



3.8 AESTHETICS

3.8.1 INTRODUCTION

This section illustrates and describes the physical character of the Wilburton Commercial Area (Study Area) and its immediate surroundings. A three-dimensional model was employed using the software City Engine, and allows for the viewing of potential development patterns within the existing and future context of Downtown and BelRed. Illustrations based on the visual model provide representative views of potential development under the No Action Alternative and two Action Alternatives that would intensify development in the area (Alternatives 1 and 2). The alternatives differ in building form and geographic distribution of growth throughout the Study Area. Representations for each alternative include selected views from significant public spaces, and shadow studies.

This analysis identifies significant impacts using the following thresholds:

- Inconsistency with the City of Bellevue's policies regarding public view protection
- Shadows on public open spaces that could hinder public use and enjoyment of the space during daylight hours in spring, summer, and fall



In addition, each Alternative is evaluated using performance measures responding to the City Council Guiding Principles, listed in Section 2.3:

- Increased opportunities for skyline and water views
- Height of development, location of roads, and landscaping abutting surrounding neighborhoods creating an appropriate transition to areas of greater or lower density
- Concentration of development and activity at perimeter of neighborhoods creating an appropriate transition to areas of greater or lower activity

The features of the alternatives that can mitigate impacts, other City programs and regulations, and other ways to address significant aesthetic impacts are included in the Mitigation section.

3.8.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

AREA CONTEXT

The Study Area, located within the larger Wilburton subarea, is centrally located within Bellevue. Separated from Downtown by the freeway, the Study Area currently includes a mix of retail and commercial uses and a limited amount of multifamily housing. Bellevue's Medical Institution District and auto-row are also located within the Study Area.

The Study Area is adjacent to the BelRed Subarea to the north, which includes the Spring District adjacent to the Spring District/120th East Link Station. The Spring District includes the Global Innovation Exchange, a partnership between Microsoft, University of Washington, and Tsinghua University that serves as a high tech and innovative education institution. East of the Study Area, multifamily developments transition to single-family housing in the Wilburton Hill neighborhood. Southeast of the Study Area, the hillside and the Bellevue Botanical garden buffers single-family housing. West of the Study Area lies I-405 and Downtown. Downtown is the most intensely developed part of Bellevue with midrise and tower development containing office, retail, residential, and mixed uses. South of Downtown and just west of I-405 is a lower intensity mix of uses with office, hotel, and residential buildings.



Neighborhood Character

The Study Area is a retail and commercial district characterized by low-density buildings in an auto-oriented development pattern. Residential uses are limited to a small cluster of multifamily buildings on the eastern corner of the Study Area between 121st Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE. Bellevue's Medical Institution District is located in the northwestern portion of the Study Area, west of 116th Avenue NE and north of NE 8th Street. The 116th Avenue Corridor between the NE 6th Street and NE 8th Street is an area with several auto dealerships and functions as an "Auto Row" in the city.

Height, Bulk, and Scale

Much of the area is characterized by low-rise and mid-rise structures, with maximum heights ranging from 20 to 75 feet in a suburban commercial strip format. Buildings are set back from the street while off-street parking is mostly located behind or beside buildings. Parking lots between buildings and the street are common. The Medical Institution District in the northwest corner, however, has a different scale and form, and buildings here are taller. Small-scale retail and restaurants are mostly located in the northern portion of the area, and there is large format or "big box" retail located in the area where NE 4th Street connects 116th Ave NE and 120th Ave NE. Notable retail establishments that contribute to visual character include Best Buy, Home Depot, REI, Marshall's Home Goods, and Trader Joe's. There is additional "big box" and strip retail located south of NE 8th and west of 120th Avenue NE with Uwajimaya, Bartell Drugs, and other retail establishments. Lake Bellevue is located at the northern edge of the Study Area and includes small-scale office and multifamily housing, as well as restaurants.

Medical Institution District

Located in the northwestern corner of the Study Area, the Medical Institution District exhibits a different architectural style than the rest of the Study Area, and buildings of larger scale are found here. Building heights are taller, with office and hospital facilities as tall as 200 feet. Relatively little land is used for surface parking, since buildings include structured parking. Notable establishments that contribute to visual character include Overlake Medical Center and Kaiser Permanente on either side of NE 10th Street and Seattle Children's on NE 12th Street, beyond the Study Area boundary.



