



DATE: May 8, 2012

TO: Parks Board

FROM: Michael Bergstrom, Senior Planner (Department of Planning and Community Development); 425-452-6866

SUBJECT: Eastgate/I-90 Land Use & Transportation Project
(No Board action requested)

Introduction

The Eastgate/I-90 Land Use & Transportation Project reached a major milestone on April 23, when the Final Report of the Council-appointed Citizen Advisory Committee was presented to Council. The Report establishes a vision that will guide future growth and evolution of the Eastgate/I-90 corridor over the next 20 years. This vision is summarized in Attachment A, and will be more fully discussed at your May 8 meeting.

Context

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan identifies the Eastgate/I-90 corridor as one of the City's five major employment centers. As of March 2009 the study area (Attachment B) had an estimated 24,000 employees, approximately 17% of the City's total employment. Several large corporations are located in the corridor, including T-Mobile, Boeing, Microsoft, and Verizon. In addition, the corridor is home to Bellevue College, the third-largest institution of higher-education in the state.

The area is an important gateway for Bellevue, as it flanks a major interstate highway and contains part of the route of the Mountains to Sound Greenway that stretches from Central Washington to the Seattle waterfront. The corridor is surrounded by well-established neighborhoods, and provides important services to those neighborhoods.

The corridor has enjoyed much success over the past few decades as a regional employment center. Little capacity for new development exists. Because of the era in which most of the existing development occurred, the urban form that has emerged has a low-intensity, suburban, auto-dominated nature, with few amenities or conveniences available for local employees or the public at large. Because it is primarily an employment center, public spaces and recreation opportunities within the study area boundaries are few, though several exist in relatively close proximity to the study area.

I-90 is the dominant physical and visual feature of the corridor. While it provides good regional connections and mobility, it poses challenges to convenient localized north-south motorized and non-motorized movement. The physical barrier it presents results in traffic congestion at the few intersections where travelling from one side to the other is possible.

Planning Process

The City Council authorized this project in early 2010, and established the study area boundaries, project scope, and a set of principles to guide it (Attachment C). In October 2010 a Citizen Advisory Committee was appointed to oversee the project. The CAC, which included members of City boards and commissions, study area stakeholders, and residents from nearby neighborhoods, was guided in its work by the project principles.

Over the ensuing 18 months, the CAC met roughly monthly. Members became very familiar with the corridor, its challenges, and its opportunities. They engaged in robust public outreach to learn the concerns and desires of the community, and developed and evaluated various alternative courses of action, or visions, for the future of the corridor. Ultimately, the CAC produced a “Preferred Alternative” which is captured in their Final Report.

Key Themes

The plan contained in the Final Report builds upon and reflects several important themes. It:

- ❑ Builds on the corridor’s success as a regional employment and office center by adding capacity for office growth and allowing greater mix of uses.
- ❑ Establishes a mixed-use Transit-Oriented Development Center that capitalizes on the park-and-ride and proximity to Bellevue College; it allows 2.0 FAR and 10-12 story buildings at this location, creating a high-visibility focal point and activity hub.
- ❑ Increases the residential presence in the corridor, which will add vibrancy to the area; it provides housing near Bellevue College and places of work, which will benefit from existing transit service.
- ❑ Promotes enhancement of the visual presence of Bellevue College by anchoring the 148th SE entrance with college-related uses and through relationships with the TOD center to the south.
- ❑ Leverages the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway theme by integrating the MTSG Trail into the non-motorized system, adding greenery to interchanges, and promoting “green building” practices in new construction.
- ❑ Identifies modest but effective transportation improvements to ensure future growth will be supported; some improvements will be achieved through partnerships with other agencies.
- ❑ Increases allowable floor area ratios and building heights to accommodate future job and economic growth, and to provide desired public amenities and other benefits.

