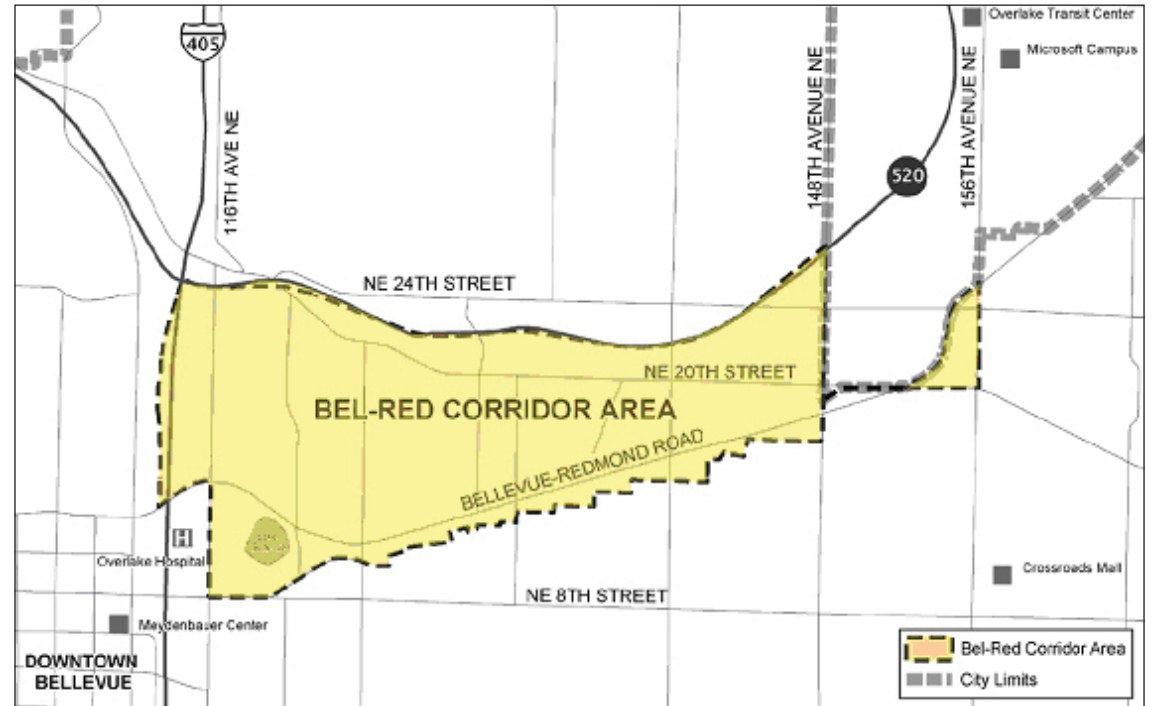
Section 2 Introduction/Planning Context

of the 75 acres it owned in the corridor. The former King County Journal also moved operations from the Bel-Red Corridor to Kent. Concurrently, employment has also declined: between 1995 and 2004, employment dropped by more than 5 percent in the Bel-Red Corridor while increasing by 20 percent in Bellevue as a whole.

The corridor's physical characteristics reflect its light industrial use pattern. The transportation network is sparse and discontinuous with little in the way of a street grid, particularly on the corridor's west side. Although the corridor is bordered by SR 520 along its northern edge, there are only two access points to the highway: one at 124th Avenue NE, which only provides access to and from westbound SR 520, and one full interchange at 148th Avenue NE. Six streams run through the corridor—most highly impacted by historical development, but some still providing natural functions and sustaining habitat for salmonids. There is one major recreational facility (Highland Community Center) in the corridor's 900-plus acres, but there are no substantial neighborhood parks or trails.

When it was last updated in 1988, the Bel-Red/Northrup Subarea Plan affirmed the area's light industrial and commercial land use pattern. Since then, Downtown Bellevue has grown dramatically, and Redmond's Overlake area has become a major regional employment center. With these two regional urban centers as its "bookends" and major development occurring in both, a reexamination of the corridor was appropriate. The need to consider future land uses was heightened by Sound Transit's ongoing work to evaluate an extension of light rail transit (LRT) through the Bel-Red Corridor and into Redmond. LRT could support changes in the area's land use patterns by providing new transportation system capacity; experience in other urban areas has demonstrated that LRT can serve as a catalyst for redevelopment to different types of uses and greater densities. The corridor's current zoning, however, limits the extent to

Bel-Red Study Area



which land use could support LRT because industrial and commercial uses tend to be relatively low-intensity and oriented more toward driving than transit use.

The most recent update of the City's Comprehensive Plan identified particular economic challenges facing Bellevue in the years ahead. One of the challenges listed was the presence of aging commercial areas in various areas across the City that would need some repositioning to reach their full potential. The Bel-Red Corridor was identified as including some of these aging areas, and the plan noted that those uses in the corridor (primarily warehousing, distribution, and manufacturing) might not be the best long-term uses, given Bellevue's place in the current economy.

Project Purpose and Major Goals

Bellevue's economy has been dynamic in recent years, with significant increases in overall employment and rapidly increasing land values. These land value changes, coupled with warehouse and distribution activities relocating to other areas in the region, have signaled an increase in market demand for office and residential uses in close-in locations. This employment decline previously noted, combined with requests for changes in land use in parts of the corridor and the fact that the area had not been planned for in a comprehensive manner in over 15 years, motivated the City to reexamine land use in the corridor.

The City had several other reasons for initiating the project. One was to be in a position to influence upcoming decisions by Sound Transit about the future of high-capacity transit (HCT), which is planned to serve the City of Bellevue and pass through the Bel-Red area. Another was the City's recognition of the corridor's strategic location connecting Downtown Bellevue and Overlake, prompting the desire to be proactive in determining the corridor's role in its overall growth management and economic development strategy.

Based on these factors, in 2005 the City Council approved launching the Bel-Red Corridor Project. The objective was to work with the community to plan and manage change, rather than to accommodate the inevitable change in a haphazard, piecemeal way. The major goals of the project are to:

- Identify a preferred long-term land use vision for the Bel-Red corridor that:
 - Provides clear and deliberate direction for the area's future.
 - Enhances the economic vitality of this area and of the larger city.
 - Complements Downtown Bellevue and other employment centers in the city.
 - Strongly integrates land use and transportation systems in an environmentally sustainable manner.

- Devise a multi-modal transportation system for the area that accommodates future growth, enhances overall mobility, and mitigates impacts on adjoining areas.
- Evaluate the impact and opportunities presented by HCT through the area on both land use and transportation, and identify a preferred HCT route and station locations through this corridor in coordination with Sound Transit.
- Identify community and neighborhood amenities that will complement the preferred land use vision for the area and serve the broader community.
- Protect adjoining areas from impacts of land use and transportation changes in the study area.



In August, 2005, the City Council decided to launch the planning effort, and endorsed a set of planning principles to frame this effort.



Council's Principles

1. **Long-Term Vision.** The preferred vision resulting from this project should be long-term, ambitious, and rooted in reality, providing clear direction for the future of the Bel-Red area.
2. **Economic Vitality.** This project should establish a solid and dynamic economic future for Bel-Red, enhancing the area's existing strengths and its future potential.
3. **Differentiated Economic Niche.** Bel-Red should provide for future growth of jobs and firms that have significant potential for expansion, and which are not well accommodated in other parts of the city.
4. **Building from Existing Assets.** This project should build on existing assets of the corridor, including the large number of viable, successful businesses in the area.
5. **High Capacity Transit as an Opportunity.** This project should approach High Capacity Transit as a significant opportunity to both enhance mobility and affect desired land use change.
6. **Land Use/Transportation Integration.** Given the importance of maintaining a well-balanced transportation system, and the inter-dependence between transportation and land use, this project should closely integrate land use and transportation planning.
7. **Community Amenities and Quality of Life.** The Bel-Red plan should protect existing natural resources and community amenities, and identify an extensive package of new amenities for the area.
8. **Neighborhood Protection, Enhancement, and Creation.** This project must identify strategies to identify and mitigate potential neighborhood impacts related to future Bel-Red development.
9. **Sustainability.** The vision for Bel-Red should identify opportunities to manage the area's natural resources in a sustainable manner.
10. **Coordination.** This planning effort requires solid coordination with other affected jurisdictions.



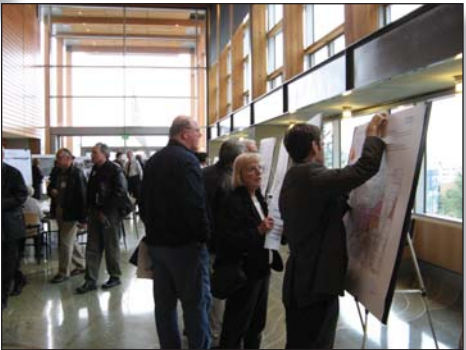
Section 3

Planning Process



Planning for the Bel-Red Corridor began with a Steering Committee of community stakeholders charged with defining and evaluating future development scenarios.

Over its nearly two-year tenure, the committee studied a wealth of data, listened to public input, framed a range of policy choices—and, ultimately, recommended a preferred alternative for the future of the corridor.



Public Involvement

Involving affected members of the public in the planning process is a key priority for the City of Bellevue. Given the importance of the Bel-Red planning effort, the City Council decided that the corridor project should be guided by a Steering Committee that would be made up of a variety of community stakeholders.

These stakeholders included former City Council members, members of City Boards and Commissions (the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission, and the Parks and Community Services Board), representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, and residents from neighborhoods surrounding the study area.

In October 2005, the City Council confirmed a 16-member committee that represented these broad interests. Subsequent to beginning the process, one Steering Committee member resigned.



**Steering
Committee
Recommendation**



BEL RED
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Section 3 **Planning Process**

The Council’s charge to the committee said, in part:

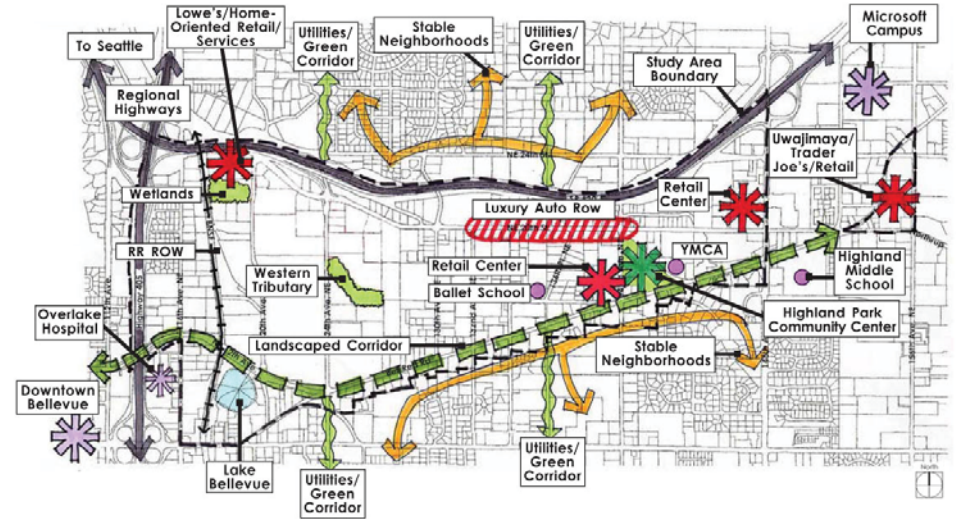
“The Bel-Red Steering Committee is directed to provide guidance to City staff in developing work products to accomplish the Bel-Red corridor project. Specifically, this work will involve developing future development scenarios for the Bel-Red corridor, evaluating those scenarios in an Environmental Impact Statement, and ultimately selecting a preferred land use and transportation alternative and identifying actions to implement the preferred vision. The



