



Downtown Livability

Date: March 3, 2014

To: Chair Grindeland and members of the Parks & Community Services Board

From: Patti Wilma, Community Development Planning Manager
Planning & Community Development • 425-452-4114; pwilma@bellevuewa.gov
Camron Parker, Senior Planner
Parks & Community Services • 425-452-2032; cparker@bellevuewa.gov

Subject: Update on Downtown Livability Initiative
(*Board feedback requested*)

The Downtown Livability Initiative is a targeted review of specific regulations that guide development and land use activity in Downtown Bellevue. The stated objectives of this project are to: achieve the vision for Downtown as a vibrant, mixed-use center; enhance the pedestrian environment; improve the area as a residential setting; enhance the identity and character of Downtown neighborhoods; and incorporate elements from the Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link design work.

Downtown Bellevue is where a majority of the city's planned growth is expected to occur from a residential and jobs standpoint. It is home to a growing number of retail uses, restaurants, and other attractions that add to Bellevue's quality of life. Downtown Bellevue is a major component of the city tax base; and helps contribute to the services available to all residents.

In recent years, Downtown Bellevue has seen significant growth in new jobs and housing. There are currently 43,300 jobs in Downtown with a projected 70,300 jobs by 2030. From a residential standpoint, Downtown is the City's fastest growing neighborhood and now has over 10,500 residents (up from 2,588 in 2000) and is projected to reach 19,000 by 2030.

At the March meeting, the Board will receive a progress report of the Downtown Livability Initiative that is currently underway. The work is being guided by a Council-appointed Advisory Committee that includes representation from City boards, commissions and other community stakeholder groups. The Committee is co-chaired by Aaron Laing (Planning Commission) and Ernie Simas (Transportation Commission) and includes Parks & Community Services Board member Erin Powell. Committee meetings are held monthly and are open to the public, with packet materials posted on the project web site (www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm).

The Advisory Committee and staff are working from the Project Scope and Principles adopted by Council in early 2013 (Attachment 1). The scope focuses on key elements of the Downtown Land Use Code (such as building height and form, public open space, design guidelines, and the density incentive system). This code has guided Downtown development since its adoption in 1981. Many of the elements are out-of-date or otherwise warrant revisiting at this time.

The Advisory Committee began their orientation to the project in May 2013 and are currently finishing their review of the existing Land Use Code. A series of "Code Audits" are being used to describe existing Code provisions, relevant Comprehensive Plan policies, implementation results on the

ground, observations about what's working well, and where there is room for improvement or new opportunities. This is an important foundational piece to help ensure that we maintain Code elements that are working well, and focus changes on areas needing improvement and new opportunities that did not exist decades ago when the Code was adopted.

The Downtown Livability Initiative is now entering the "Alternatives Analysis" phase, which includes detailed staff and consultant analysis and public comment on the range of alternatives, alternatives refinement and Committee recommendations. Attachment 2 includes a summary of the Committee's alternative analysis on the topics of the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor, Public Open Spaces and the Amenity Incentive System. The project schedule anticipates the work of the Advisory Committee to be completed by June. After that, the project will proceed to Planning Commission review and City Council consideration during the adoption process.

Public engagement is a key part of the Downtown Livability project, and we are using a range of approaches to inform and involve interests from Downtown and throughout the City. This includes getting the word out through the City's web site, Neighborhood News, It's Your City, Bellevue Reporter, Bellevue Patch, and the project's own interested parties list, which now numbers over 575 parties. We have engaged in dialogue through Downtown walking tours, meetings with business groups and resident groups, one-on-one meetings, and two series of focus groups—one at the beginning of the process and a second round following publication of the Code Audits.

An open house and other outreach efforts will take place as alternatives and recommendations are developed. Our goal is to have a broadly inclusive public process, providing meaningful opportunities for the full spectrum of stakeholders and interested members of the public – from Downtown and throughout the City – to be involved throughout the project.

After the presentation, the Board will have time to discuss and ask questions about the project. The Board's feedback will be useful for Boardmember Powell as she continues to represent the Board on the Advisory Committee. Sections relating to Downtown Bellevue from the 2010 Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan are provided in Attachment 3 for reference. They describe the current inventory of parks in the subarea as well as the priorities for future acquisition, development and improvement.

Downtown Livability

Scope and Council Principles

Approved January 22, 2013

The over-arching purpose of this Initiative is to **advance implementation of the Downtown Subarea Plan**, in particular the Plan’s central theme of making Downtown more **Viable, Livable, and Memorable**. The project will be guided by the existing vision set forth in the Downtown Subarea Plan, and work to more effectively implement the Plan. The focus is on the specific elements of the Land Use Code and related codes as laid out in the Project Scope approved by Council in September 2012, which includes strong coordination with the companion Downtown Transportation Plan update occurring in this same timeframe. However, if other related issues arise, the Council desires to hear about these and have the opportunity to refer them to this or another venue, such as the Major Comprehensive Plan Update.