The plan creates additional development potential throughout the corridor. Because few vacant parcels remain, more *redevelopment* is envisioned than *new development*. The added development capacity is created by increasing allowable building heights and floor area ratios (the amount of floor space that can be developed relative to the parcel size). An underlying concept of the plan is that, in order for a property owner or developer to take advantage of that increased development potential, they would contribute public benefits. Those benefits are yet to be identified, and the mechanism by which they will be provided is yet to be created, but benefits are expected to include open space/recreation opportunities, pedestrian amenities, transportation network improvements, and improvements that add value to the corridor as a whole (e.g., freeway interchange landscaping or Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail development).

Plan Implementation

The plan must still be implemented, and on April 23 Council authorized the necessary steps to move forward. These steps include amending the Comprehensive Plan to lay a policy framework, amending the Land Use Code to create appropriate development regulations, developing Urban Design Guidelines to ensure sensitive and high quality building and site design, and amending the Zoning Map to tailor it to the vision expressed in the plan. Already

underway is preliminary design of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail segment that extends through the corridor (made possible with the help of Parks Department seed money) and consideration of priority transportation projects through the Transportation Facilities Plan update process.

As part of the upcoming implementation steps, there may be changes needed to policies that speak to open space and/or recreation interests. Also, the Land Use Code mechanism that will establish the public benefit system for increased development potential will likely be of interest to the Parks Board and would benefit from your input. All of this work is slated to begin in 2012, with much of the work continuing through 2013.

I look forward to discussing this project with you at your May 8 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Project Summary
- B. Study Area Map
- C. Council Principles
- D. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Graphic

Eastgate/I-90 Land Use & Transportation Project

What is this project?

In October 2010 the Bellevue City Council authorized the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use & Transportation Project to identify a long-term (to year 2030) vision for the area. A Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) identified, developed, and evaluated land use and multi-modal transportation concepts.

The planning process extended from November 2010 to April 2012. It included regular monthly meetings, public open houses, an economic development forum, online surveys, stakeholder interviews, and presentations to interest groups.

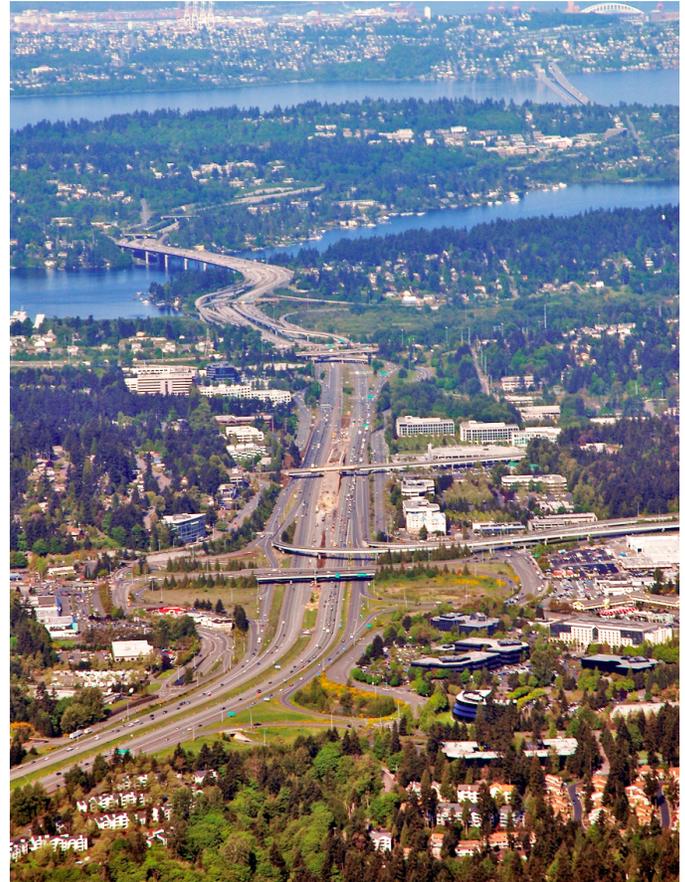
The CAC's work culminated in a "preferred alternative" that enhances the **economic vitality** of the I-90 corridor, provides for **neighborhood retail** services, improves **transportation** infrastructure, traffic flow, and travel options, upgrades the area's **environmental quality** and **visual character**, and supports the institutional mission of **Bellevue College**.