Exhibit 3.8-1 View of 116th Avenue NE

Source: Wilburton Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Briefing Book, 2017

Auto Row

Within the Study Area, 116th Ave SE, as well as NE 8th Street, form the spine of a low-density, car-oriented linear commercial district that features a variety of car dealerships, car repair shops, and related businesses. Referred to as “Auto Row,” building heights here are low and typically feature a showroom building with land around the building dedicated to surface parking lots, service bays, or outdoor storage of cars.

Lake Bellevue

The portion of the Study Area around Lake Bellevue is surrounded by condominiums, parking lots, and restaurants. Due to these developments around the shoreline, the Lake is not visible from public areas nearby.



REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Viewsheds

The City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan Urban Design and the Arts Section contains a policy related to public view protection, stating:

“ Identify and preserve views of water, mountains, skylines or other unique landmarks from public places as valuable civic assets. ”

– UD-62. P320

In addition, the City has a policy within the Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan to protect public views:

“ S-WI-40. Retain, reveal, and enhance the views of prominent land forms, vegetation, watersheds, drainage ways, Downtown and significant panoramas in the Subarea. Discussion: Within the Subarea, there are numerous views, some of which are the view west from NE 8th Street and NE 5th Street on the ridge between 122nd and 123rd Avenues, the view south from the Lake Hills Connector north of SE 8th Street, the view east from SE 4th Street toward Kelsey Creek Park and the view from SE 1st Street and Main Street at the power line right-of-way at 136th Avenue. As development or public improvements occur, efforts should be made to provide public access to these viewing areas. Impacts to significant views may be minimized by encouraging alternative building orientation, roof designs, and the location of rooftop equipment during the design review process. ”

– S-WI-40. P289

Based on these policies, the following public views were selected for analysis:

- Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and NE 12th Street– Looking South to Lake Bellevue
- Intersection of NE 12th Street and 120th Ave NE–Looking Southwest to Lake Bellevue
- I-405 at NE 10th–Looking Southeast to the proposed Grand Connection and Mt. Rainier
- Intersection of NE 8th Street and 124th Ave NE–Looking West
- I-405 at NE 6th Street–Looking Southeast to the proposed Grand Connection and Mt. Rainier
- Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and NE 6th Street–View Looking West



- NE 5th Street between 120th Ave NE and 124th Ave NE– Looking West
- View from City Hall–Looking East
- Intersection of Main Street and 112th Ave NE–Looking East
- Intersection of Main Street and 116th Ave NE–Looking Northeast
- Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and SE 1st Street–Looking South
- Bellevue Botanical Garden- Looking Northwest
- Overall Views
 - » View Looking Southeast
 - » View Looking Northwest

These view locations are shown in Exhibit 3.8-2, and the respective impacts of each alternative on these viewed are discussed in the Impacts section.

Shadows

Topographically, the northern portion of the Study Area is relatively flat but the grade rises to the east, with the portion south of NE 6th Street including substantial changes in grade. The southeastern corner near the Bellevue Botanical garden is at a slightly higher level than the rest of the area, with the ridge line running between 122nd Avenue NE and 123rd Avenue NE. Within the Study Area, specific areas that could meet the City's criteria for minimizing or preventing light blockage and the creation of shadows include the following public locations:

- Eastside Rail Corridor near NE 4th Street (see location in Exhibit 3.8-2)
- Eastside Rail Corridor near Bellevue Botanical Garden (see location in Exhibit 3.8-2)

The shadow analysis estimates probable shading cast by development under each of the alternatives for three days of the year: fall (approximately autumnal equinox September 21), spring (approximately vernal equinox March 21), and summer (approximately solstice June 21). The analysis considers shadows cast at three times of day: 9:00 am, noon, and 3:00 pm. For this analysis, maximum building height and bulk of surrounding development was modeled on these dates and times to identify impacts.