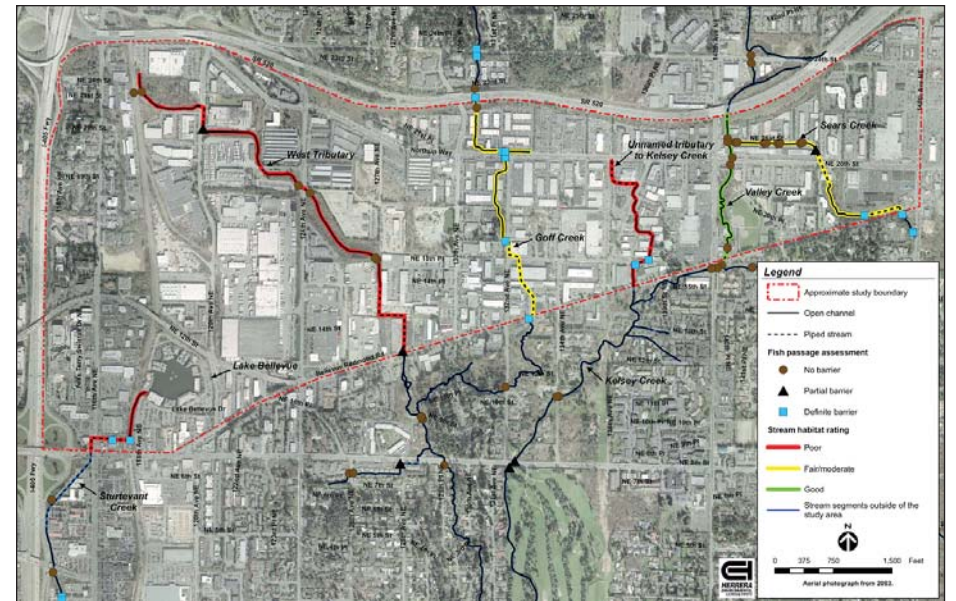
project will culminate with a final report summarizing the recommendations of the committee ... The Steering Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Transportation Commission, and the Parks & Community Services Board. The City Council, upon review by City boards and commissions, will ultimately approve the final

report on the project, which will lead to follow-up work on Comprehensive Plan and subarea plan amendments, and potentially changes to the Land Use Code and Capital Investment Program Plan. In conducting its work, the Steering Committee should recognize that a wide representation of opinions, expertise, and objectives exists within the individual members of the committee. The Steering Committee members should respectfully consider each other’s views and right to participate, and fully consider all aspects of any issue before drawing conclusions and recommendations. The Steering Committee should also participate in broader public outreach efforts on the project and solicit input from the general public and other key community stakeholders.”

Assessment of Existing Assets



Assessment of Streams



The Steering Committee conducted 19 meetings over the course of the planning effort, all of which were attended by members of the public. At each meeting the committee listened to comments from members of the public and business/property owners in the area. Committee members also attended, and participated in, events with the broader community and business/property owners in the corridor. The committee's recommendation on the future of the corridor is in large part informed by this public interaction.

In addition to their regular meetings, the committee held several special workshops, particularly focusing on the development of plan alternatives. Another special workshop was a tour of Portland's Tri-Met Max light rail system, with visits to a number of stations where members observed examples of transit-oriented development and redevelopment in the Pearl District.

In addition to the Steering Committee process, there was significant public outreach and involvement through the duration of the planning effort. Community meetings and open houses included scoping meetings at the beginning of the project, as well as community-wide meetings for review of draft land use alternatives and development of the preferred alternative. The City undertook special efforts to inform and involve property owners and business owners in the area, since these stakeholders will be most directly affected by the planning process. For example, the City convened "panels" of business and property owners in the corridor on three occasions: to get their feedback on the issues to be considered in developing land use alternatives, to request feedback on the draft alternatives, and to get input into creating the preferred alternative. These panels, each of which lasted approximately 2 hours, were run like focus groups; the information gained from them helped guide the work of City staff and was provided to committee members to help inform their decisions.

Throughout the course of the project, staff provided briefings to City boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Parks & Community Services Board, and the Environmental Services Commission. These boards and commissions have important long-term responsibilities in

the implementation of the Bel-Red Corridor Project vision. The City Council also received briefings at key milestones in the project, including a joint meeting with Redmond City Council at which issues of mutual concern were discussed.

Defining Existing Conditions in the Corridor

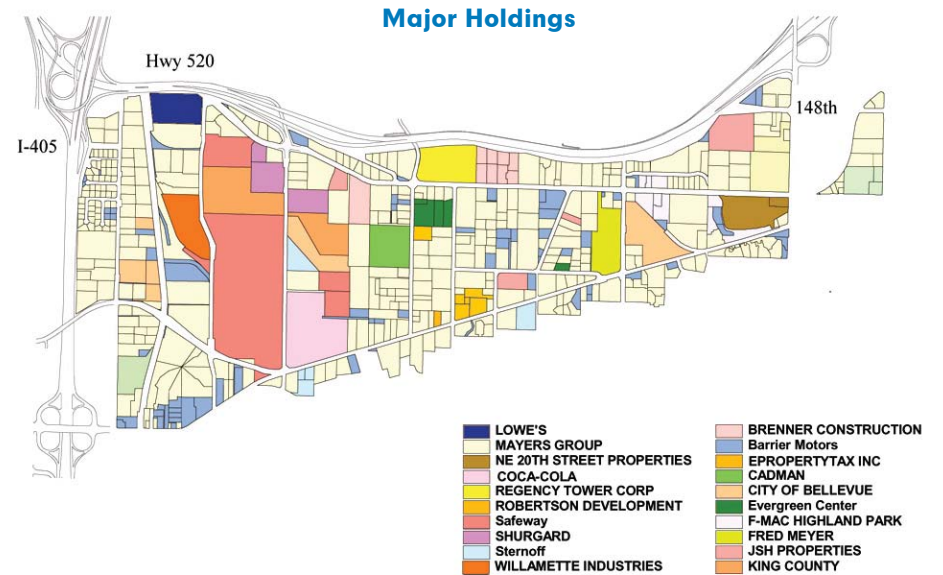
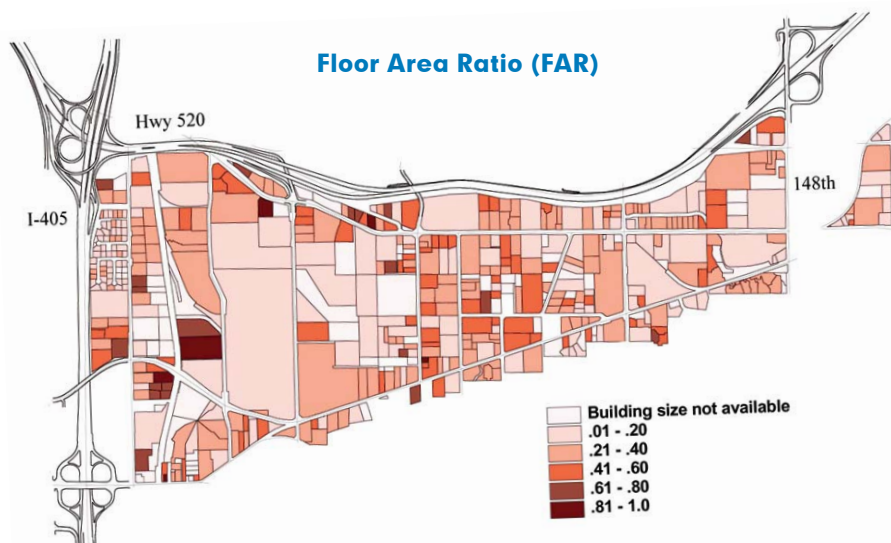
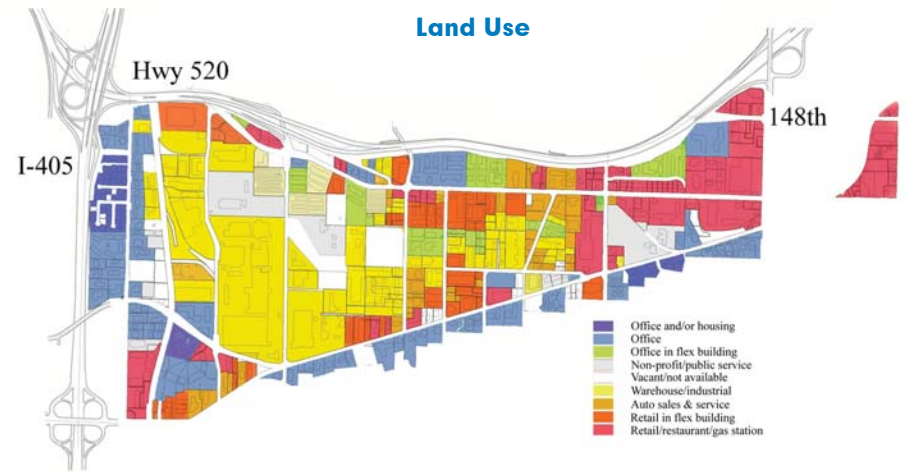
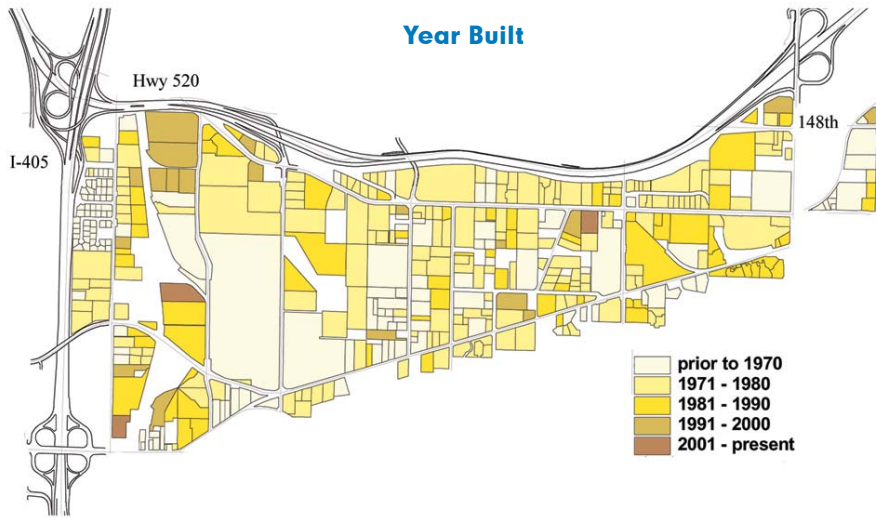
An important part of the Steering Committee's early work was gaining a clear understanding of what the Bel-Red Corridor is like today. Early on, the committee was presented background information and data on various aspects of the corridor. This included information on economic and employment trends, existing land use characteristics, environmental features (including an in-depth analysis of the conditions and restoration potential of several riparian corridors that run through the area), transportation patterns and trends, and environmental sustainability opportunities. The committee also received information summarizing relevant portions of the existing Bel-Red/Northup subarea plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and other relevant planning efforts, such as the Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) and the 2005-06 update of Sound Transit's regional transit plan.

In addition to information on existing conditions, the committee was presented with data about the future development potential of the area (age of buildings, improvement to land ratios, parcel ownership patterns, etc.). This information was derived from the economic/market analysis, which was the first major product prepared as part of the project. Committee members also toured the area to gain a better understanding of its existing land use pattern, topography, and environmental features, and to discuss future development opportunities.

Supplementing the technical background and data, the committee also reviewed public input submitted as part of the scoping process for the Environmental Impact Statement. The scoping process, which included a well-attended community meeting, occurred in November and December of 2005. It generated a number of comments and concerns that helped inform the committee's thinking and perspective about the area in the early part of their work.