What's the vision?

LAND USE

The best opportunity to expand Eastgate's economic role as an employment center, as well as adding retail services and some residences, is **mixed-use transit oriented development (TOD)** around the Eastgate Park & Ride and south of the Bellevue College (BC) campus. This area has the potential to accommodate a substantial portion of the market demand for additional office space, is suitable for mid-rise residential development, leverages transit investment, and minimizes adverse impacts to transportation systems. As such, the greatest building heights and intensity are proposed at this location. This development concept also provides a spectrum of opportunities for BC and creates a high visibility focus for Eastgate with a mix of uses, multi-modal access, and ample amenities.

Elsewhere in the corridor, redevelopment would be encouraged by allowing larger office buildings, though less than at the TOD center. **Increased development potential** would be offered in exchange for public benefits. Current restrictions on support retail and service uses in office districts would be eased to bring these conveniences closer to places of employment,



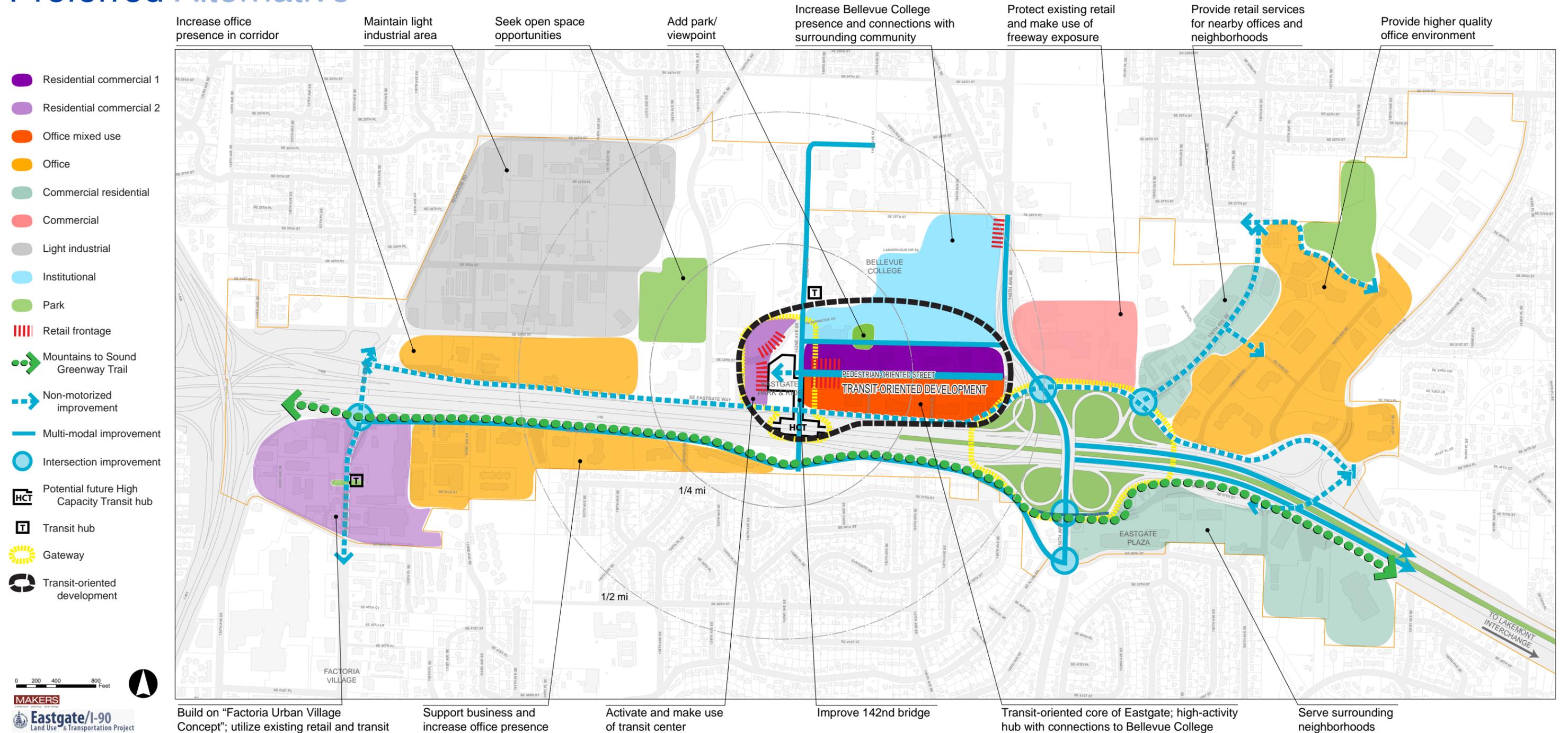
How much growth can Bellevue expect here?