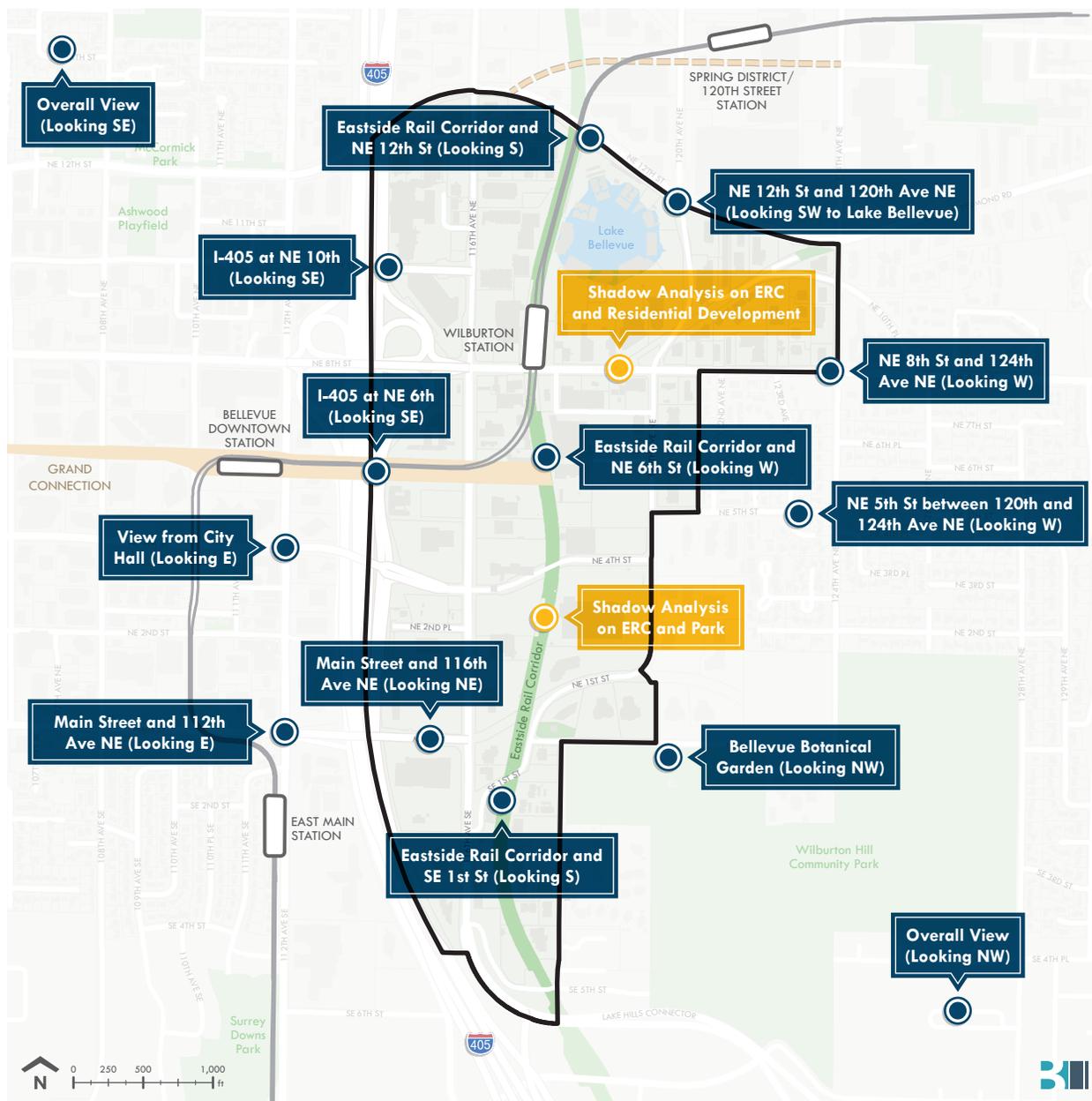


Exhibit 3.8-2 Selected Locations for View and Shadow Analysis

Source: BERK, 2017

- Wilburton Study Area Boundary
- View Analysis
- Shadow Analysis
- Grand Connection
- East Link Light Rail Stations
- East Link Light Rail Route
- Spring Blvd—Under Construction
- Parks & Open Space
- Buildings



Light and Glare

The Study Area has typical urban lighting sources including street lights, building lights, vehicle headlights, signage, and security lighting. Given its proximity to I-405, evening traffic is also a source of light.