Section 3 **Planning Process**



BEL RED
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**Steering
Committee
Recommendation**

Analyzing Economic Trends and Market Potential

In the summer of 2005, the city retained Leland Consulting Group to prepare a market/economic study of the Bel-Red Corridor area. The main purposes of the study were to assess future market conditions for various types of land uses, identify the amounts of various future land use that could be anticipated in the future based on those market conditions, and identify market strategies to encourage future development in the corridor.

Leland evaluated existing land use and development patterns in the corridor, projected employment and household growth patterns in Bellevue and the region, studied demographic data, and evaluated and mapped several features of the area, such as age of buildings, improvement-to-land ratios, and ownership patterns. In addition, Leland conducted stakeholder interviews with property owners, real estate experts, and developers to understand local perspectives on future development potential within the area. They also identified several subdistricts within the corridor which had unique characteristics: the 116th office corridor, the light industrial core area, a services core, and a retail core on the north and east ends of the planning area.

Based on this work, Leland forecast that the area could anticipate a strong future demand for office and housing units, 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 warehouse/industrial uses were unlikely to locate in the area in the future due to already high, and rising, land prices. Other major conclusions included:

- Overlake Hospital Medical Center and the Microsoft campus, located to the west and east of the corridor (respectively), function as economic anchors at each end of the corridor, and present opportunities to encourage redevelopment within it.

- Much of the land within the Bel-Red corridor is underdeveloped, as calculated on the basis of land values vs. improvement values.
- The Bel-Red area can provide space for large corporate employers who might want more of a campus-like setting, rather than a dense, high-rise setting.

Leland also identified several potential development themes and issues that could frame future planning of the corridor. These were shared with the Steering Committee in early 2006, and helped shape the committee's thinking about the area. These conclusions included:

- There are significant opportunities to build more housing in this area, given the strong housing demand in East King County generally, and access to close-by shopping and employment. Areas adjacent to Lake Bellevue or Highland Community Center might be places where this could occur in the shorter term.
- Wetlands and riparian corridors should be treated as an amenities, and improvement of these degraded environmental resources could be an asset for future development (either office or residential).
- Transit should be aligned with new development, and there are opportunities to create "transit villages" within the area, such as the area near the Safeway site or the "Uwajimaya triangle" area on the east end of the study area.
- A health care/medical office corridor could and should be created along 116th Avenue NE.

The committee and staff used the findings in the Leland study in the development of future land use alternatives that were evaluated in the next step of the process.



Developing and Evaluating Alternatives for the Corridor

Many of the early meetings of the steering committee involved presentations of reports and analysis by staff and consultants. These presentations, along with documents, field trips, and community input, armed the committee with a strong background on the important components that would eventually make up their preferred alternative. After considering this background—but prior to developing any alternatives—the committee articulated the attributes that they believed each alternative should contain. That discussion led to the development of a set of objectives that the committee adopted to frame development of the alternatives.

Steering Committee Objectives

The objectives used to help create the Bel-Red Corridor alternatives were developed after extensive committee discussion, and were based on:

- The ten planning principles adopted by the City Council.
- Public comments, which provided some clear themes: improving the natural environment; adding parks/open space amenities; accommodating service uses; supporting housing, office, and mixed-use development; and increasing transportation mobility (streets, non-motorized, and transit).
- Technical reports and analysis by City staff and consultants, including analyses of economic and market conditions, existing land use conditions, transportation, and riparian corridors.
- Steering Committee discussions.

In April 2006, the steering committee approved the following set of objectives. These objectives were used as a preliminary screening of the alternatives to ensure that each alternative analyzed would be a viable one.

Market Feasibility

- Incorporate elements of market forecast (office, housing, retail)
- Serve distinctive market niche
- Meet market needs and economic realities
- Leverage nearby opportunities (i.e., Overlake Hospital expansion)

Land Use

- Jobs-housing relationship (accommodate housing and commercial uses)
- Accommodate service uses
- Land use takes advantage of HCT stations (mixed use nodes)
- Appropriate scale of development within area

Neighborhood Impact

- Land use sensitive to surrounding areas
- Addresses transportation spillover impacts

Environmental Quality

- Improve environmental resources (streams, wetlands)
- Support sustainable development patterns

Parks and Open Space

- Parks integrated with future land use concepts
- Achieves critical mass of park improvements
- Adds value to overall system (include regional facility)

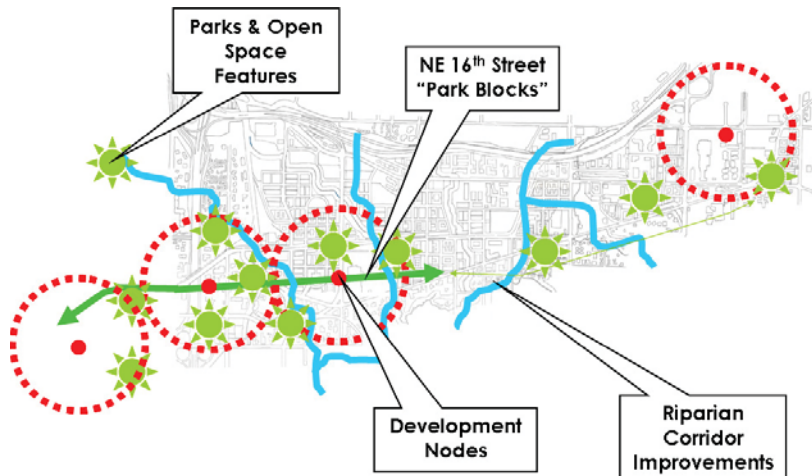


Transportation Accessibility and Mobility

- Addresses multi-modal transportation improvements in the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods
- Provides improved access to regional system
- Provides improved local access and circulation
- Accommodates planned level of development

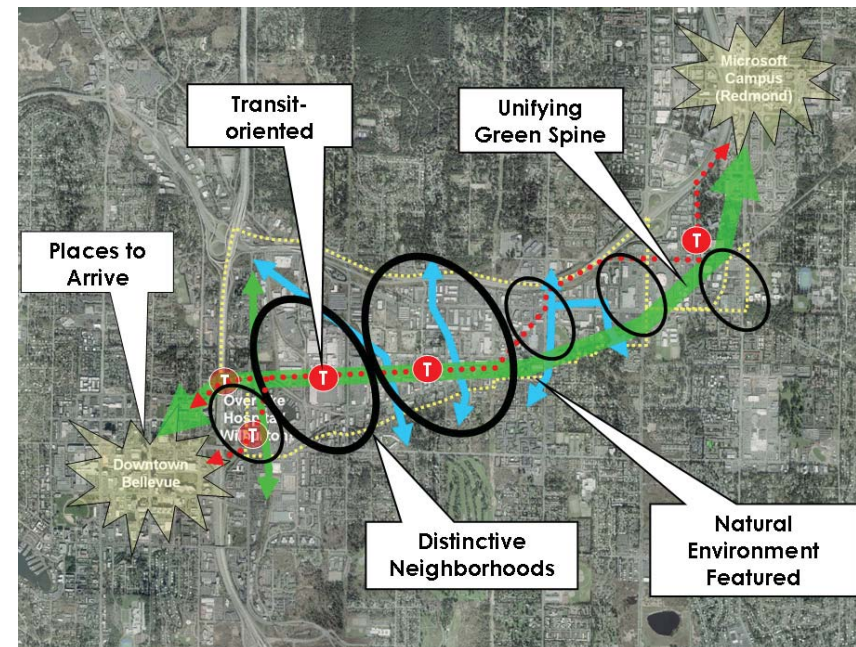
The steering committee, together with Bellevue staff and a consultant team led by Crandall Arambula, developed the action alternatives for the Bel-Red Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) through a structured process that involved analyzing market conditions and existing land use patterns, developing potential land use and transportation scenarios, and seeking input from the public, property owners, and business owners. As described earlier in this chapter, there was extensive public involvement during this phase, including two panels of area business and property owners.

Major Components



When developing and approving the alternatives for further review in the DEIS, the committee and staff made a conscious effort to make the alternatives different from one another. These differences allowed the committee to evaluate the effects of different policy choices, including varying land use patterns, amounts of future development, ways of dealing with light industrial or service uses, and locations of light rail stations. Framing the alternatives in this way allowed for a more robust discussion and evaluation of choices and preferences when it came time to develop the preferred alternative. In June 2006, the committee selected four alternatives (including the “No Action” alternative) for evaluation in the DEIS. Prepared by CH2M HILL, the DEIS was published in January 2007. It analyzed the environmental impacts of each alternative and identified mitigation opportunities.

Fundamental Concepts



Identifying the Preliminary Preferred Alternative

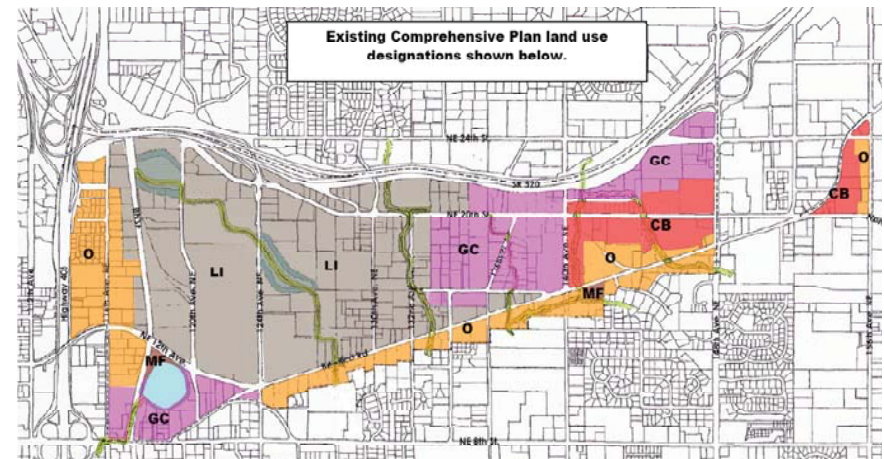
Public comment on the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS helped shape the development of a preliminary preferred alternative, and reflected the strong public interest in the project. The City received numerous written comments and considerable oral testimony on the DEIS. Each individual comment was responded to in the Final EIS (FEIS). Published in July 2007, the FEIS evaluated the preliminary preferred alternative as recommended by the Steering Committee. This alternative included components of each previously studied alternatives, including the No-Action alternative, but most closely resembled the land use development program proposed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS.

Several attributes of the preliminary preferred alternative embodied constant themes within each of the DEIS alternatives, including:

- A nodal development pattern based on potential future light-rail station locations
- Medical office uses along 116th Avenue NE
- Lower-intensity office uses south of Bel-Red Road
- Low-density mixed-use retail/housing along 156th Avenue NE
- Retail along NE 20th Street/Northup Way
- Stream and open space enhancements
- Parks and recreation opportunities

The following maps and table summarize and illustrate each of the Bel-Red Corridor alternatives evaluated in the environmental impact statement. The next chapter of this document describes the preferred alternative in greater depth.