The preferred alternative is projected to accommodate the following new growth by the year 2030:

- Office – 1,800,000 square feet
- Institutional (Bellevue College) – 350,000 square feet
- Retail – 100,000 square feet
- Industrial – 0 square feet
- Hotel – 300 rooms
- Residential – 800 dwelling units

To make this growth possible, land use regulations and policies must change, especially to encourage redevelopment that contributes to the corridor's economic vitality and desired public amenities. Without these changes, little growth is expected within the next twenty years due to the developed nature of the corridor and the value of existing improvements.

Preferred Alternative



reducing daytime vehicle trips. Existing **retail centers** (e.g., Sunset Village, Eastgate Plaza, Factoria Village, and 156th Avenue SE) would be retained and enhanced, to continue to serve the employment base and surrounding neighborhoods. Modest residential development would occur, taking advantage of proximity to employment, transportation, and shopping.

TRANSPORTATION

The land use vision is supported by transportation strategies that serve regional and local travel with an expanded and more efficient interstate system, network of local streets, bus routes,

bicycle facilities, and pedestrian enhancements. This vision arose out of a robust screening process that took into account the ability of Bellevue and its partner agencies to secure funding to implement the projects.

Consistent with the TOD concept, the transportation vision promotes **improvements to the 142nd PI SE bridge** to create a “transit emphasis corridor.” Sidewalks would be widened and canopies added for protection from the weather. The bridge would provide convenient connections to the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail south of I-90, the transit center on the