3.8.3 IMPACTS

For the purposes of this EIS, the following thresholds of significance are identified:

- Inconsistency with the City of Bellevue's policies regarding public view protection.
- Shadows on public open spaces that could hinder public use and enjoyment of the space during daylight hours in spring, summer, and fall.

In this section, the impacts of the alternatives on the aesthetic character of the Study Area are considered. To assess impacts, development under each alternative has been modeled based on a review of the City's planning estimates for growth, pipeline development, and the potential "full buildout" growth on redevelopable parcels. These assumptions are described in detail in Chapter 2 and include the following:

- **The No Action Alternative** would maintain current heights and development standards. Under this alternative, the Study Area would support 335 total housing units and 4,230,636 total square feet of development. All land use categories are expected to grow, with the exception of industrial uses, which will decline from approximately 30,000 square feet to under 1,000 square feet.
- **Alternative 1** would allow greater heights and result in greater capacity for development, and the style of development would emphasize a mix of uses. Under Alternative 1 there could be up to 3,946 total housing units and over 13 million square feet of total development in the Study Area by 2035. During and after 2035, ultimate building space is anticipated to reach over 16 million square feet.
- **Alternative 2** presents the highest growth alternative, with the potential for up to 5,246 housing units and over 16 million square feet of development by 2035. Development up to 22.8 million square feet of building space could occur during and after 2035.



Although each of the action alternatives would increase allowed heights over broad portions of the Study Area, this analysis assumes that most future growth in the Study Area, up to the thresholds described for each alternative, would be concentrated on sites with a high potential for redevelopment. While the analysis of impacts to views, shading, and building form assumes ultimate building form at full buildout, it is likely that development, and building shapes and forms, will occur in phases through the 2035 planning horizon.

METHODOLOGY

Assessment of aesthetic impacts is subjective and can vary between individuals based on perspectives and preferences. To provide a common basis for the discussion in this impact section, the analysis assumes a No Action Alternative which includes existing conditions plus development under current regulations. This includes pipeline development (development already underway or which has begun the entitlement and permitting process) as well as new development. Development modeling for each alternative distributed future growth to its ultimate design under the existing zoning (No Action Alternative) or transects (Alternatives 1 and 2).

IMPACTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

All the alternatives would result in a general increase in development density and intensity in the Study Area. Exhibit 3.8-3 through Exhibit 3.8-8 show modeled aerial views of the Study Area under each of the alternatives. Allowed building heights would be increased in the Study Area under the two action alternatives, and those areas where height limits would not be increased would experience increased development intensity due to infill construction and redevelopment of existing properties.

This section includes a discussion of potential short-term and long-term impacts of each of the alternatives on the Study Area. Potential short-term impacts discussed are those from construction and visual character as the area transitions to a relatively higher-density mixed-use pattern. Potential long-term impacts on visual character and quality, and shading conditions, are discussed in the sections on view and shadow impacts.



Exhibit 3.8-3
Overall View (Looking Southeast)—No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

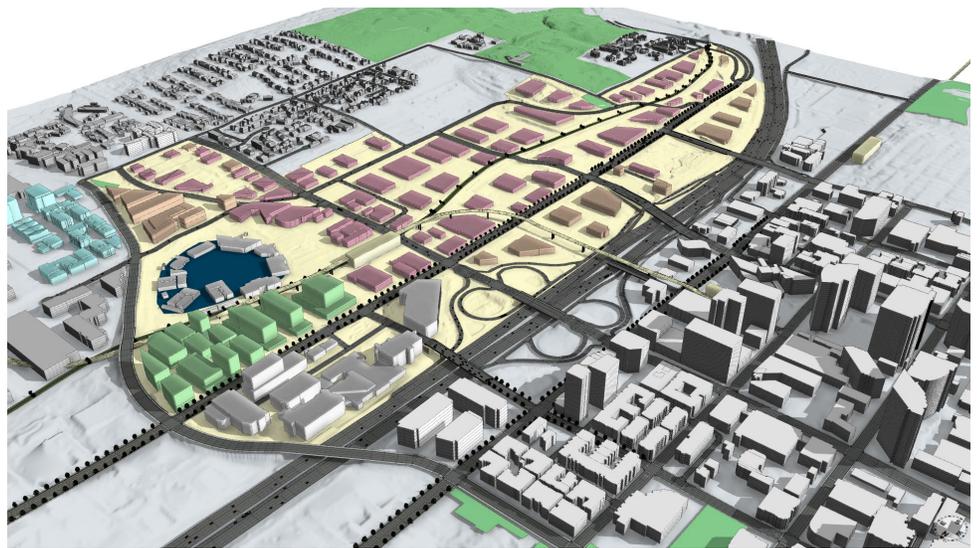


Exhibit 3.8-4
Overall View (Looking Southeast)—Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-5
Overall View (Looking Southeast)—Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