The Project Scope includes the following:

- Amenity incentive system
- Building form and height
- Design guidelines
- NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor
- Light rail interface
- Downtown parking
- Vision for Downtown OLB district
- Downtown signage
- Sidewalk widths and landscaping
- Vacant sites and buildings
- Mechanical equipment screening
- Recycling and solid waste
- Vendor carts
- Range of permitted uses
- Green, energy efficient, and sustainable development forms
- The Land Use Code interface with the mobility work underway through the Downtown Transportation Plan

This is the most extensive Code update since the adoption of the original Downtown Land Use Code in 1981. In the intervening decades, Downtown Bellevue has evolved dramatically, from a bedroom suburb to a dynamic regional employment center, as well as the City’s fastest growing residential neighborhood. This project should place particular emphasis on the following changes that have led to and accompanied Downtown’s evolution.

Change

Principle

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After several development cycles since the original Code adoption, it has become increasingly clear what is working and not working with development incentives. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refine the incentive system to develop the appropriate balance between private return on investment and public benefit. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Bellevue has experienced a massive influx of new residents. This has helped create long hoped-for urban qualities, but also led to increased frictions that occur in a dense, mixed use environment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Promote elements that make Downtown a great urban environment while also softening undesirable side effects on Downtown residents. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown has seen a significant increase in pedestrians and street-level activity. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Increase Downtown’s liveliness, street presence, and the overall quality of the pedestrian environment. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through new development, Downtown has an opportunity to create more memorable places, as well as a distinctive skyline. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Promote a distinctive and memorable skyline that sets Downtown apart from other cities, and likewise create more memorable streets, public spaces, and opportunities for activities and events. |

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Change

Principle

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environmental rules and strategies have evolved over the past decades since the Downtown Code was adopted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Encourage sustainability and green building innovation in Downtown development. Enable design that promotes water, resource, and energy conservation, and that advances ecological function and integrity. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Downtown is attracting a younger and more diverse demographic mix, of workers, visitors, and residents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Respond to Downtown's changing demographics by meeting the needs of a wide range of ages and backgrounds for an enlivening, safe and supportive environment. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As Downtown has become a more mature urban center, it is experiencing an increase in visitors and more interest in tourism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Promote elements that will create a great visitor experience and a more vital tourism sector for Downtown. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We live in an increasingly global economy, with flows of goods and services, capital and people transcending state and national boundaries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Strengthen Downtown's competitive position in the global and regional economy, while reinforcing local roots and local approaches. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Downtown's relationship with adjacent residential neighborhoods has evolved. It remains important to achieve a transition in building form and intensity between Downtown and adjacent residents, but nearby neighborhoods are also seeking the attractions that the city center brings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Maintain graceful transitions with adjoining residential neighborhoods, while integrating these neighborhoods through linkages to Downtown attractions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The development arena is becoming increasingly competitive, as Downtown continues to seek quality investments that implement the Subarea Plan vision. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Refine the Code to provide a good balance between predictability and flexibility, in the continuing effort to attract high quality development that is economically feasible and enhances value for all users. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As Downtown has matured and filled in, opportunities for quality development are becoming limited, and expectations have grown as to how each development contributes to the greater whole. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Promote through each development an environment that is aesthetically beautiful and of high quality in design, form and materials; and that reinforces the identity and sense of place for Downtown and for distinct districts. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bellevue's park and open space system has dramatically evolved, for example with acquisition and planning for Meydenbauer Bay Park, development of the Downtown Park, and the nearby Botanical Garden on Wilburton Hill. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Advance the theme of "City in a Park" for Downtown, creating more green features, public open space, trees and landscaping; and promoting connections to the rest of the park and open space system |



Downtown Livability

Results of Downtown Advisory Committee Alternatives Workshop

Topics covered at the January 15, 2014 Workshop

Major Pedestrian Corridor

KEY ISSUE: How can the Pedestrian Corridor make for a more memorable and vibrant Downtown urban fabric?

The Big Picture ~ Current Policy Direction

The Major Pedestrian Corridor has long been envisioned as perhaps the most prominent urban design feature of Downtown Bellevue. The Downtown Subarea Plan identifies the Corridor as a major unifying feature for the entire city center. Running east-west through the heart of Downtown, the Pedestrian Corridor links the regional mall and the Civic Center District. It is envisioned as a vibrant and people-oriented place, dominated by pedestrians and pedestrian-serving uses. At various locations, the Corridor includes a string of major and minor public open spaces that serve as gateways and focal points for activity. The most prominent of these is the large area at NE 6th and 106th Avenue, in the geographic center of Downtown, half-completed as “Compass Plaza.”

Design Guidelines call out three specific design segments along the Corridor, each with its own theme: “Street as Plaza;” “Garden Hillclimb;” and “Transit Central.” Construction of the Corridor, consistent with these guidelines, is intended to occur in concert with private development. Theoretically this will create the best “fit” and highest activation of the Corridor, as development provides elements (restaurants, entertainment, shops) at the street wall of adjoining buildings.

In practice, about half of the Pedestrian Corridor remains unfinished three decades into its development. While it is much used and does serve as a unifying feature for Downtown, its activation to date is far short of its envisioned potential. Any changes to the Pedestrian Corridor should consider:

- The users’ experience of the Corridor – how it enlivens, enriches and delights the pedestrian.
- Users’ expectations for comfort and convenience.
- Emerging changes, including the Downtown light rail station siting on the Pedestrian Corridor.
- The balance between incremental improvement – which has taken decades, and a more accelerated approach to realizing the vision of the Corridor.