No Action Alternative (DEIS)



Alternative 1 (DEIS)



FIGURE 2-3
Alternative 1: Midrange Employment and Midrange Housing (Nodes at 122nd and 152nd Avenues NE)
Bel-Red Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Alternative 2 (DEIS)

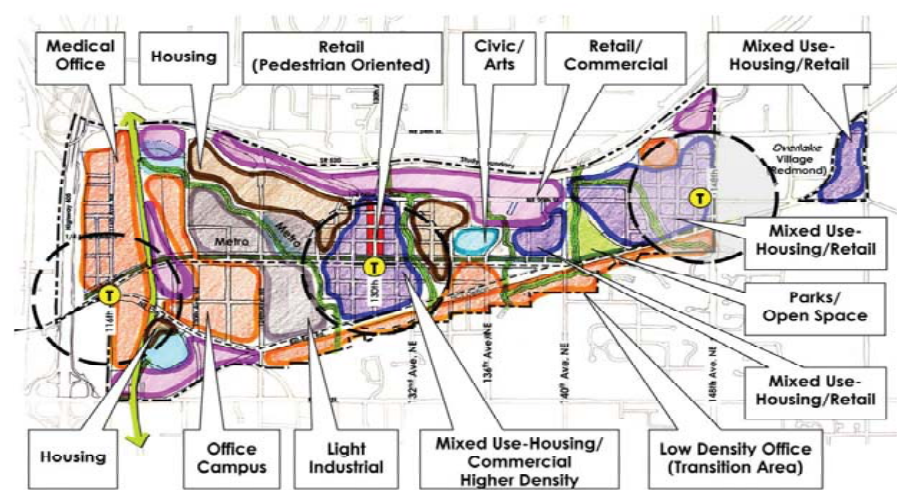


FIGURE 2-4
Alternative 2: Low Employment and High Housing (Nodes at 110th and 130th Avenues NE; and near 148th Avenue NE)
Bel-Red Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Alternative 3 (DEIS)

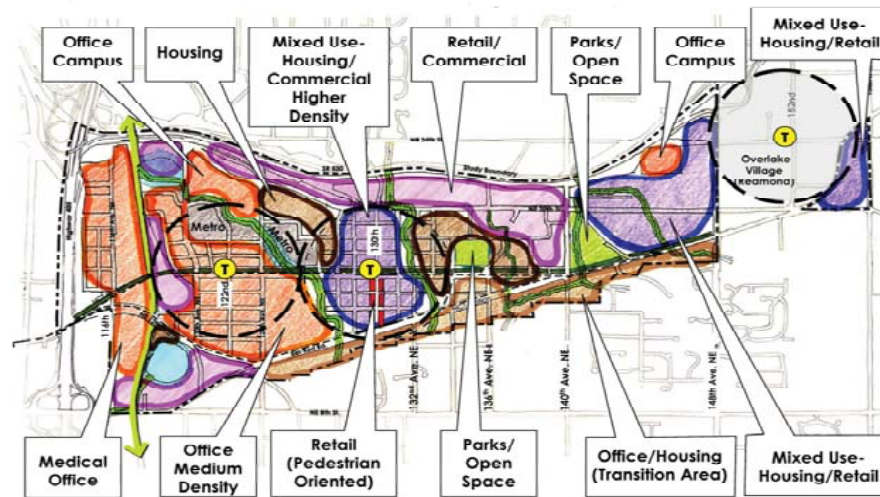


FIGURE 2-5
Alternative 3: High Employment and High Housing (Nodes at 122nd, 130th, and 152nd Avenues NE)
Bel-Red Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Steering
Committee
Recommendation



BEL RED
corridor project

Summary of Alternatives Evaluated

Attribute	DEIS				FEIS
	No-Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Preliminary Preferred Alternative
Net change in nonresidential development (square feet) through 2030	606,500 Office 124,000 Retail 300,000 Industrial	3,200,000 Office 300,000 Retail -2,690,000 Industrial	2,300,000 Office 200,000 Retail -1,980,000 Industrial	4,000,000 Office 500,000 Retail -2,490,000 Industrial	4,000,000 Office 500,000 Retail -2,490,000 Industrial
New housing units	None	3,500	5,000	5,000	5,000
Light-rail stations and locations	Two stations: • Overlake Hospital Medical Center vicinity • 152nd Avenue NE (Redmond)	Two stations: • 122nd Avenue NE • 152nd Avenue NE (Redmond)	Three stations: • Overlake Hospital Medical Center vicinity • 130th Avenue NE • 148th Avenue NE	Three stations: • 122nd Avenue NE • 130th Avenue NE • 152nd Avenue NE (Redmond)	Four stations: • Overlake Hospital • Medical Center vicinity • 122nd Avenue NE • 130th Avenue NE • 152nd Avenue NE (Redmond)
Other features		Services core	Light Industrial "reserve"		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts District • No non-conforming light industrial and service uses; new service uses accommodated in the future • Floor area ratio (FAR) of up to 2.5 in development nodes • FAR of up to 1.0 outside of nodes • Analysis of heights of up to 150/165 feet in development nodes

Section 4

Preferred Alternative



The preferred alternative for the Bel-Red Corridor is a comprehensive array of components that respond to each of the project's planning principles: economic vitality, integration of transit and land use, environmental sustainability, preservation of existing assets, and protection of the surrounding neighborhoods, to name just a few. It represents a comprehensive vision for Bel-Red that is sufficiently detailed to allow the City to begin its planning for implementation. This section describes key features of the preferred alternative.

Components of the Preferred Alternative

The Steering Committee's recommended preferred alternative comprises a number of components that were developed over several committee meetings in the spring and summer of 2007. Discussed in detail below, these include a vision statement, land use components, transportation components, riparian corridor/green infrastructure components, and parks/open space components.

Vision Statement

The Bel-Red corridor in 2030 will be an area that is unique within the city of Bellevue and the entire Puget Sound region. It will be an area where thriving businesses will be adjacent to, and sometimes mixed with, livable neighborhoods, all served by a multi-modal transportation system that connects the area to the greater city and region. The area will also be distinguished by environmental and community amenities that will serve residents and employees in the area, as well as residents from surrounding neighborhoods and the entire city. The area will transition gracefully over time, with existing businesses being accommodated while new types of development occur as conditions warrant.



Specifically, the area will be distinguished by the following attributes:

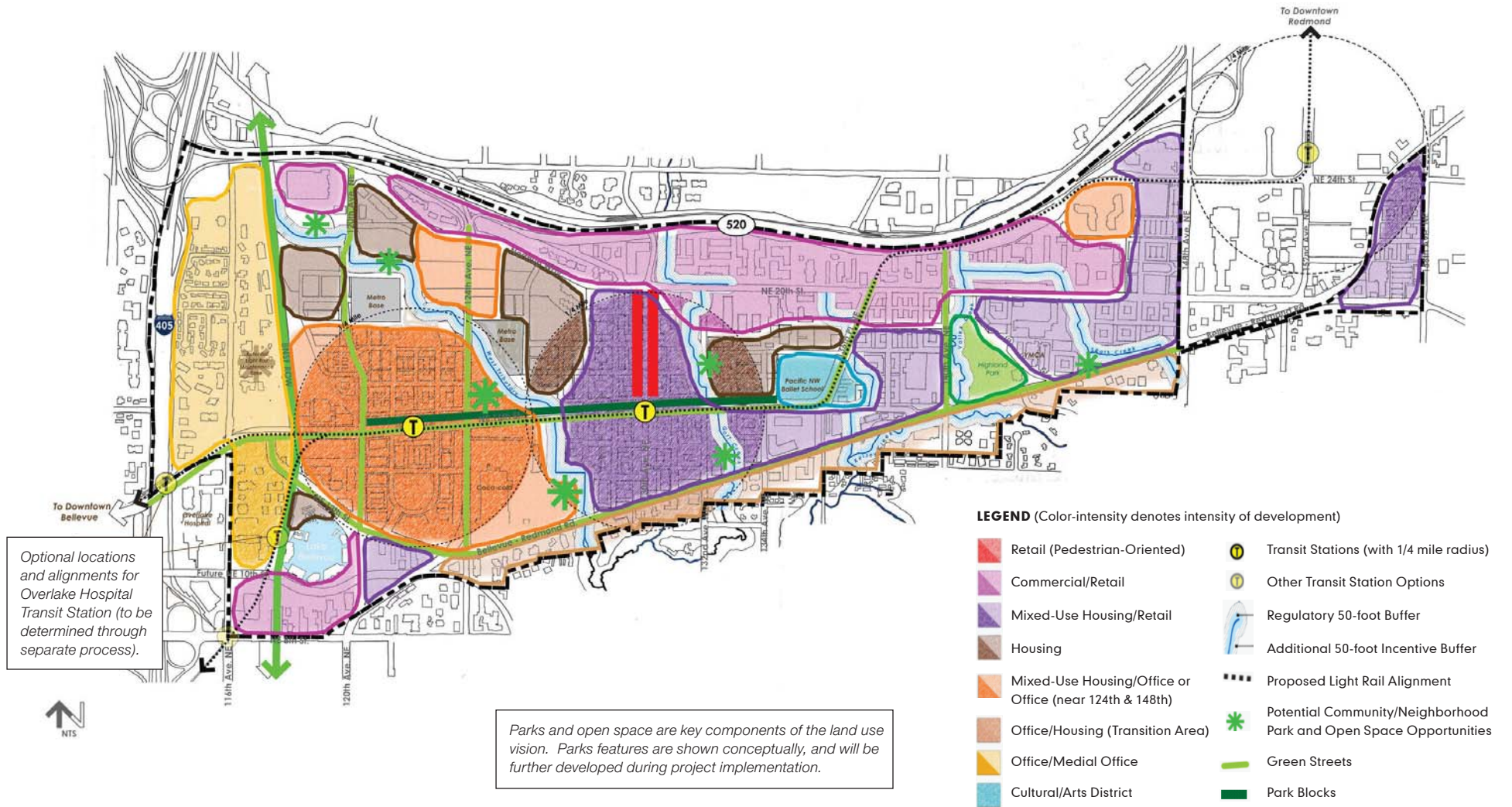
- **A thriving, diverse economy.** Bel-Red will be home to major employers, types of businesses and employment sectors unique to this part of Bellevue, and services that are important to the local community.
- **Vibrant, diverse neighborhoods.** Bel-Red will contain a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population of varied income levels. Neighborhoods will have convenient access to shopping, jobs, and community amenities, and will also be well connected to the larger city and region.
- **A comprehensive, connected parks and open space system.** Bel-Red will have a park system that serves residents, employees, and visitors to the area, and provides recreation and open space benefits for residents from surrounding neighborhoods as well. Park system components will include trails along stream corridors, community facilities, neighborhood parks, and cultural/arts features.
- **Environmental improvements.** Redevelopment of the corridor will provide opportunities for major environmental enhancements—including improving riparian corridors and adding trees and green spaces—and will implement a more sustainable approach to managing stormwater and other natural resources.
- **A multi-modal transportation system.** Bel-Red’s transportation system will take maximum advantage of its proximity to Downtown Bellevue and Overlake by providing convenient access and short travel times within and outside the corridor for drivers, transit riders, vanpools and access vans, bicyclists, and pedestrians, while minimizing spillover traffic impacts on adjoining neighborhoods.



- **A sense of place.** Bel-Red will have a character that is different from Downtown Bellevue, Overlake, or other Bellevue neighborhoods. The area will build on its industrial past while incorporating new development types that will offer a unique experience for residents and employees.
- **Appropriate scale of development.** Development and redevelopment in Bel-Red should complement, not compete with, Downtown Bellevue, and should provide graceful transitions in scale in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
- **Timing of development.** As the Bel-Red corridor redevelops over time, provision of infrastructure (particularly transportation infrastructure) and public amenities (such as parks) should occur concurrently with development.
- **Sustainability.** New neighborhoods, buildings, streetscapes, parks and open space systems, environmental enhancements, and transportation facilities will be planned, designed and developed using state-of-the-art techniques to enhance the natural and built environment and create a more livable community.



Preferred Alternative



Land Use Components

The preferred alternative map, shown on the previous page, is the basis for the Steering Committee’s land use vision. The land use components of the preferred alternative are outlined below. Parks and open space components and treatment of the riparian corridors are generally indicated on the land use map, and are discussed in greater detail in the sections on riparian corridor/green infrastructure and parks/open space components.