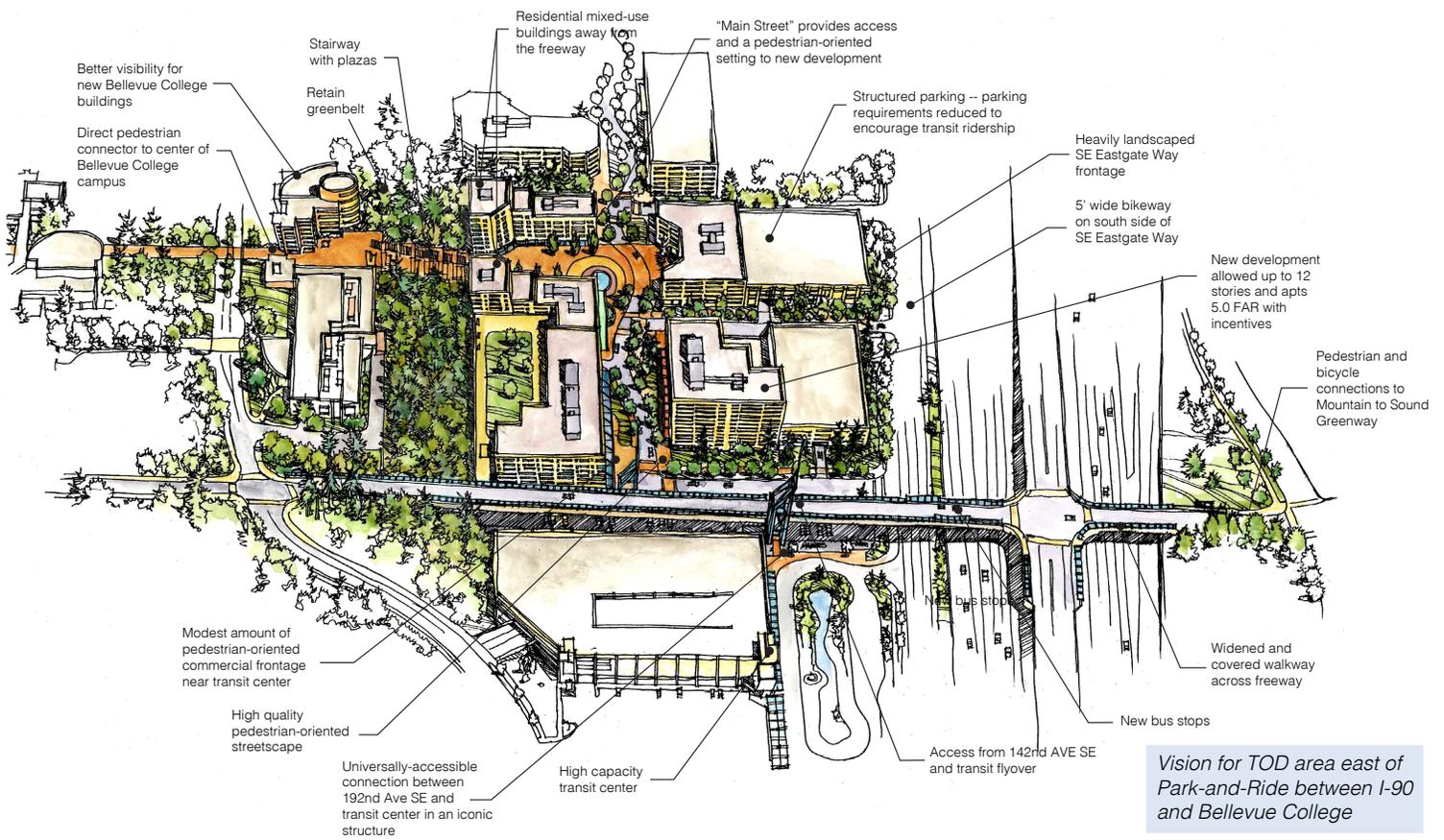
north side of I-90, the future TOD center, and Bellevue College, creating a strong north-south linkage.

Other transportation improvements recommended in the preferred alternative address the following:

- Improvements to existing and future choke points at **critical intersections** and their approaches (could include roundabouts or other traffic control devices);
- Access to and support for new development;
- Safer and more complete **pedestrian and bicycle networks**;

- Completion of the **Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail** through Eastgate;
- Upgraded **transit** operations and access to transit stops;
- Improved **visual coherence** and attractiveness of the corridor (e.g., 150th Avenue SE boulevard project); and
- Support of WSDOT in their efforts to increase vehicle capacity on I-90.

Taken together, these measures will ensure that the land use growth envisioned by the preferred alternative will be supported by appropriate infrastructure improvements.



Vision for TOD area east of Park-and-Ride between I-90 and Bellevue College

What could it look and feel like?

Building on Bellevue's "City in a Park" theme, landscaping is emphasized to enhance corridors and frame views, such as naturalistic landscaping in the freeway and interchange ROW and substantial street landscaping on several streets. The new TOD area will likely be a more intense, urban character with a pedestrian-friendly main street and landmark structures visible from I-90 (see image above). Finally, the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail will add a "green" connector through the area.

How can it happen?

The "vision" is just the starting point for realizing the evolution of the corridor. General implementation strategies include:

- Amend the City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, Zoning Map, and Transportation Facilities Plan.
- Complete the environmental review.
- Balance increased development potential with public benefit requirements (e.g., open space, outdoor seating, affordable housing, bicycle facilities, etc.).
- Study allowable building heights and floor area ratios in more detail to ensure the quality of future development.
- Direct a substantial portion of the projected office and residential growth to the Transit-Oriented Development center through Land Use Code amendments.
- Partner or continue partnering with other agencies, service providers, and private development (e.g., WSDOT, Metro, Sound Transit, and Bellevue College).