Note: Please see Downtown Land Use Code Audits (6/19/2013) for a detailed discussion of current policy and code direction, results on the ground, observations about what appears to be working well versus where there is room for improvement, and comments from public/stakeholder focus groups.



| <p>Draft Range of Strategies ➔</p> | <p>Workshop Direction (1-15-2014) ➔</p> | <p>Proposed Strategies to Analyze</p> |
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| <p>■ <u>Land Use Code Measures</u> – Proposed refinements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the corridor to the east to be more integrated with the Civic Center District and the light rail station • Require weather protection along the Corridor • Specify a maximum distance between building entries • Add additional landscaping/green elements • Remove Code barriers, if any, to achieving features that activate the Corridor (e.g. restaurants, outdoor seating, etc.) • Evaluate amenity incentives for off-site developers to contribute to Pedestrian Corridor improvements • Evaluate the integration of bicycles and other wheeled users to coexist with pedestrians (“hand-off” from Downtown Transportation Plan) <p>■ <u>Other City Measures</u> – The Committee may ultimately conclude that additional measures and public investments are needed (beyond Code changes) to help realize the Corridor’s potential. While not part of the Committee’s charge, these ideas could be noted in the group’s final recommendations. Potential ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment in key sections of the Corridor, such as the Garden Hillclimb area, the extension segment between 110th and 112th Avenues, and the bottleneck west of 108th Avenue. • Improve Pedestrian Corridor intersections with wayfinding, weather protection, upgraded pedestrian crosswalks and other features to make the Corridor more inviting. • Development of a partnership between the City and Corridor properties to support a richer array of regular programmed events and activities along the Corridor. | <p><u>GROUP #1 (Lainig, Bannon, D’Amato, Lopez, Helland, Stout)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to move strategies relating to Land Use Code Measures and Other City Measures forward for analysis. • Clarify bullet three under Land Use Code Measures to explore maximum distance between building entries, visual access, and other ways to activate building frontages. • Clarify that bullet two under Other City Measures could include areas beyond just “intersections”, and should list lighting as an example. • Add a strategy under Other City Measures to explore creative funding to help construct a City-sponsored “grand” design for the Pedestrian Corridor. <p><u>GROUP #2 (Simas, Chaplin, Ferris, Guenther, Jackson, Maxwell, Powell)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to move strategies relating to Land Use Code Measures forward for analysis. • Concern about bullets one and two under Other City Measures; reticent to use City investment on the Pedestrian Corridor. • Explore changing the name/re-branding the Corridor. | <p>Proposed strategies include the broadest range of ideas based on direction from small group discussion.</p> <p>■ <u>Land Use Code Measures</u> – Proposed refinements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the corridor to the east to be more integrated with the Civic Center District and the light rail station • Require weather protection along the Corridor • Explore maximum distance between building entries, visual access, and other ways to activate building frontages • Add additional landscaping/green elements • Remove Code barriers, if any, to achieving features that activate the Corridor (e.g. restaurants, outdoor seating, etc.) • Evaluate amenity incentives for off-site developers to contribute to Pedestrian Corridor improvements • Evaluate the integration of bicycles and other wheeled users to coexist with pedestrians (“hand-off” from Downtown Transportation Plan) <p>■ <u>Other City Measures</u> – Committee may ultimately conclude that additional measures and public investments are needed (beyond Code changes) to help realize the Corridor’s potential. Proposed ideas to further analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment in key sections of the Corridor, such as the Garden Hillclimb area, the extension segment between 110th and 112th Avenues, and the bottleneck west of 108th Avenue. • Improve Pedestrian Corridor with wayfinding, overall weather protection, lighting, upgraded pedestrian crosswalks and other features to make the Corridor more inviting. • Development of a partnership between the City and Corridor properties to support a richer array of regular programmed events and activities along the Corridor. • Explore creative funding to help construct a City-sponsored “grand” design for the Corridor. • Explore changing the name/re-branding the Corridor. |

Public Open Spaces

KEY ISSUE: How can public open spaces make for a more memorable and vibrant Downtown urban fabric?

The Big Picture ~ Current Policy Direction

The Downtown Subarea Plan recognizes open space as a key component of a livable place, and promotes its provision through the combined efforts of the City and private developers. The Plan encourages creation of both active and passive open spaces throughout Downtown, and calls for a system of pedestrian connections that effectively link these spaces.

Publicly-provided open space includes the flagship Downtown Park, Ashwood Park, future neighborhood parks, City Hall and King County Library plazas, and connections to the new Meydenbauer Park on Lake Washington.

Public open spaces provided by private development include plazas and “mini-parks” open to the general public. The Land Use Code Audit identifies 30 publicly accessible plazas and other public open space constructed by private development over the past three decades. These publicly accessible open spaces are key features eligible for bonus FAR and building height through the Amenity Incentive System.

The Land Use Code Audit assessed these publicly accessible plazas from the perspective of four key themes: 1) access, linkages, and information; 2) comfort and image; 3) uses and activities; and 4) sociability. While the majority of plazas scored well on the first two themes, most scored poorly in terms of uses and activities, and sociability. Many plazas were not busy at times other than the lunch hour, with little to draw people to the space throughout the day. Most plazas do not seem to attract a cross-section of Downtown demographics, and in most cases, observations are that users do not seem to be fully utilizing, enjoying and socializing in the space. Most plazas were rated mediocre, with a few rated as poor, and two “great” spaces: Compass Plaza and Library Plaza.