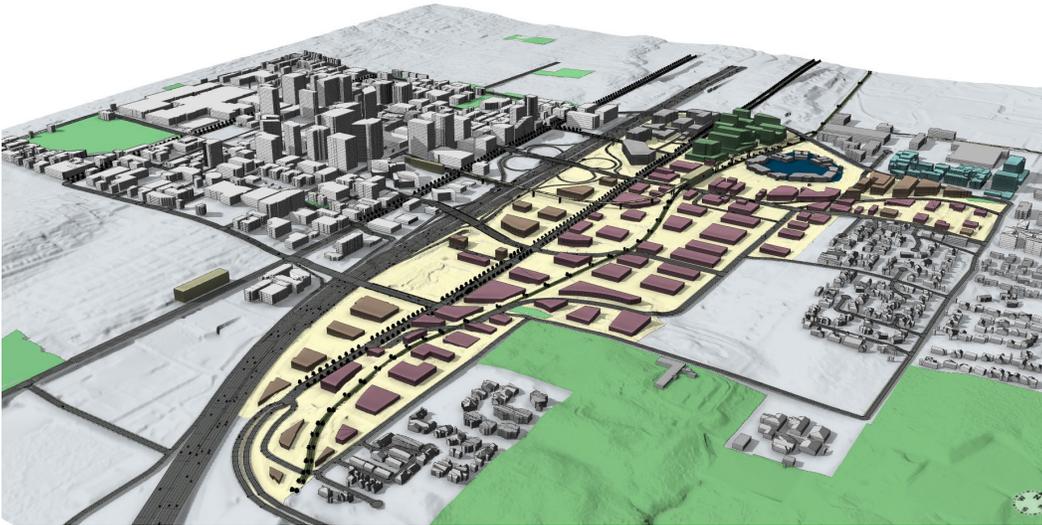


Exhibit 3.8-6
Overall View (Looking Northwest)—No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

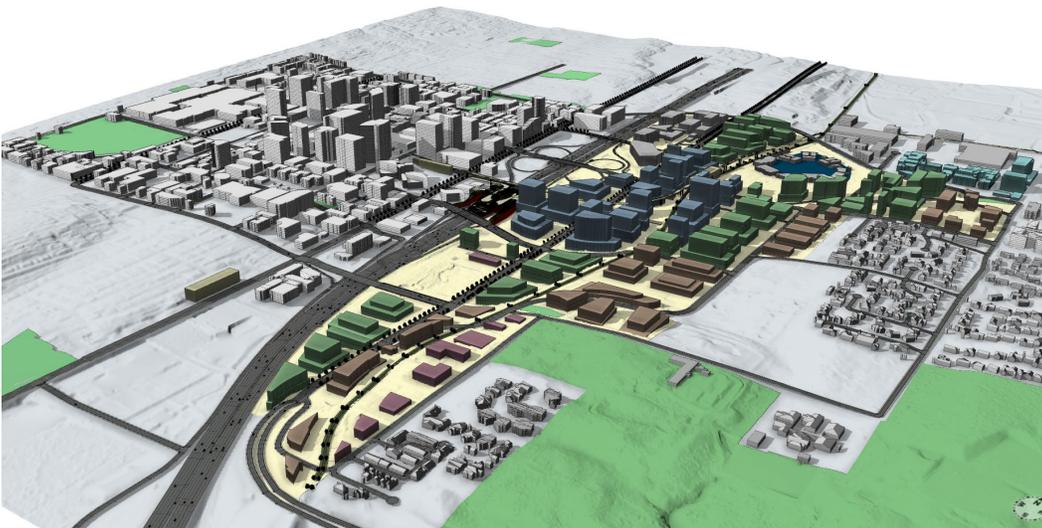


Exhibit 3.8-7
Overall View (Looking Northwest)—Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