Recommended improvements to SE 36th St include Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trail on north side, landscaping to buffer walkers and bicyclists and encourage a human scale, prominent crosswalks, and striped bike route.

- Invest in projects outlined in the Transportation Strategies Report.
- Create design guidelines and "green" guidelines to ensure high quality and sustainable private development.
- Landscape the interchanges with gateway treatments.

These actions will help ensure that the Eastgate corridor will continue to be a major contributor to Bellevue's economic vitality, provide local services and connections, serve as a prominent and visually pleasing gateway, and remain an attractive place in which to do business and serve the surrounding community.

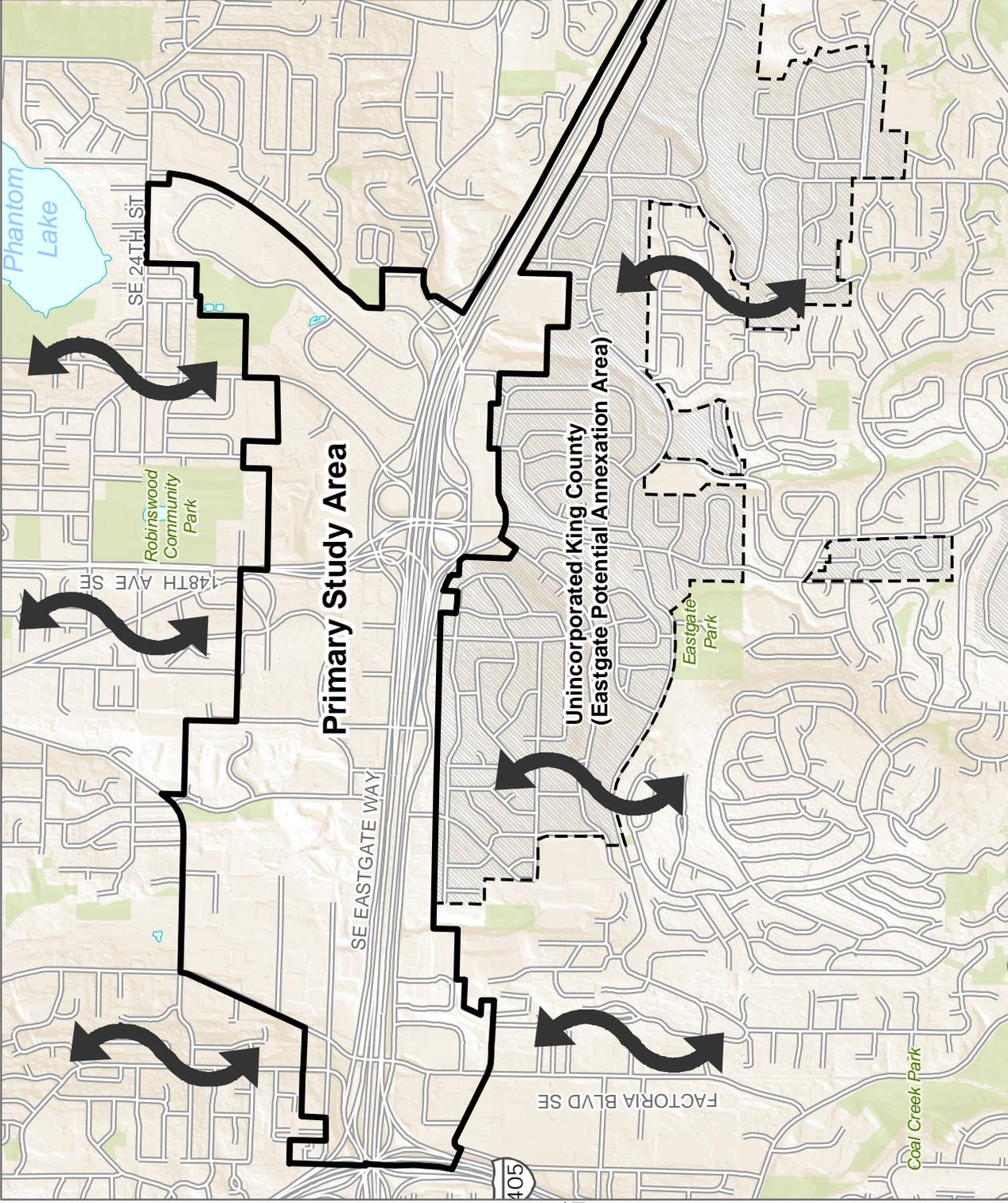
For more information and full report, visit:
www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/eastgate-corridor.htm