Any changes to provisions for Public Open Space should include factors such as the following:

- Meeting open space needs across all of Downtown, and the full suite of users including children and older citizens.
- Designing spaces that work well in terms of uses, activities and sociability.
- Using public open spaces to help promote neighborhood character and identity.

Note: Please see Downtown Land Use Code Audits (6/19/2013) for a detailed discussion of current policy and code direction, results on the ground, observations about what appears to be working well versus where there is room for improvement, and comments from public/stakeholder focus groups.



Public Open Space

| <p>Draft Range of Strategies ➔</p> | <p>Workshop Direction (1-15-2014) ➔</p> | <p>Proposed Strategies to Analyze</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Open Space Expression</u> – Draw from the Downtown Design Charrette and Streetscape Design Guidelines to identify and incentivize different open space expressions for each neighborhood, to help address each neighborhood’s needs and enhance neighborhood character. ■ <u>Mid-Block Connections</u> – Strengthen requirements and guidelines for integrating mid-block connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both north-south and east-west mid-block connections are essential • Show proposed new connections in general locations on map, but allow flexibility with implementation • Integrate alley and shared vehicle/pedestrian connections ■ <u>Update Design Guidelines</u> – Update guidelines for mid-block connections and publicly accessible open spaces, including provisions for solar access, seating, safe-design principles, and active edges along perimeter of open space. ■ <u>Active Spaces</u> – Add incentives and design guidelines for active spaces (e.g. sports courts, community gardens, play structures, etc.) | <p><u>GROUP #1 (Laing, Bannon, D’Amato, Lopez, Helland, Stout)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to move four strategy areas forward for analysis. • Mention the potential for an open space investment that links Downtown to Wilburton District across I-405. • Add a new strategy to explore method for funding open space acquisition and improvement. <p><u>GROUP #2 (Simas, Chaplin, Ferris, Guenther, Jackson, Maxwell, Powell)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to move four strategy areas forward for analysis. • Pockets parks should be explored through incentives and public acquisition. | <p>Proposed strategies include the broadest range of ideas based on direction from small group discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>Open Space Expression</u> – Draw from the Downtown Design Charrette and Streetscape Design Guidelines to identify and incentivize different open space expressions for each neighborhood, to help address each neighborhood’s needs and enhance neighborhood character. ■ <u>I-405 Open Space/Connection</u> – Explore potential for significant open space/park investment with a lid over I-405 from Downtown to Wilburton along roughly a NE 5th alignment. ■ <u>Mid-Block Connections</u> – Strengthen requirements and guidelines for integrating mid-block connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both north-south and east-west mid-block connections are essential • Show proposed new connections in general locations on map, but allow flexibility with implementation • Integrate alley and shared vehicle/pedestrian connections ■ <u>Update Design Guidelines</u> – Update guidelines for mid-block connections and publicly accessible open spaces, including provisions for solar access, seating, safe-design principles, and active edges along perimeter of open space. ■ <u>Active Spaces</u> – Add incentives and design guidelines for active spaces (e.g. sports courts, community gardens, play structures, etc.) ■ <u>Funding Mechanism</u> – Explore method for helping to fund Downtown open space acquisition and improvement. |

Amenity Incentive System

KEY ISSUE: How should the incentive system be updated to meet evolving market conditions and integrate newer thinking about desired Downtown amenities?

The Big Picture ~ Current Policy Direction

A key tool for achieving the Downtown vision has been the Amenity Incentive System, which provides for buildings to earn “bonus” intensity (FAR) and height in return for providing public amenities. The Downtown Subarea Plan, adopted in 2004, promotes this bonus system as a way to accomplish the public objectives set forth in the Plan. It directly calls out incentives for certain features, such as residential uses, development of themed streets, and reinforcing the unique characteristics of Downtown districts.

The current list of amenities eligible for bonus FAR and height is quite extensive, including 23 amenities, each with specific design criteria and a bonus rate used to calculate the amount of added floor area earned. When first adopted in the early 1980s, the bonus rates were based on the developer’s cost to deliver a given amenity, converted to the value of extra development rights (FAR) received. These rates have not been re-calibrated for many years.

Several incentives are worthy of special note:

- Development of the Major Pedestrian Corridor and its related Major Public Open Spaces receives a “super-bonus” of height in the Core Design District – above what can be earned for any other amenity.
- First and second levels of retail are highly incentivized by being “free” FAR; i.e. they are not counted against the FAR maximums and can allow a building to include significantly more floor area than the stated Code maximums.
- “Basic Floor Area Requirements” ensure that all developments meet a minimum threshold of amenities, typically at the ground level and oriented to a public right of way. Qualifying basic amenities are a subset of the larger whole, and include pedestrian-oriented frontage, weather protection (arcades, marquees and awnings), some open space features, and others.
- Pedestrian-oriented frontage is required in many cases, and is also eligible for incentive.

Any changes to the Amenity Incentive System should consider factors such as:

- The amenities most important to achieving Livability and desired future for Downtown.
- What needs to be incentivized vs. what development will do without incentives.
- The economics of development, to ensure that the modified incentive system is feasible and acts as a real incentive.