Development Nodes

A major theme of the preferred alternative is the “nodal” development pattern, which would concentrate development in the vicinity of potential future light rail stations (generally within a quarter-mile radius). The development nodes would be located in the vicinity of Overlake Hospital, at 122nd Avenue NE, at 130th Avenue NE, and 152nd Avenue NE (with a station in Redmond). These nodes would be mixed-use in nature, with a high level of pedestrian amenities. Land use intensities within transit nodes could reach a maximum development intensity of 2.5 FAR, but only if developers participate in an incentive system that provides public amenities in exchange for higher densities. The base FAR will be much lower than this maximum. Several factors framed the designation of appropriate FARs: the Council’s desire that the area complement, but not compete with Downtown; the interest in having adequate FARs in some places to support light rail transit; and the finding in the economic analysis that there was demand for a more “mid-rise” office product in Bellevue. Building heights within nodes are discussed below.

The committee endorsed the following mix of land uses within the development nodes:

- **Vicinity of Overlake Hospital**—Office, with an emphasis on medical office

- **122nd Avenue NE**—Office and housing, with more of an emphasis on office
- **130th Avenue NE**—Housing, retail, and services, with pedestrian-oriented retail street
- **152nd Avenue NE**—Mixed use housing/retail in the “Uwajimaya triangle” along 156th Avenue NE

The intensity of development and uses within the nodes is designed to support transit. The highest intensities are generally concentrated in the west half of the corridor. The decision to locate new employment-generating uses in the nodes is intended to link development areas to locations where the existing or planned expansion of transportation facilities could support development, and to protect residential neighborhoods located to the north, south and east of the corridor from cut-through traffic.

Land Uses Outside Nodes

A number of land uses would be designated outside of the development nodes. Some of these would be very consistent with existing plans and zoning in place today, while others would be different. Land use intensities outside nodes could reach a maximum of 1.0 FAR through an amenity incentive system. Land uses identified by the Steering Committee include:

- **Medical office uses along the 116th Avenue NE corridor.** The vision is that medical office would be the emphasis along 116th Avenue NE north of NE 12th Street due to the proximity of Overlake Hospital Medical Center, but other office uses (not just medical) could be included as well. The highest intensities would center on the development node, which could be located near the hospital at NE 12th Street or further south.



- **Retail commercial emphasis along the NE 20th Street corridor.** The preferred alternative includes retail along the central portion of the NE 20th Street corridor. This is not an area contemplated for more intense development, so uses in this corridor would generally have the same planned development intensity as under current zoning.



- **Mix of office and housing south of Bel-Red Road.** The south side of Bel-Red Road is, for the most part, planned and zoned for office uses. The existing development pattern is low-intensity office buildings of one or two stories. This land use pattern is an appropriate buffer between the uses north of Bel-Red Road and the single-family residential neighborhoods to the south. The committee recommended that, while office should remain a focus, housing should also be included in the preferred vision for this area.

- **Mixed housing and retail.** The area just west of 148th Avenue NE within the Bel-Red corridor is currently planned, zoned, and developed as auto-oriented retail uses. Large and medium-size shopping centers are located in this area, including the Fred Meyer store on 148th Avenue NE and Evergreen Center on 140th Avenue NE. The committee discussed whether the future development of the area should include housing as well as retail. They concluded that, while retail would remain an important element in future development, mixed-use development



with housing in addition to retail should be part of the preferred vision for this area. The committee also believed this same retail/housing land use pattern should be in place near Highland Community Center, in the Sherwood Shopping Center area, and in the triangular area south of NE 12th Street, east of 120th Avenue NE.

- **Housing in northwest portion of planning area** (south side of NE 20th Street). The northwest portion of the study area (north of the Metro base along the south end of NE 20th Street) is shown as housing in the preferred alternative. This was driven in part by the idea that housing in this area could take advantage of view corridors to the south and west (this is one of the highest points in the study area), and would also benefit from potential improvements to the West Tributary stream corridor.



- **Office.** There are a few other areas outside development nodes designated for an office focus. These include the areas along 124th Avenue NE south of Northup Way, and off 148th Avenue NE south of NE 24th Street. The intensity of these office uses would be substantially lower than within development nodes.
- **Retail/commercial southwest portion of study area** (south of NE 12th Street). The southwest portion of the study area (generally south of NE 12th Street and contiguous to Lake Bellevue) is currently planned and zoned for general commercial uses, and has a combination of retail, office, and car dealerships. The committee elected to continue to designate this area as retail commercial in the preferred alternative.

- Cultural/Arts District.** The preferred alternative includes a Cultural/Arts District in the vicinity of the Pacific Northwest Ballet School on 136th Place NE. The concept of the arts district is to build upon the PNB school concept through adaptive reuse of existing buildings for arts classroom or rehearsal spaces. This could result in a cluster of studio, rehearsal, and possibly performance spaces that could be used by artists and/or non-profit organizations. Uses could also include the creation of crafts such as pottery, sculpture, and glass-blowing.

Building Heights in Development Nodes

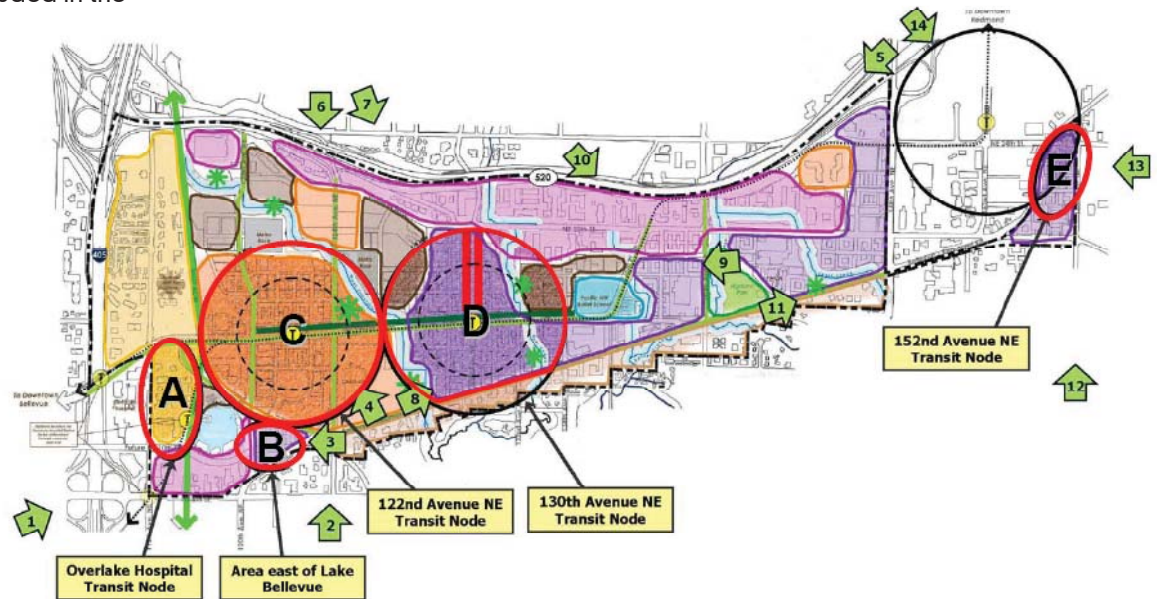
As the Steering Committee began developing the preferred alternative, several prospective developers in the area stated that they were interested in development that could exceed the anticipated maximum building heights of up to 6 stories for new buildings in the corridor. Because greater building heights were not analyzed in the DEIS, the committee asked that an analysis of potential building heights of up to 150 feet within development nodes be included in the

FEIS. Building heights outside of development nodes would generally be limited to up to 60 feet, with lower limits in place in areas such as the transition area south of Bel-Red Road.

There were several components to the building height analysis: visual impacts from public vantage points; urban form and its impact on community character and identity; locations of taller buildings in citywide context; relationship of building height to the Bel-Red implementation strategy; and the desire to maintain a differentiated economic niche that would not compete with Downtown Bellevue. An underlying assumption was that base heights would be substantially lower than any new maximum heights recommended, while taller buildings would be permitted as incentives to developers who provided amenities in the form of open space, stream buffers, and other benefits.

Following substantial discussion, the committee’s recommendations regarding building height are listed on the following page (see map below).

Example of Building Height Analysis



Area A Overlake Hospital Medical Center vicinity transit node, east of 116th Avenue NE

Recommendation: Allow buildings up to 150 feet

Area B Area east of Lake Bellevue

Recommendation: Allow building heights up to 60 feet, except for areas within the transit node, which could be up to 75 feet

Area C 122nd Avenue NE transit node

Recommendation: Up to 150 feet in core of node, up to 125 feet on perimeter

Area D 130th Avenue NE transit node

Recommendation: Up to 150 feet in core of node, up to 125 feet on perimeter

Area E 152nd Avenue NE transit node (Uwajimaya/Angelo's Nursery)

Recommendation: Retain height limits consistent with existing zoning—generally 45 feet and 60 feet, depending on underlying zone

FEIS Analysis of Potential Locations of Taller Buildings



Bel-Red Height Analysis

It is important to note that the committee’s recommendations for additional building height within development nodes do not equate to more density or intensity—they are a matter of urban form.

An important part of the building height recommendations is their relationship to the Bel-Red implementation strategy. The Steering Committee identified a number of enhancements to infrastructure, urban amenities, and the environment that will be needed to realize the vision of a redeveloped Bel-Red area. It is anticipated that all development will contribute to this package of improvements. Allowing for taller buildings could be a component of land use incentives granted in exchange for providing a higher level of public benefit than would otherwise be required for new development.

Strategy for Accommodating Traditional Light Industrial Uses

Approximately half of the study area is presently planned and zoned for light industrial (LI) uses. In addition, out of the 750 acres of land in Bellevue zoned for LI uses, approximately 450 acres, or 60 percent, is located in the Bel-Red corridor. Therefore, a strategy for “traditional light industrial uses” was an important topic for the Bel-Red work. Staff and the Steering Committee also heard many concerns expressed by existing businesses (such as the Coca-Cola bottling plant) that had been in the area for some time, and were interested in remaining. Thus, the deliberation on how to accommodate LI uses became an important part of the committee’s overall discussion.

While there are a number of different uses in the LI-designated portion of Bel-Red, traditional “LI uses” are generally distinguished as either industrial and manufacturing (characterized by business activities, manufacturing, assembly, processing, and similar operations) or warehouse/distribution (characterized by businesses involved in the warehousing and distribution of wholesale goods and supplies—typically associated with heavy truck traffic). Understanding the unique attributes of the LI zoning was a source of some confusion, because many

of the area’s service uses (see next section of committee’s recommendation) are designated in the LI area, although such uses are also located in many other parts of the planning area and City.

In arriving at the preferred vision, the Steering Committee discussed four options for how to deal with LI uses in the corridor. After much discussion and deliberation, the committee decided on a strategy that allows existing uses to continue, but recognizes that market forces are likely to reduce the demand for these uses over time. The strategy can be summarized as follows:

- Existing LI uses will be allowed and may be continued by future owners.
- No new LI uses will be allowed.
- Expansions to existing LI structures will be permitted.
- Discontinued LI uses may not be re-established.
- Destroyed LI structures may be reconstructed.

Existing light industrial uses will not be considered “nonconforming” uses under the provisions of the Land Use Code. Bellevue’s Land Use Code does not currently include a term for an existing use that is allowed to continue and



expand its structure, but would not otherwise be allowed as a new use. Accordingly, a new zoning term and approach will be developed to address the treatment of existing LI uses in the Bel-Red corridor.