Eastgate/I-90 Land Use & Transportation Project

The primary study area encompasses the commercial properties in the Eastgate/I-90 corridor and is the area within which land use changes will be considered. Outside this area no land use changes are anticipated as part of this project. In addition, the primary study area extends eastward along I-90 to and including the Lakemont Blvd Interchange area for transportation analysis only, and also includes the Mountains to Sound Greenway corridor along I-90.

Arrows indicate a broader zone of transportation influence which is included for transportation planning.



The information on this map is a geographic representation derived from the City of Bellevue Geographic Information System. The City of Bellevue does not guarantee that the information on this map is accurate or complete. This map is provided on an "as is" basis and disclaims all warranties, express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and non-infringement. Any commercial use or sale of this map, or portions thereof, without the express written consent of the City of Bellevue. The City of Bellevue is not responsible for any damages arising from the use of information on this map. Use of this map is at user's risk. Users should verify the information before making project commitments.

Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project Map

Approved by the Bellevue City Council on February 1, 2010

City of Bellevue logo featuring a stylized blue and white emblem with the text 'CITY OF BELLEVUE' and 'NOVUM CUM VETERIBUS'. Below the logo is a scale bar labeled '= 2,000 feet'.

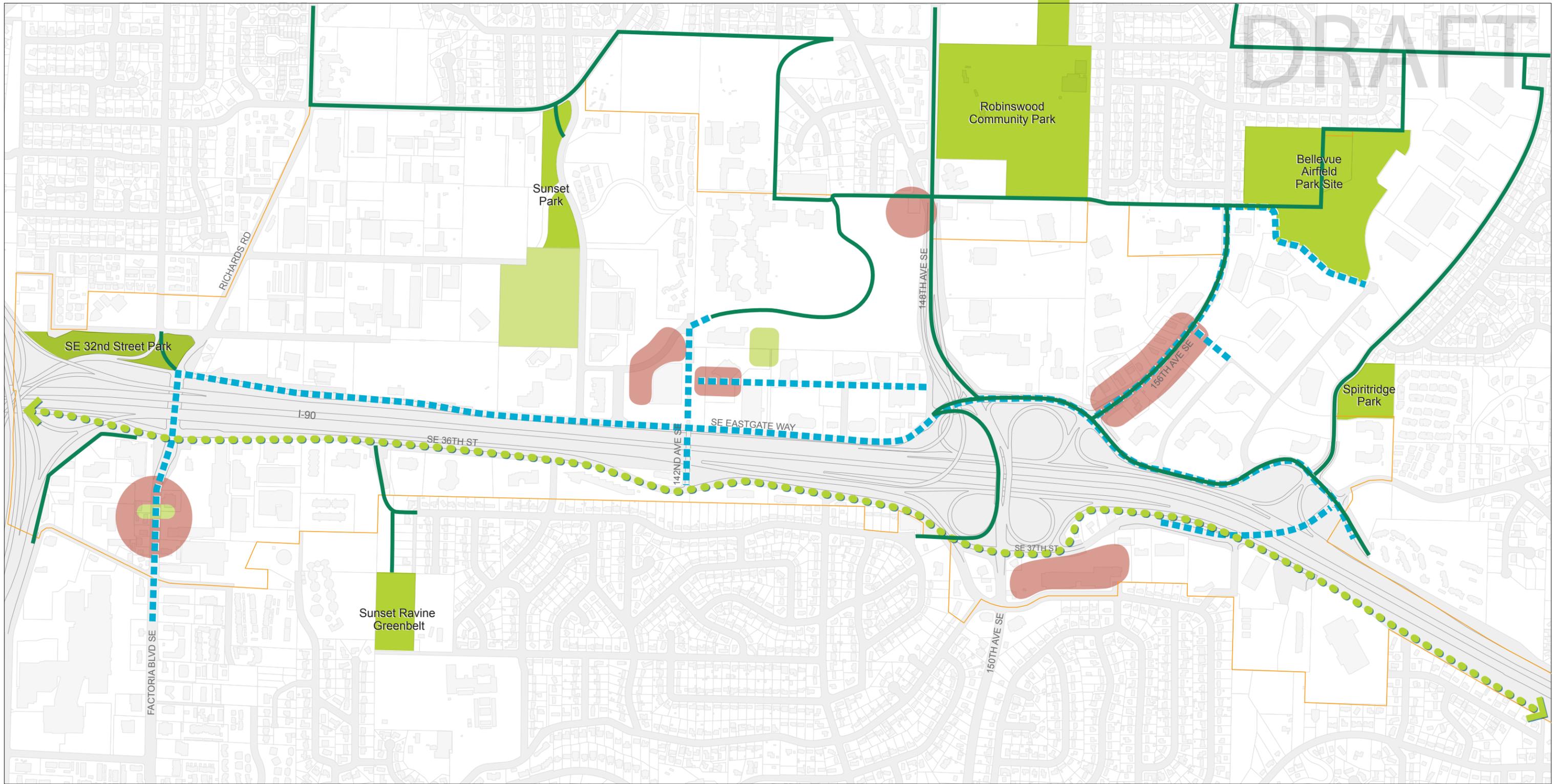
Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project Council Principles

Approved by the Bellevue City Council on February 1, 2010.

The following Council Principles are intended to provide consistent direction over the course of this project. An over-arching consideration that cuts across all these Principles is the reality of fiscal constraints that limit the City's ability to fund major new infrastructure projects. To the extent that new infrastructure is needed to support potential land use changes, costs and ability to fund these improvements must be serious and early considerations.