Note: Please see Downtown Land Use Code Audits (6/19/2013) for a detailed discussion of current policy and code direction, results on the ground, observations about what appears to be working well versus where there is room for improvement, and comments from public/stakeholder focus groups.



Amenity Incentive System

| <p>Draft Range of Alternatives ➔</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Status Quo with Recalibration – Maintain existing list of eligible amenities as is. Expanded Amenity List – Adjust amenity list to include all additional items identified by the Committee. Remove very low priority existing items, and identify items to simply require (weather protection). Shorter, More Focused Amenity List – Adjust Amenity List to include only a handful of highest priority items (examples: pedestrian-oriented frontage, open space to be expressed differently in each neighborhood, affordable housing). | <p>Workshop Direction (1-15-2014) ➔</p> <p><u>GROUP #1 (Lainig, Bannon, D'Amato, Lopez, Helland, Stout)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded amenity list (Alternative 2) is not desirable. Agree to move Alternative 3 forward for analysis. <p><u>GROUP #2 (Simas, Chaplin, Ferris, Guenther, Jackson, Maxwell, Powell)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded amenity list (Alternative 2) is not desirable. Agree to move Alternative 3 forward for analysis. Specific focus should be on district character and what amenities can help differentiate neighborhoods. | <p>Proposed Alternatives to Analyze</p> <p>Proposed alternatives and common elements include the broadest range of ideas based on direction from small group discussion. Alternative below to be analyzed against baseline/status quo for comparison.</p> <p>Shorter, More Focused Amenity List – Adjust Amenity List to include only a handful of highest priority items (examples: pedestrian-oriented frontage, open space to be expressed differently in each neighborhood, affordable housing).</p> |
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| <p>Draft Common Elements ➔</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify which current amenities, such as weather protection, may be shifted to be a development requirement; and adjust base height and density accordingly. Recalibrate FAR values to reflect updated economics and public priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop cost estimates for potential amenities. At a future step, prioritize/value amenities with consideration of cost to produce, bonus received, and district needs. Convert to FAR earned per unit of amenity. Provide mechanism for fee-in-lieu payments. | <p>Workshop Direction (1-15-2014) ➔</p> <p><u>GROUP #1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree to move three common elements forward as part of analysis. Specify that the Code provisions relating to the amenity system will be updated on a set interval. <p><u>GROUP #2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree to move three common elements forward as part of analysis. Specify that the Code provisions relating to the amenity system will be updated on a set interval. | <p>Proposed Common Elements to Analyze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify which current amenities, such as weather protection, may be shifted to be a development requirement; and adjust base height and density accordingly. Recalibrate FAR values to reflect updated economics and public priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop cost estimates for potential amenities. At a future step, prioritize/value amenities with consideration of cost to produce, bonus received, and district needs. Convert to FAR earned per unit of amenity. Provide mechanism for fee-in-lieu payments. Specify that the Code provisions relating to the amenity system will be updated on a set interval (may be similar in the future to other sections of the Downtown Land Use Code that need routine updating). |
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Amenity Incentive System

Potential amenities to analyze to include in shorter, more focused list

Public Gathering Space/Placemaking

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| Major Pedestrian Corridor..... | Existing List |
| Pedestrian Oriented Frontage..... | Existing List |
| Signature Streets | New Idea |
| Third Places, gathering places | New Idea |
| Farmers Market Space | New Idea |

Parks/Green/Open Space

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|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Outdoor Plaza | Existing List |
| Landscape Feature | Existing List |
| Landscape Area | Existing List |
| Donation of Park Property | Existing List |
| Residential Entry Courtyard | Existing List |
| Active Recreation Area | Existing List |
| Enclosed Plaza | Existing List |
| Upper Level Plaza | New Idea |
| Green Space/Open Space..... | New Idea |
| Pocket Parks & Urban Courtyards | New Idea |
| Green Streets Concepts | New Idea |
| Landmark Tree Preservation | New Idea |
| Significant Tree Planting | New Idea |
| Activated Rooftops | New Idea |

Connectivity

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| Connectivity through Plazas and Blocks; Connections to Neighborhoods | New Idea |
| Midblock Crossings | New Idea |
| Pedestrian Bridges..... | New Idea |

Weather Protection

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| Marquee | Existing List |
| Awning | Existing List |
| Arcade | Existing List |
| Freestanding Canopies at Corners | New Idea |

Parking

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| Underground Parking..... | Existing List |
| Above Grade Parking | Existing List |
| Above Grade Parking in Residential Bldg. | Existing List |
| Electric Car Charging | New Idea |
| Bike Parking and Other Facilities | New Idea |

Housing

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| Residential Uses | Existing List |
| Affordable Housing | New Idea |

Neighborhood-Serving Uses

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|---|---------------|
| Public Meeting Rooms | Existing List |
| Child Care Services | Existing List |
| Retail Food | Existing List |
| Space for Non-profit Social Services..... | Existing List |
| Partnership for Downtown School | New Idea |

Arts and Culture

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| Performing Arts Space | Existing List |
| Sculpture | Existing List |
| Water Feature | Existing List |
| Art Space | New Idea |
| Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources..... | New Idea |