Strategy for Accommodating Service Uses

One of the City Council’s Planning Principles for the Bel-Red Corridor Project was to build from existing assets, including the many successful service-related businesses that serve the local

community. Accommodating service uses is also one of the objectives adopted by the Steering Committee, and this objective has been widely supported by existing businesses and members of the public. This theme was consistently expressed by members of the community from the very beginning of the project. Therefore, the committee spent considerable time analyzing the composition of existing services uses in the corridor, and exploring how a future vision should best accommodate these important uses.

The services sector is very broad, and approximately 50 percent of existing businesses in the corridor fall into this category. Service uses include health care, business and professional office, household repair, and auto-oriented services (such as auto repair). The Steering Committee reached consensus that most uses in the broad service uses heading, which typically have characteristics of general retail as opposed to light industrial, would be appropriate throughout the corridor and should be included in the preferred alternative. The examples given ranged from medical-related services, to dry-cleaners, to an existing saw repair shop.

Strategy for Broad Service Uses *(Those service uses with characteristics and impacts similar to general retail)*

The committee recommends that all existing and future uses in the broad Service Uses sector (those services that have characteristics similar to general retail) should be allowed to occur throughout the corridor (e.g. health care, business and professional office, household repair).

The committee then shifted to those select service uses that display unique characteristics typically associated with light industrial uses. This focused definition of service uses includes auto repair, automotive parts and accessories (including tire shops), auto dealers and boat dealers (particularly the service/repair component), car washing and detailing, and towing and car rental. These uses were distinguished from the many other service uses because they could have potential impacts on adjacent future uses (such as noise, odor, fumes, aesthetics) that are similar to those of light industrial uses.



The committee discussed a range of options to accommodate these specific types of service uses. After deliberation on the options, the committee recommended the following:

Strategy for “LI-type” Service Uses in nodes and standalone housing areas *(Existing uses allowed, market forces could pressure)*

- Existing service uses will be allowed and may be continued by future owners.
- No new service uses will be allowed.
- Expansions to existing service structures will be permitted.
- Discontinued service uses may not be re-established.
- Destroyed service structures may be reconstructed.

Strategy for LI-type Service Uses in area outside nodes and outside non-standalone housing locations *(New service uses allowed across the district)*

- Existing service uses will be allowed and may be continued by future owners.
- New service uses will be allowed.
- Expansions of service uses will be allowed.
- Destroyed service structures may be reconstructed.

Service uses with LI characteristics located in transit nodes and standalone housing areas will not be considered “nonconforming” uses. As noted above, Bellevue’s Land Use Code does not currently include a term for an existing use that is allowed to continue and expand its structure, but would not otherwise be allowed as a new use. Accordingly, the Land Use Code will address the treatment of existing service uses with LI characteristics in the Bel-Red corridor.

Principles on Workforce/Affordable Housing

The preferred alternative envisions the creation of 5,000 additional housing units in the Bel-Red Corridor. Bellevue has not created this much new housing potential in decades. The committee recognized the importance of this, and also the importance of developing a thoughtful strategy for incorporating a wide range of housing types in this new supply. This issue of housing diversity was also important to many members of the public. The committee recognized the complexity of the issue, but felt the need to provide some perspective on how to realize its vision of creating a variety of housing types available to a wide range of households. Accordingly, the Steering Committee developed some preliminary principles on housing that are included as part of its recommendation. These principles are as follows:

- **Vision.** One element of the Bel-Red Steering Committee’s vision for Bel-Red is that the area “will contain a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population of varied income levels.” While Bel-Red will likely include some high-end housing and a predominance of market rate prices, a deliberate strategy will be required to deliver on this vision of diversity in housing form and pricing.
- **Integration with larger City.** As Bellevue continues to experience the escalating prices of a very dynamic housing market, maintaining some housing options for low and moderate income workers and households on fixed incomes is a growing challenge for the City as a whole. The City also faces challenges in meeting the housing needs for a growing segment of our labor force who cannot afford the rising costs of housing in the Bellevue area. While no one area of the city will solve Bellevue’s affordable housing challenges, Bel-Red provides an opportunity to contribute to City-wide solutions. Housing affordability approaches here should be integrated with the City’s wider approach to the challenge of affordable housing.

- **Timing.** Bel-Red represents an extraordinary opportunity to develop new capacity for housing in Bellevue, with the potential for 5,000 housing units in an area that today accommodates virtually no housing. The time to consider workforce/affordable housing strategies is up-front, as part of the zoning and land use strategy to create this new housing capacity.
- **Multi-pronged strategy.** Providing a range of housing choices requires a multi-faceted approach. Bel-Red implementation should consider a wide range of options for encouraging affordable housing, including incentives, tax policy, and regulatory measures.

Transportation Components

To support the development program envisioned in the preferred alternative, additional transportation system infrastructure will need to be built for all transportation modes—cars, transit, and nonmotorized (pedestrian and bicycle). This need is not unique to the preferred alternative—new infrastructure would be needed under all the action alternatives analyzed in the DEIS. Traffic analysis for the 2030 planning horizon suggests that transportation capacity improvements would be needed mostly in the western part of the study area, because much of the potential employment and residential growth would be directed to this area. The map on page 4-14 shows the major transportation system improvements in the preferred alternative.

Existing Conditions

- **Streets.** The Bel-Red Corridor is characterized as having an “immature” street system. Many arterials within the study area have two lanes and no pedestrian or bicycle facilities. There are few east-west street connections, except for the major travel corridors of Bel-Red Road and NE 20th Street on the perimeter of the study area. In the western portion of the study area, 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE primarily serve light industrial users. Arterials further to the east carry commuter traffic through the study area and provide local access to retail and service uses.

- **Transit.** King County Metro provides limited bus service within the Bel-Red Corridor. That service is confined primarily to the roads on the perimeter of the study area: Bel-Red Road, NE 20th Street, 116th Avenue NE, 148th Avenue NE and 156th Avenue NE. Several bus routes provide peak-hour service only, with other routes operating on 30 to 60 minute headways.
- **Non-Motorized Transportation.** Sidewalks exist on some of the streets, but the system is discontinuous. Within the interior of the Bel-Red Corridor, many segments of road have no sidewalks. Bicycle accommodation is limited to shared roadway facilities; there are no exclusive bicycle lanes.
- **BNSF Corridor.** This existing rail line runs north-south in the western portion of the Bel-Red Corridor and provides only limited freight mobility. The planned removal of the Wilburton Tunnel to accommodate I-405 expansion will diminish the rail line’s viability as a freight corridor. Regional efforts to acquire the BNSF Corridor would result in its preservation for public use, potentially including use as a pedestrian and bicycle facility.



Future Traffic Volumes

The location and intensity of proposed land uses will determine the pattern and volume of traffic in the future. Although it is difficult to know what modes of travel people will choose to use 20 or more years from now, it is important to note that the traffic modeling provides a forecast that is based on actual existing conditions and assumed future land use and transportation system changes.

Increases in traffic and corresponding increases in congestion would occur in the Bel-Red Corridor, surrounding neighborhoods, and the regional system with both the No-Action Alternative and the preferred alternative. In general, traffic volume



for the preferred alternative would increase by about 10 percent compared to the No-Action Alternative. This increase would be due in part to regional factors, including economic growth and land use changes outside of Bellevue.

In the No-Action Alternative, 86 percent of people would drive alone from home to work, 5 percent would use various ridesharing alternatives, and 9 percent of commuters would use transit. For the preferred alternative, only 75 to 80 percent are projected to drive alone, 4 to 5 percent would share a ride to work, and 19 percent are expected to take a transit mode.

Work trips in the preferred alternative would increase by about 72 percent over the No Action Alternative. Because of increased roadway congestion and the availability of light rail, the use of transit would grow by 285 percent, while the percentage of carpool users would remain about the same.

Traffic Congestion at Intersections

Modeling results for traffic operations in the preferred alternative are somewhat counterintuitive. They show that the number of congested intersections is lower than under the No-Action Alternative, despite the fact that the preferred alternative has higher concentrations of commercial and residential development. Transportation capacity differences between the alternatives explain the results. For example, the preferred alternative includes light-rail stations surrounded by high-density uses, resulting in high transit ridership and fewer vehicle trips. Further contributing to reduced vehicle trips is a land use pattern that provides employment and housing opportunities close to transit. Also, there are a number of roadway capacity projects included in the preferred alternative. These differences would all help to diffuse the potential traffic impacts associated with the preferred alternative.

Neighborhood Impacts

Traffic modeling for the preferred alternative shows that new development in the Bel-Red corridor, combined with development around the region, is projected to cause some increase in traffic on arterials such as 140th Avenue NE and



116th Avenue NE that traverse residential neighborhoods. Mitigation for potential traffic impacts on arterials must create a roadway character that alerts drivers that they are in a neighborhood and encourages

them to drive accordingly. Medians, special paving, and other options for mitigation are identified in the DEIS. Specific measures to address traffic volume and speed on arterials will be developed in coordination with the affected neighborhoods.

Traffic-calming devices and traffic control measures would be considered on a case-by-case basis for non-arterial streets meeting Bellevue's Neighborhood Traffic Control Program criteria within residential neighborhoods in and around the Bel-Red Corridor.

Light Rail

The proposed light rail route between downtown Bellevue and Overlake would traverse the Bel-Red Corridor. An alignment through the center of the corridor along approximately NE 16th Street would maximize the potential to create transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods and employment areas. Prior to the development of the light rail system, enhanced bus transit can help support additional land use. When light rail is operating, "feeder" bus service can be reallocated to connect neighborhoods with the light rail stations.





As described elsewhere in this report, the planning in the corridor has been based in part on a decision by Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue to develop light rail through the Bel-Red corridor as part of Sound Transit’s East Link project, which will extend light rail from downtown Seattle to Redmond. The plan focuses development around transit-oriented nodes, and is designed to encourage mixed-use development in ways that depend on, and will also support, transit service. It is important to note that if light rail does not come to the area during the project’s planning horizon (2030), the overall land use plan and development program will remain valid. However, the intensity and timing of development may need to be adjusted to reflect the level of transit service that can be delivered to the corridor by other forms of transit in the interim.

While the Bel-Red Corridor Project identifies a preferred alignment and station locations, and anticipates that a light rail maintenance base may be located somewhere in the Bel-Red corridor, the Sound Transit Board is the final decision-making authority regarding light rail.

Stations. Station locations in the vicinity of Overlake Hospital Medical Center, 122nd Avenue NE, 130th Avenue NE and at 152nd Avenue NE/NE 24th Street in Redmond’s Overlake Village would support the Bel-Red Corridor land use vision. About three-quarters of residents and employees in the preferred alternative would have convenient, walkable access to the light rail stations.

Ridership. During the morning peak hour, the preferred alternative would generate substantial demand for light rail within the Bel-Red Corridor itself, with about 1,800 boardings and 5,300 alightings. This level of ridership is attributed primarily to the proximity of the light rail stations to areas of mixed-use housing, commercial, and retail uses.

Non-Motorized Transportation

The preferred pedestrian and bicycle system consists of sidewalks and bicycle facilities along roadways and stream corridors, plus a paved multi-purpose path on the BNSF railroad right-of-way. The preferred alternative offers the potential to create transit-rich development nodes and neighborhoods in which walking and bicycling opportunities abound. Some bicycle facilities would be geared toward the commuter, and others geared more for the recreational cyclist. Links to local parks and connections to the regional system are part of the vision. A few key components of the non-motorized transportation system are highlighted below.

- **BNSF Corridor.** As noted above, the BNSF corridor may be acquired and preserved for future public use. Providing multiple access points to the BNSF corridor would allow opportunities to enhance the local and regional non-motorized transportation system. In accordance with the rail-banking legislation under which the BNSF corridor would be acquired, the corridor



would be used in the short term for non-motorized transportation. Long-term use is envisioned to include the trail together with a light rail or commuter rail system.