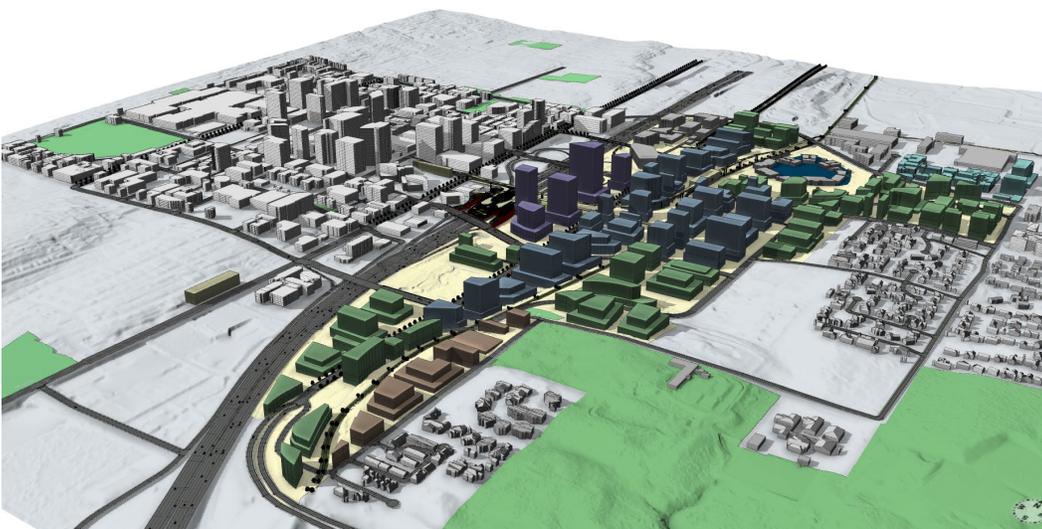


Exhibit 3.8-8
Overall View (Looking Northwest)—Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-9 Summary of Aesthetic and Urban Design Impacts

LOCATION (STREET-LEVEL VIEWS)	NATURE OF IMPACT	NO ACTION ALT.	ALT. 1	ALT. 2
Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and NE 12th Street–Looking South to Lake Bellevue	No impact	○	○	○
Intersection of NE 12th Street and 120th Ave NE–Looking Southwest to Lake Bellevue	No impact	○	○	○
I-405 at NE 10th Street–Looking Southeast to the proposed Grand Connection and Mt. Rainier	Impact on view of Mt. Rainier–Policy UD-62. P320	○	◐	●
Intersection of NE 8th Street and 124th Ave NE–Looking West	Impact on view of Downtown skyline–Policy S-WI-40	○	◐	●
I-405 at NE 6th–Looking Southeast to the proposed Grand Connection and Mt. Rainier	Impact on view of Mt. Rainier–Policy UD-62. P320	○	◐	●
Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and NE 6th Street–View Looking West	Impact on view of Downtown skyline–Policy S-WI-40	○	●	●
NE 5th Street between 120th and 124th Ave NE–View Looking West	Impact on view of Downtown skyline–Policy S-WI-40	○	◐	●
View from City Hall–Looking East	Impact on view of Wilburton Hill–Policy S-WI-40	○	◐	●
Intersection of Main Street and 112th Ave NE–View East	Impact on view of the ridge–Policy S-WI-40	○	◐	●
Intersection of Main Street and 116th Ave NE–View Northeast	No impact on public view	○	○	○
Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and SE 1st Street–Looking South	No impact	○	○	○
Bellevue Botanical Garden–Looking Northwest	No impact	○	○	○

- = Consistent with policies for public view protection and shadows on open spaces
- ◐ = Partially consistent with policies for public view protection and shadows on open spaces
- = Inconsistent with policies for public view protection and shadows on open spaces

Exhibit 3.8-9 lists the views evaluated in the impact analysis for each alternative in the following sections and summarizes the relative effects on views. Generally, Alternative 1 and 2 could impact three view locations, diminishing views of Mount Rainier.