Design

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| Iconic Features (i.e. rooftop, tower, etc.) | New Idea |
| Increased Setbacks for Light/Air..... | New Idea |
| Small Lot Interesting Architecture | New Idea |
| Sustainable Features/Practices..... | New Idea |

BELLEVUE PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM PLAN

2010



City of Bellevue
Parks & Community Services
425-452-6885
www.bellevuewa.gov/parks-community-services.htm

In the 2003 edition of this plan, this section was entitled the Downtown District Focus Area. Since that time, the City of Bellevue completed a planning process that allows for significant redevelopment in the Bel-Red Subarea. Future redevelopment will alter the urban character in that portion of the city from primarily low-density light industrial and retail land uses to a high density residential and job center. To attract new residents and employers to the areas, a significant parks and open space system is conceived. It therefore became necessary to broaden the scope of this section to consider the unique park and open space needs of both Downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red Subarea. Parks designed for urban areas differ substantially from those designed to serve lower density single family neighborhoods. As such, the unique challenges of developing an urban park system are described in this section, focusing first on Downtown, then on Bel-Red, and finally on issues that equally affect both areas.



DOWNTOWN BELLEVUE

The Downtown Subarea is the city's financial and business hub and the area where the majority of new residential and employment growth is occurring and will continue to occur well into the future. Downtown represents less than two percent of Bellevue's land area, but will accommodate exponentially higher percentages of Bellevue workforce and resident populations. Maintaining a livable urban environment while accommodating significant new growth depends on creating a parks and open space system that responds to the unique needs of this community.

Meeting the Downtown Subarea's parks, open space, and recreation needs requires a different approach than used elsewhere in the city. Limited land availability with its resulting high costs precludes opportunities that exist in other subareas and requires a distinct treatment for open space needs and solutions.

A system of coordinated and connected open spaces downtown requires commitment from both public and private sectors. Public-private partnerships will be critical to meet the recreation needs of the people who live and work in the Downtown Subarea. Since most land in downtown is privately owned, the City is dependent to a degree upon developers to incorporate exciting and inviting public spaces into their development projects. To accomplish this goal, the City provides incentives through the zoning code allowing downtown developers to achieve greater development potential in exchange for amenities that benefit the pedestrian experience and add to publicly accessible open space. These amenities can include arcades, plazas, active recreation areas, public art, and landscaped green spaces.

Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan

While this method of providing public spaces has resulted in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor public amenities, there are drawbacks. The private developers designing these spaces may not place the highest priority on serving the public. This can result in public spaces that are awkwardly placed, difficult to find, disconnected from the street and otherwise unwelcoming. Also, control and management of these spaces remains private and rules governing access can be more restrictive in policy or practice than in a publicly owned park.



In order to study Downtown's urban context and increasing population, Parks & Community Services conducted a Downtown Needs Assessment in 2002 as part of the City's overall [Downtown Implementation Plan](#) initiative. The report identified emerging themes and developed recommendations addressing urban trail system connections, parks and open space areas, active recreation opportunities, a community center, and human services needs. The findings of this report remain relevant today.

Southwest Quadrant

The Downtown Park, at seventeen acres, is the cornerstone of the downtown open space system. It provides interesting, attractive, and safe places for active and passive recreation uses. The park's large open space areas provide a prime location for special events throughout the year. Completion of the Downtown Park, per the updated 1997 Master Plan, is an important goal identified in the Downtown Needs Assessment. In addition, creating a more prominent visual park presence on Bellevue Way will enhance Bellevue's "City in a Park" image on this key downtown arterial.



Visual and physical connections from the Downtown Park to Meydenbauer Bay will provide links between the Downtown and Meydenbauer Bay Parks. Because of the downtown's close proximity to the Bay, connecting these two amenities enhances the uniqueness of this environment and provides additional recreational, retail, and tourism opportunities.

Northeast Quadrant

The three acre Ashwood Park is currently maintained with a large grass area, small children’s ball field, and a parking lot used jointly by the King County Regional Library and park users. The current master plan includes a community center with affordable housing and passive parkland. The Downtown’s northeast quadrant has undergone significant development since the Ashwood Park master plan was completed. Now that the character of the neighborhood is better understood, the current master plan should be updated to reflect a contemporary vision for the park. Future planning for the park should include the plaza south of the library and the Ashwood Plaza at the northeast corner of NE 10th Street and 110th Avenue NE

Northwest and Southeast Quadrants

The downtown open space system proposal includes a minimum of 2-1/2 to 3 acres of parkland in addition to linear transitions and corner parks in the Downtown Subarea’s northwest and southeast quadrants. Although the context and form of these urban parks will differ from the more traditional suburban neighborhood parks, at least half of each site is proposed to be passive, green open space. These green open spaces will offer respite from a highly urban environment by providing neighborhood gathering space and areas for informal recreational opportunities. The remaining space is expected to provide more formalized hardscape areas, including plazas, water features, gardens, seating areas, and walking paths. These major open spaces, connected by urban trail systems, will support Bellevue’s “City in a Park” experience.

Downtown residential development should include indoor and outdoor spaces that address recreation needs unique to that residential community (e.g., court games, unstructured play spaces, and seating areas). Since the majority of new residential development is projected to occur in the Downtown Subarea, this issue becomes increasingly important in meeting these downtown residents’ recreation needs.