- Stream Corridor Trails.** A component of the Bel-Red Corridor “Great Streams” vision (described later in this chapter) is to make use of the stream corridors for multiple purposes to enhance the community and the environment. The riparian corridor along the West Tributary of Kelsey Creek is particularly well suited for a future trail system that would connect the BNSF Corridor to Bel-Red Road. A pathway and sidewalk system that is more urban in character along Goff Creek would knit together the new neighborhood. Trails are envisioned along other stream corridors in the area as well, and might be developed in partnership with adjacent private property owners.



- NE 16th Street.** As a major future arterial and light rail corridor, an extension of NE 16th Street is also proposed to be the primary component of an east-west non-motorized transportation system. Providing a high quality pedestrian and bicycling environment along this arterial would create auto-free access between neighborhoods, to regional trail systems, and to light rail stations. The east-west pedestrian and bicycle corridor is also intended to be the connective facility that links the various north-south trails and sidewalks.

Roadway Projects

To support the 2030 land use development program, additional roadway infrastructure would be required within the Bel-Red Corridor, along with improved connections to downtown Bellevue and to SR 520. New or extended east-west arterials are proposed for corridors along NE 4th Street, NE 10th Street and NE 16th Street. Arterial improvements and expansions are proposed for 116th Ave NE, 120th Ave NE, 124th Ave NE, and NE 136th Place. 130th Avenue NE would be redeveloped as a pedestrian-oriented retail street. The following list and map describe the roadway capacity improvement projects in the preferred alternative. Intersection improvements would also be necessary for the transportation system to function properly; these are shown on the map and are described in the FEIS.



Recommended List of Transportation Projects

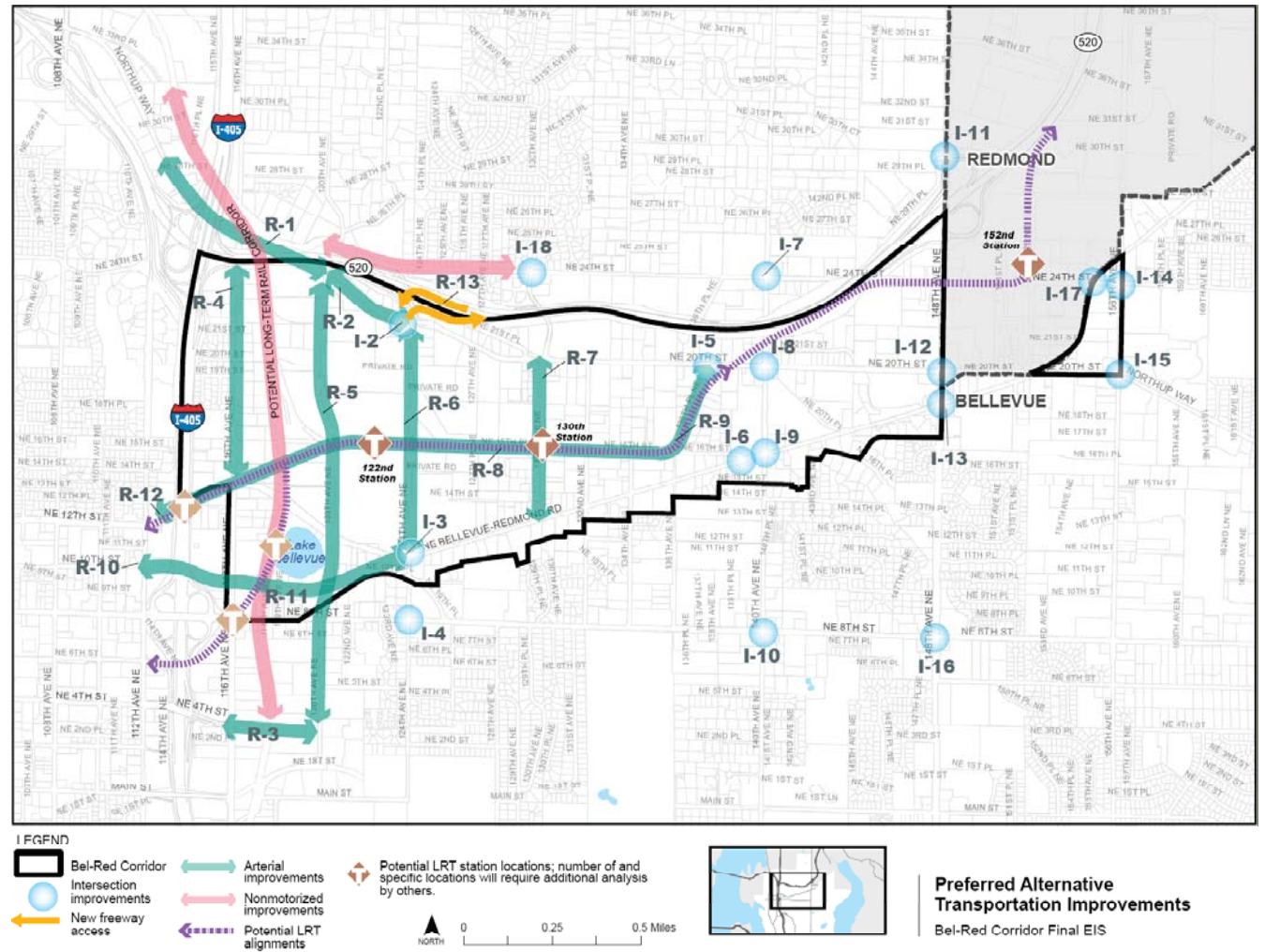
- R-1 Northup Way, two-way left-turn lane west of 120th Avenue NE
- R-2 Northup Way, add eastbound through lane between 120th and 124th Avenue NE
- R-3 NE 4th Street Extension, 116th to 120th Avenue NE, four lanes
- R-4 116th Avenue NE, develop to include two lanes in each direction plus a center turn lane
- R-5 120th Avenue NE, widen to five lanes between Northup Way and NE 4th Street
- R-6 124th Avenue NE, widen to five lanes between Northup Way and Bel-Red Road



Section 4 Preferred Alternative

- R-7 130th Avenue NE, redevelop to two lanes plus on-street parking between NE 16th Street and NE 20th Street
- R-8 NE 16th Street, five-lane roadway, linking core of study area to Downtown Bellevue via NE 12th Street
- R-9 NE 16th Street:
 - East end treatment with terminus at NE 20th Street via 136th Place NE
 - Five-lane to three-lane reduction following along 136th Place NE
 - Continue three-lane section to NE 20th Street along 136th Place NE
 - Two-lane non-arterial connection between 136th Place NE and Bel-Red Road
- R-10 NE 10th Street/ I-405 overcrossing
- R-11 NE 10th Street extension, 116th to 124th Avenue NE Four-lane roadway with turn pockets
- R-12 NE 12th Street:
 - Widen to six lanes between 112th Avenue NE and new NE 16th Street connection
 - Reduce functional class and capacity between new NE 16th Street and 124th Avenue NE
- R-13 SR 520 and 124th Avenue NE interchange, complete the interchange by constructing ramps to and from the east

Preferred Alternative Transportation Improvements



Riparian Corridor/Green Infrastructure Components: The Great Streams Strategy

As described earlier in this report, several streams run through the Bel-Red area. These riparian corridors suffered severe impacts during the development that occurred in the area in the 1960s and 1970s, prior to the advent of current environmental regulations. One consistent message from the community was an interest in improving these corridors, and the Steering Committee made this part of their overall recommendation.

Four principles of stream restoration are embodied in the Bel-Red Corridor “Great Streams” Strategy: place-making, habitat enhancement, greenways and trails, and green infrastructure. The preferred alternative embraces the concept of enhancing the stream corridors to attain these multiple benefits. While there are opportunities along each stream corridor, and each degraded stream system will accrue incremental benefits as redevelopment occurs, the greatest opportunities for enhancement have been identified along the West Tributary and Goff Creek.

Along the West Tributary, a natural systems approach would create wider buffers for habitat and open space. Trails, passive recreation areas, environmental education, and stormwater management are among the uses envisioned for this stream corridor. In particular, a trail following the creek that connects Bel-Red Road and the future BNSF Corridor trail will provide an important component of local and regional non-motorized transportation.

Goff Creek enhancement opportunities present an urban approach that highlights the creek as an important feature in urban plazas, where people can see, hear and touch the stream and watch salmon as they migrate to protected spawning areas. Much of Goff Creek south of NE 16th Street is currently in



a pipe. “Daylighting” this stream segment can create a significant urban amenity and improve fish and wildlife habitat in the creek as a whole.

Achieving this vision will require wider riparian corridors than currently exist, plus acquiring and developing “opportunity areas” where elements of the parks and transportation systems interface with the streams. Improving stream conditions and corridors in Bel-Red will not be accomplished through additional regulatory requirements. The baseline regulations would be those in the City’s existing Critical Areas Ordinance. Enhancements to the stream corridors are planned to be accomplished through use of incentives that would offer increased density and/or building height to achieve greater setbacks. City investments would also play a role at key locations where parks, transportation, or stormwater projects could be integrated with habitat improvements.

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The use of green infrastructure—or low-impact development techniques—would be encouraged throughout the study area, so that properties not immediately adjacent to a stream corridor would also contribute to environmental enhancements. Low-impact development techniques manage stormwater in a manner



that allows rainfall to infiltrate into the soil on the site, or even to be used on the site, rather than running off quickly and carrying contaminants into nearby streams. Green

infrastructure would be incorporated in private-sector redevelopment, and also in transportation infrastructure and parks. “Green streets” would have abundant street trees and areas of landscaping to improve stormwater runoff, and in places, porous pavement would reduce the amount of runoff. A number of techniques are available, and a customized green infrastructure approach could be crafted to suit each location.

Opportunities for Stream Restoration

Each stream in the Bel-Red Corridor has been rated using criteria to indicate whether stream conditions are good, moderate, or poor with respect to the overall stream health and habitat suitability for fish. These ratings have been used to identify and prioritize the potential fish habitat and riparian rehabilitation opportunities of the streams.

The focus of potential enhancements is on improving the ecological health of streams, as well as creating open space amenities for the community.



Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure Strategies

LID and green infrastructure strategies can be applied across the Bel Red Corridor study area to mimic natural watershed processes. Creating a network of LD elements such as swales, rain gardens, and stormwater planters upstream of urban creeks can have an ecological benefit to urban watersheds. These networks of green infrastructure can be incorporated into roadways, pedestrian and bicycle trails, and within mixed use redevelopment. Detaining stormwater runoff and slowly releasing it back into the stormwater collection system or infiltrating it into the soil means that the downstream creeks and streams are more stable, cleaner, cooler, and healthier.

HOW LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS WORK TO MIMIC WATERSHED PROCESSES

- HOUSES** use different strategies to collect, infiltrate, and convey rooftop runoff: rainwater harvesting, permeable pavement, rainwater storage tanks, rainwater cisterns, stormwater planters, planter depressions (rain gardens), green roofs.
- STREETS** slow to one day and catch in built-in catchment (oil-painted and grass swales).
- SIDWALKS** collect, absorb, and filter runoff from streets and houses into the ground before going into the city storm drain.
- CONVEYANCE FURROWS** direct water away from the house to a path of gravel and crushed rock.
- STORMWATER** traps up runoff water into the street.
- SWALES** are designed with crowding points.
- PERMEABLE SIDEWALKS** allow water to pass through into the ground.
- PERMEABLE DRIVEWAYS** allow water to pass through into the ground.
- YARD DRAINAGE** direct rainwater to infiltrate a pipe.
- SPLASH BLOCKS** slow and absorb water from the house and should be next to a lawn.
- SKIPPED PIPES** create water to seep into the ground while moving water flow from the house and into the rain garden.
- STORMWATER** flows across sidewalks, paved areas.
- CITY STORM DRAIN** to carry larger rainstorms.
- ROCKY WALL** holds water until it seeps into the pipe.