1. Enhance the Eastgate corridor's economic vitality without degrading mobility in other parts of the City, and ensure that it continues to contribute to the diversity of the City's economic mix.
2. Retain and enhance neighborhood-oriented services and businesses, which are important to nearby residents of Bellevue and the adjacent Eastgate potential annexation area.
3. Improve linkages with Bellevue College, which may include land use and transportation strategies, as well as a variety of partnerships that benefit both the College and the City as a whole.
4. Better integrate land use and transportation across Eastgate, which may include consideration of transit-oriented development in portions of the area. Changes in land use should be informed by transportation opportunities and impacts. For example, the large Eastgate park and ride facility may create an opportunity for a transit overlay district, with well integrated land use and transportation performance. *[Text added]*
5. Continue to evolve Eastgate's transportation infrastructure to a high performing, multi-modal system, including coordinating with service providers on increased transit service to the area.
6. Increase connectivity across the Eastgate corridor, addressing the area's numerous barriers such as its limited street and non-motorized (both pedestrian and bicycle) network, and stand-alone developments.
7. Model environmental sustainability in planning for Eastgate's future, so that future plans for the area produce measurable environmental benefits.
8. Improve the Eastgate Corridor's urban design quality and coherence, recognizing the area as a major City gateway and prominent location on the Mountain to Sound Greenway.
9. Work to improve the performance of state facilities in the area – I-90 and its access points—which today create major issues for the City's land use and arterial system.

DRAFT



- Existing/future parks
- Proposed green nodes
- Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail
- Existing trails
- Primary pedestrian connections
- Activity centers (e.g., areas with cafes, shops, public spaces)