~~BEL-RED SUBAREA~~

~~In 2005, the Bellevue City Council appointed a steering committee to consider how the City might plan for a massive redevelopment of the Bel-Red Subarea. In general, this area includes 900 acres north of Bel-Red Road, south of State Route 520 and east of Interstate 405. The result of this process was a new Subarea Plan and Land Use Code that allows the area to transition from low-density light industrial land uses, to a high-density residential and employment center. According to the [Bel-Red Subarea Plan](#), the goal for providing parks and open space is “to create a robust, aesthetically beautiful, and functional parks and open space system that serves the needs of Bel-Red and the broader community, and that connects with and complements the larger Bellevue parks and open space system.”~~



URBAN TRAIL SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

Respondents to the 2002 Downtown Needs Assessment survey identified space for walking and running trails as the highest rated priority. Both Downtown and Bel-Red Subareas have potential for providing aesthetically pleasing and functional pedestrian linkages, which will encourage people to explore both the public and private spaces located within walking distance from where they live and work.

The City has set standards for transportation infrastructure projects and provides incentives to private developers to invest in non-motorized transportation amenities. These provide the public with inviting, attractive and functional pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments. Examples include dedicated off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities, small street-side plazas, fountains, seating areas, landscaping and public art.

In Downtown, the major Pedestrian Corridor is located between Bellevue Way and 110th Avenue NE, along the NE 6th Street right of way. The corridor acts as a significant component of the downtown's open space system and provide an east/west pedestrian spine through the center of downtown. In addition, there are a number of mid-block pedestrian connections designated to "break up" the downtown's superblocks. These mid-block connections will provide a safer and more human scale to the downtown and provide more pedestrian-friendly features such as landscaping, benches, artwork, and fountains in an environment that encourages lingering. A similar plan has been designed for the larger Bel-Red Subarea that envisions a network of urban trail connections allowing pedestrians and bicycle users to navigate easily within the area and connect to other trail systems within the city.

Pedestrian-friendly corridor opportunities include:

- Major north-south trails where possible along 106th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE (the geographic ridge in downtown), 110th Avenue NE and along the 15th/16th Street corridor in Bel-Red.
- Connecting the Lake to Lake Trail to Lake Washington along Main Street or 2nd Avenue NE to complete a major component of the urban trail system.
- Connecting the trail system to key destinations, such as Bellevue Square, Bellevue Arts Museum, Meydenbauer Convention Center, Meydenbauer Bay, restaurants, the King County Regional Library, and major parks.
- Connecting existing City trail systems to a new regional trail developed within the BNSF railroad corridor.

The urban trail system should integrate recreation nodes and urban plazas. Opportunities abound to create a vibrant and changing environment of both indoor and outdoor routes that enhance the pedestrian experience regardless of the weather.



ARTERIAL AND FREEWAY GATEWAYS

The design of urban gateways, when viewed from the freeway and neighboring arterials, spotlights the quality of the streetscape that will be found within Downtown and a redeveloped Bel-Red area. These gateways deserve special design consideration to ensure a visually pleasing entrance that entices people to enter and explore these urban areas. The gateways can incorporate architectural elements, a variety of vegetation, water features, decorative paving, and interpretative or directional signage. Landscaped medians, similar to those used on Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street, also identify key locations such as the west terminus of the Pedestrian Corridor and the Downtown Park, and benefit pedestrians at major mid-block crossings.

CAPITAL PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following projects are recommended to create an attractive urban environment that will boost the City’s ability to attract new residents and businesses to Downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red Subarea.

| Opportunity: | Acquire | Develop | Enhance/ Preserve |
|---|---------|---------|----------------------|
| <p>Downtown Subarea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NW & SE quadrant neighborhood parks Downtown Park Ashwood Park Main Street linear buffer greenway Community center serving Downtown | ● | ● | ● |
| <p>Bel-Red Subarea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space and off-street trail development Multi-purpose trail development Park acquisition and development | ● | ● | |
| <p>*The Acquire category includes purchase of land as well as obtaining easements or other use agreements for public access to property not owned by the City of Bellevue. In some cases, acquisition may not be necessary for project implementation if an existing park facility can accommodate the project.</p> | | | |