SHORT TERM IMPACTS

Construction activities for the alternatives could result in short-term visual impacts. As part of construction activity, demolition operations, graded surfaces, construction materials, equipment,



temporary power poles, and truck traffic could be visible in the Study Area. Soil could be stockpiled and equipment for grading activities could be staged at various locations across the Study Area. Adherence to the City of Bellevue's Clearing and Grading Codes and measures such as appropriate screening can help mitigate any short-term visual impacts.

Under the Bellevue City Code (BCC), construction activities are prohibited outside of the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. No construction is permitted on Sundays and legal holidays. Since construction activities would only occur as early as 7:00 a.m. and as late as 7:00 p.m., short-term light/glare impacts associated with construction would be minimal because light and glare would not be produced very early in the morning or very late at night.

There may be lighting at night related to construction activities. However, no significant impacts are anticipated because lighting conditions are not likely to differ greatly from the night lighting in the Study Area under current conditions.

Under all alternatives, increased levels of development in the Study Area would create a more urban environment. Within the 2035 planning period, growth may occur first on redevelopable parcels, as shown on Exhibit 3.5-9. Thus, these portions of the Study Area would feature more prominent urban buildings than currently exist, with greater height and potentially greater site coverage.

As redevelopment occurs within the Study Area, there is the potential for localized impacts to visual quality as differences in scale and character are likely on some locations where newer development is of greater height and intensity than existing development. These short-term mismatches in visual scale are likely to be most noticeable in the areas northeast of the proposed Wilburton station near 120th Avenue NE and in the southern portion of the Study Area near the Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Short-term impacts to visual quality and cohesiveness, if they occur, are temporary and will be resolved over time. The extent of these impacts varies by alternative, and can be reduced by the application of existing or new development and design standards as well as extensive landscaping.



LONG TERM IMPACTS

Neighborhood Character

Under all alternatives, increased levels of development in the Study Area would create a more urban environment. While the alternatives differ in the scale of growth proposed, all alternatives would focus this future growth on parcels likely to redevelop (Exhibit 3.5-9). Thus, these portions of the Study Area corridor would feature more prominent urban buildings than currently exist, with greater height and potentially greater site coverage.

While the City's assessment of redevelopment potential identifies parcels likely to redevelop as the primary location for future growth under all alternatives, it should be noted that increased building heights are proposed throughout most of the Study Area. This allowance for greater height may spur redevelopment in other locations as well.

Height, Bulk, and Scale

While the No Action Alternative would not alter the existing height limits in the Study Area, both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 would increase allowable building height and scale, creating opportunities for more mid-rise and high-rise buildings.

Under both Alternatives 1 and 2, height increases would be most pronounced around the proposed light rail station in the area of NE 8th and 116th Avenue NE, while the No Action Alternative would reflect current patterns and have the most pronounced height in the Medical Institution District in the northwestern corner. Alternatives 1 and 2 would increase the height limit in the area around the proposed light rail station to 250 feet, roughly five times the current 55-foot limit. Alternative 1 would create a more nodal pattern with buildings of 200'-250' clustered around the proposed Grand Connection, Eastside Rail Corridor, and light rail station while Alternative 2 will create a more linear spine of height and bulk along 116th Avenue NE, comprised mostly of buildings in the 200'-250' height range but with some taller towers in the 300'-450' range.

While this analysis assumes that most future development will be concentrated on those properties with the highest redevelopment



potential, increased height limits can themselves provide an incentive for redevelopment, and building heights may increase throughout the Study Area in response to the zoning changes proposed under Alternatives 1 and 2.

Views

All alternatives would result in some alteration of current public views, though the impacts vary by location and alternative. A discussion of impacts under each of the alternatives is presented in the description of each viewpoint in the View Impacts section that follows.

Shadows

Building heights are linked to shading conditions in urban environments, and increased development under all alternatives would generate increases in shade and shadows at street level. Increased height limits under Alternatives 1 and 2 could increase shading further by allowing taller buildings that will block more light and cast longer shadows. Impacts associated with each alternative are described in the Shadow Impacts section.

Light and Glare

Given the presence of large format retail, the Medical Institution District, and auto dealerships, as well as the proximity to the highway, the Study Area is already an environment with high levels of artificial lighting. As such, increased lighting conditions under any of the alternatives is not anticipated to result in significant impacts.