Other strategies shown:

- Dense vegetation in swales can intercept pollutants and slow down the flow of water to allow for sediment to settle.
- Roof runoff is collected from nearby buildings and piped into a series of cisterns located in the right-of-way that slow down the stormwater before releasing into the stream.
- Planters may be engaged with runoff from the roof deck instead of with potable water.
- Rain gardens can be incorporated into the landscaped sidewalks along the right-of-way.
- Green roofs with native plantings can provide habitat and stormwater reduction.
- Vegetation along alleys and access roads with and a filter for stormwater runoff can provide a buffer between multifamily housing.
- Porous pavement in streets and alleys can reduce runoff and allow water to infiltrate into the soil.
- A rainwater harvesting system overflows to a built swale and into a rain garden within the right-of-way.
- Rain gardens in right-of-way can collect and treat stormwater from pollutant-generating surfaces before discharging to the stream.
- Planning for low impact development early in the process can allow for more flexibility in the design.

Bel-Red Corridor Great Streams Project | CITY OF BELLFLOWER | EDAW | AECOM

All streams in the Bel-Red Corridor are degraded to some extent. Ecologically speaking, those with the least number of constraints are those with the highest potential opportunities for rehabilitation. Types of constraints include fish passage barriers, impervious surfaces and buildings adjacent to streams, piped streams, and poor water quality.

Opportunities to enhance Bel-Red Corridor streams are related to the potential land use changes adjacent to the stream and in the watershed. Ecological analysis, coupled with the opportunities inherent in recommended future land uses, indicates that enhancement efforts should be focused on the West Tributary and Goff Creek. Removing fish passage barriers, daylighting piped stream segments and restoring riparian habitat would transform these streams from their degraded conditions into community and environmental amenities.

Parks/Open Space Components

The Bel-Red corridor is a component part of the City’s larger system of parks, streams, wetlands, plant, wildlife, and cultural/recreational elements. The preferred alternative supports park and community service enhancements that will help create and sustain new neighborhoods.

A robust park and open space system is a key element of the Bel-Red vision. Beautiful and functional open spaces will help transform the area, support new residential and commercial uses, improve the environment, and be an asset for the broader Bellevue community. A “critical mass” of parks and open space is needed. The preferred alternative includes



West Tributary Vision

Existing Conditions

- Very low gradient, inaccessible stream often channelized or piped
- Two large riparian wetlands exist, one is a regional stormwater facility
- Beaver ponds and wildlife habitat in wetlands
- Degraded water quality
- Poor aquatic habitat
- No salmon access

Components of the Vision: Natural System Emphasis

- Transform stream and wetlands into a major greenway corridor / park system as a “placemaking” amenity
- Establish pedestrian and non-motorized trail systems within corridor buffers
- Provide multimodal “green street” corridors to improve connectivity and stormwater functions
- Create interpretation and educational opportunities around enhanced wildlife habitat

Site Opportunities

Implementation Options:

Trails / Stream Enhancement

- Private land owners grant easements to City for trail and stream enhancements
- Redevelopment guided by improved design standards for land use interfaces with riparian corridors
- Provide incentives

Parks / Open Space

- Private land owners grant easements to City or negotiate rights for parks/open space
- Public / private partnerships
- Public acquisition
- Redevelopment guided by improved design standards for land use interfaces with greenway corridors

Stream / Roadway Interfaces:

- Green infrastructure incorporated into new roadway designs
- Design roadway/stream corridor interface to highlight the multiple stream functions described in the vision

Mercer Slough, Bellevue

Bel-Red Corridor Great Streams Project

Section 4 Preferred Alternative

expectations for a park and open space system that is based on an urban approach to determine the type, amount and location of space. The Bel-Red park and open space system would be implemented through a mix of public funding and private development with potential City incentives.

Embedded in the preferred alternative is a park and open space concept that would be implemented as follows:

- Utilize opportunities along stream corridors, especially the West Tributary and Goff Creek, to enhance open space, provide fish and wildlife habitat, develop trails, and improve stream water quality.
- Develop community park facilities that can serve new Bel-Red residents and employees as well as city-wide patrons.



- Provide neighborhood “pocket” parks, particularly in areas of new residential development, and link these with sidewalks and trails.
- Develop connective trails and corridors at both the local and regional scale, including major non-motorized facilities along the extended NE 16th Street, along the West Tributary of Kelsey Creek and along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad corridor.
- Incorporate “green infrastructure” in park development to provide community amenities and watershed benefits by allowing for stormwater to infiltrate on site through such features as swales, rain gardens, and pervious pavement.
- Manage the area’s natural resources in a sustainable manner to preserve and rehabilitate environmentally sensitive natural areas.
- Consider the Bel-Red Corridor study area as a suitable location for a potential major recreation facility that would meet an identified city-wide need for both indoor and outdoor recreation. Elements such as indoor soccer, basketball, fitness activity, an aquatic center, and outdoor sports fields are potential components. If this city-wide facility were to locate in Bel-Red, it should also serve as a community park for the new neighborhoods in this area.
- Some of the committee’s vision for parks and open space is captured on the preferred alternative map. Other elements cannot be precisely sited in advance of additional work on land assembly opportunities, road and trail projects, the interface with redeveloped stream corridors, and other factors.



Section 5

Implementation



To implement the Bel-Red Corridor Project land use and transportation vision will require a comprehensive, challenging effort that will equal or exceed that of the planning process. In the near term, implementation will involve a complex and interrelated set of City actions that will require further deliberation by City Boards and Commissions, the City Council, and the public. In the longer term, implementing the plan will require a combination of private redevelopment and public facilities, and a long-term commitment that will need to be well thought-out, yet flexible, as it proceeds.



In the near term, implementation of the Bel-Red vision will consist of the following general components:

- Comprehensive Plan amendments
- Land Use Code amendments
- A phasing plan
- A financing plan
- An update or successor to the Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) agreement



The committee considered a number of specific details relating to these various items. These are listed and described in more detail below.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Comprehensive Plan amendments will capture the Bel-Red vision from a policy perspective, provide background and context, and provide the basis for regulatory decisions, public investments, and other implementing actions. Two parts of the Comprehensive Plan would be amended. The first part is the General Elements—such as Land Use and Transportation—that apply citywide and also must be consistent with the Bel-Red vision. The second set of amendments would be to the Subarea Plans, which map the area land use and describe specifics about the vision and how it is to be implemented.

Comprehensive Plan amendments are anticipated to include:

- A new Subarea Plan for the Bel-Red area that articulates the vision for the area’s future.
- A new land use plan map for the Bel-Red area.
- A detailed description of the necessary transportation infrastructure and parks and open space system to support anticipated development. The plan will be developed in a manner that protects arterial road, transit and pedestrian/bicycle system right-of-way.
- The City’s preference for Sound Transit’s light rail routing and stations through the Bel-Red Corridor.
- Modified level-of-service (LOS) standards for the Bel-Red area to acknowledge the creation of a higher intensity mixed-use area with multi-modal transportation choices. The standards would change from an average volume/capacity ratio of D (0.85) to E+ (0.95). This would be accompanied by policy direction to consider amendments to parking standards, transportation demand management (TDM) measures, improved local transit service, and other mechanisms to reduce SOV use and encourage other travel modes.

- Amendments to other Subarea Plans and the Comprehensive Plan General Elements as necessary to be consistent with the new Bel-Red vision.

Land Use Code Amendments

The Land Use Code is the document that establishes the regulatory structure for new development and redevelopment. These regulations will implement the Bel-Red vision as follows:

- Direct a majority of the office and residential development capacity to identified transit-oriented development nodes.
 - Establish three transit-oriented development nodes of higher density, mixed land use:
 - **Overlake Hospital Medical Center vicinity:** intended principally for office/medical office uses
 - **122nd Avenue NE:** intended principally for office use with some residential and retail
 - **130th Avenue NE:** intended principally for residential and service uses
- In addition to these three nodes, there is an opportunity on the east side of Bel-Red to take advantage of a transit station in Redmond’s Overlake district.
- Utilize an incentive zoning structure as follows:
 - A base floor area ratio (FAR) and height would be permitted outright, with the maximum FAR/height to be achieved only through participation in an amenity incentive system.
 - Amenities would include stream restoration, “green” infrastructure, affordable housing, parks and open space, and other potential amenities.
 - Administrative Design Review would be required for individual projects, and master plan review for large phased projects.



- Allow for a continuation/expansion of existing service and light industrial uses in the manner described elsewhere in this report.
- Provide for a range of housing densities and types.
- Require development to meet basic standards and requirements, and to participate in the Bel-Red financing plan.
- Provide for light rail facilities including light rail guideway and stations, electrical power systems, and an operations and maintenance facility.
- Explore use of regional transfer of development rights (TDRs), a tool intended to help preserve rural open space, habitat and resource lands proposed by the Cascade Land Conservancy. This idea should be further evaluated in the context of the full suite of investments needed in the Bel-Red corridor.

Phasing Plan

One foundation for the Bel-Red Plan has been the integration of planning for land use and transportation. This same integration needs to take place with respect to implementation. Neither the land use nor the transportation infrastructure can be accomplished all at once. A phased approach to both will ensure that adequate public facilities are available to support new residential and commercial development. Phasing will:

- Link new commercial development to the City’s incremental expansion of multi-modal transportation capacity, supplementing the City’s current concurrency system.



- Allow residential development, which will bring home and work trips in the area closer together, to occur as the market warrants, limited only by concurrency.
- Rely on the current development capacity in the BROTS (Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study) Interlocal Agreement, until the agreement is modified or expires.

Financing Plan

Key to the phasing of public facilities is the financing available to pay for them. Funding for public facilities is anticipated to come from a variety of public and private sources, with Bel-Red development paying for a significant share of the infrastructure and amenities needed to transform the area. A comprehensive financing plan will:

- Provide an overall funding strategy to accomplish investment needed to support the development program.
- Link financial participation with benefits derived from the investments.
- Include examination of a broad array of financing strategies, including impact fees, benefit districts, Local Improvement Districts, use of new tax revenues from new development, general CIP investment, outside grants or loans, and other strategies as appropriate.
- Be coordinated with the land use incentive system, which can also provide for some of the area's infrastructure and amenities.
- Be robust enough to provide for the first phase of infrastructure investment, along with investments in parks and other amenities to support residential development in the first development cycle.

Bellevue/Redmond Growth Impact Reconciliation

Both Bellevue and Redmond have engaged in separate planning efforts that will intersect where transportation facilities are involved. These neighbors will engage in joint efforts to understand the transportation system impacts from growth, and devise a method to mitigate those impacts that cross City borders. This reconciliation process is intended to:

- Model the combined effects of growth from both cities' plans to identify transportation system impacts.
- Identify key infrastructure projects and growth phasing to maintain mobility and mitigate interjurisdictional impacts.
- Fund interjurisdictional impact mitigation from development occurring in Bellevue and Redmond.
- Require the current agreement between the two cities to be modified or re-drafted, extending the timeline consistent with each city's updated planning horizon (2030).

Conclusion

Achieving the Bel-Red Steering Committee's vision will require more than just adopting changes to City plans and codes. It will require an ongoing, vigilant effort to advance the vision over the long term. This may include the need for staff devoted to coordinating plan implementation, development of a local association of businesses and residents (such as the Bellevue Downtown Association), and new financing mechanisms. The Bel-Red area has the potential to be an extraordinarily vibrant, unique, and environmentally sustainable area of Bellevue and the greater Eastside and Puget Sound region. It will require a dedicated, ambitious, and on-going implementation effort to get there.