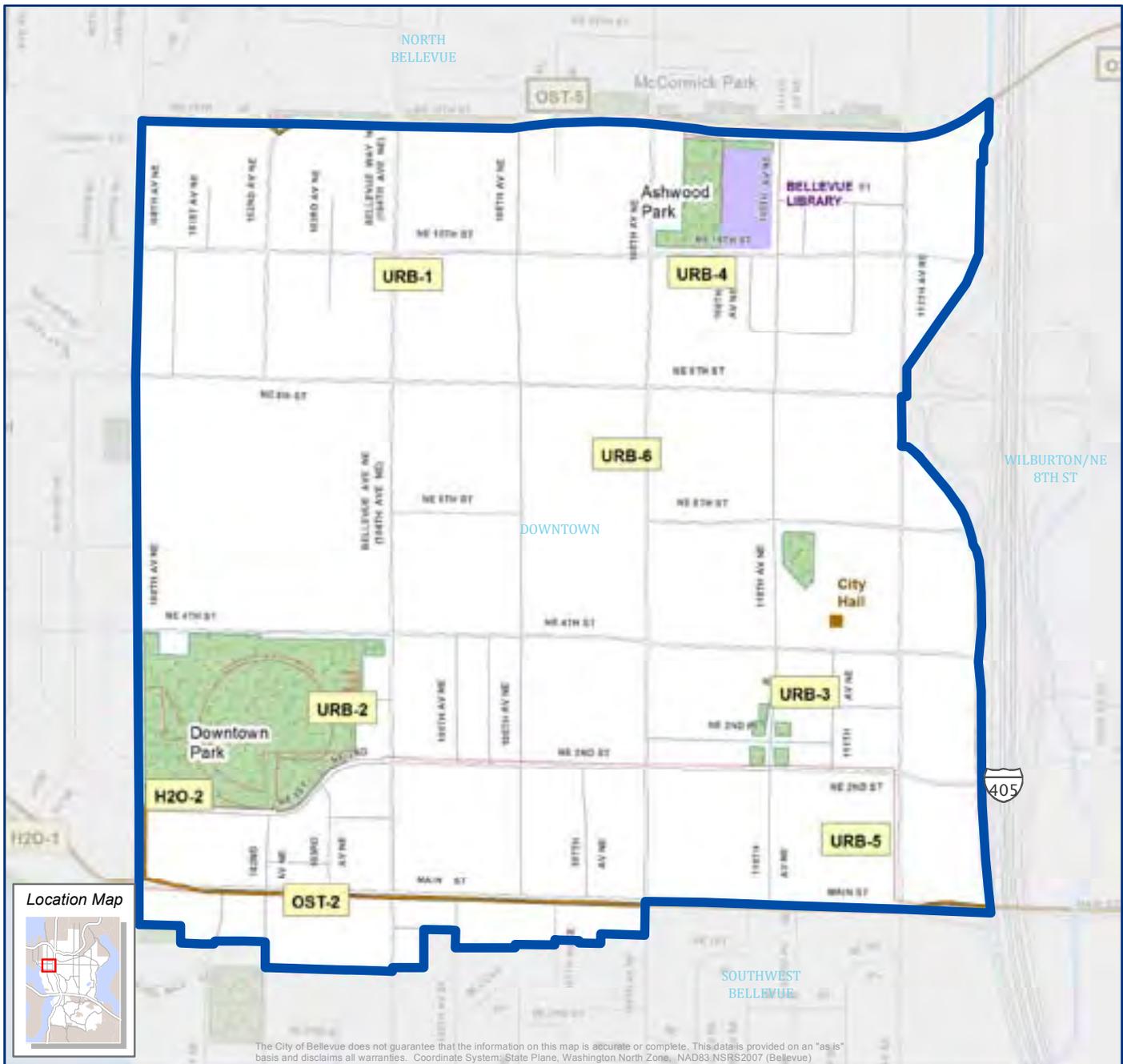


| Downtown | | Total Acres | Waterfront (ft) | Soccer / Football type Sportfields | Multi-use (overlay) Sportfields | Baseball / Softball Fields | Play Areas | Tennis Courts | Basketball Courts | Picnic Shelters | Commy. Recreation Center / School | Community Building(s) |
|---|--|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Public Park and Open Space System | | 26.59 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Community Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| City Hall (Plaza) | | 0.89 | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Downtown Park | | 21.36 | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Neighborhood Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ashwood Park <i>(including 2 - plaza easements)</i> | | 3.69 | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Open Space / Undeveloped / Maintenance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Corner 5 Parcels (NE 2nd) | | 0.65 | | | | | | | | | | |
| City Properties | | 0.00 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Trail Systems | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lake to Lake Greenway Trails* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bel-Red Greenway Trails* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public School Sites / Library | | 2.54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Bellevue Regional Library (KC) | | 2.54 | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Private Schools / Parks | | 0.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

* In multiple Subareas

‡ Half of total property contributes to Neighborhood and Community Park level of service considerations

Downtown Subarea



The City of Bellevue does not guarantee that the information on this map is accurate or complete. This data is provided on an "as is" basis and disclaims all warranties. Coordinate System: State Plane, Washington North Zone, NAD83.NRS2007 (Bellevue)

Current Statistics

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Subarea Size | 411 Acres |
| Population for 2010 | 5,050 |
| Projected Population for 2030 | 13,625 |
| Public Parks and Open Space | 26.59 Acres |
| Public Schools/Libraries | 2.54 Acres |
| Trails | 3.03 Miles |

Households within 1/3 mile walking distance to the entrance of:

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| A Park or Trail | 74 % |
| Public School Grounds only | 0 % |

Recommendations

- OST-2: Lake to Lake Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
- URB-1: Downtown Subarea: Add Neighborhood Park in NW Quadrant
- URB-2: Downtown Subarea: Downtown Park
- URB-3: Downtown Subarea: Add Neighborhood Park in SE Quadrant
- URB-4: Downtown Subarea: Ashwood Park
- URB-5: Downtown Subarea: Main Street Linear Buffer Greenway
- URB-6: Downtown Subarea: Add Community Center
- H2O-2: Meydenbauer Bay Park to Downtown Park Connection