GRAND CONNECTION OPTIONS

There are three options for the Wilburton portion of the Grand Connection that would occur under Alternatives 1 or 2; they would not be implemented under the No Action Alternative. The options range from a sculptural bridge that capitalizes on existing infrastructure assets, a signature stand-alone bridge, and the creation of a public space with a partial capping of I-405 between NE 6th Street and NE 4th Street. The compatibility of each option with views, neighborhood character and scale of the alternatives is reviewed below.



Option A: Sculptural Bridge

Option A would construct an extension from NE 6th Street into the Study Area by creating a pedestrian crossing over I-405 and an elevated crossing over 116th Avenue NE to connect with the Eastside Rail Corridor. This option would include features such as a viewing platform, terraces, and a ground level plaza and park. The park space is likely to experience negative visual and sound impacts from the nearby freeway and light rail line, while the crossing would mitigate the sights of the interstate through its form. Under all the alternatives, Option A would have modest potential for creating views. It provides some opportunity to enhance overall neighborhood character with its unique form and design and provides opportunity for public space within the boundaries of the Study Area.

Option B: Linear Bridge

Option B would create a pedestrian bridge that stands apart from existing infrastructure, while avoiding impacts to the existing interstate ramps. This bridge would be anchored to development on both sides of I-405, as well as a modest public space on the east side of I-405, smaller than that proposed in Options A and C. The width of the bridge could vary to create public space, green space, viewing platforms, or to support vendors. The crossing offers the least opportunities for mitigation of the sights and sounds of the interstate, relying on landscaped berms and vegetation to accomplish both.

In addition to the benefits of creating a Downtown connection, Option B provides an opportunity for improved integration with the scale and forms of new development because it would be directly connected to development within the Wilburton Commercial Area. This does diminish the quality of the crossing as a public space, and provides a more privatized character with its direct connection to future development. More intensive or nodal development around NE 6th street in Alternatives 1 and 2 provides an ideal opportunity for the integration of the Grand Connection into the surrounding development.



Option C: Lid Park

Option C would cover I-405 with a lid park over the existing interstate ramps between NE 4th Street and NE 6th Street to create a rolling terrain of about 200,000 square feet. This area could be used as a park or other public space and would connect with future development on both sides of the interstate at the podium level. Option C would preserve development opportunities on the City-owned parcel east of I-405 and would not require the acquisition of additional properties as under Options A and B.

Lidding I-405 presents the best opportunity to buffer and reduce the sights and sounds of I-405 and the best opportunity to create an iconic urban design. Option C provides the connection benefits of Option A, the opportunities for unique views and perspectives of Option B, and provides the greatest benefits for creating public open space. The Grand Connection is not part of the No Action Alternative as current plans and regulations did not anticipate it.



PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces are important component of neighborhood character. When well designed and sited they can soften the visual impacts of building bulk and help create residential character. Bellevue is considering five public space options for the Study Area that may be integrated into any of the alternatives, as shown in Exhibit 2-26. The No Action Alternative includes proposed policies from the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan that support a neighborhood park in Wilburton, but a location is not identified. Public space options are more likely to be integrated as part of the Grand Connection or with a concept plan that can be integrated as part of redevelopment into Alternatives 1 and 2. The compatibility of each Public Space option and the alternatives is described below.

Grand Connection Lid

The Grand Connection Lid is an opportunity to create a significant open space amenity at a major gateway into the Study Area. The effects on views and aesthetic of the Grand Connection Lid are discussed above. As noted, the No Action Alternative may not produce enough development to support this option and the significant open space would add minimal benefit in a low-density commercial district. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the Grand Connection Lid is in the vicinity of concentrated or nodal development near NE 8th Street. The open space can soften the visual impacts of building bulk and help create residential character. This is especially beneficial for the area around the transit station but the location of this space at the edge of the Study Area provides fewer benefits to residents and workers located farther away.

Civic Center

The Civic Center option would put a large public space in the Study Area. It is shown near NE 6th Street in Exhibit 2-26. The effects of the Civic Center option would be similar to those of the I-405 Lid in the Grand Connection Lid option in regard to creating public space. Unlike the Grand Connection Lid, which would create space over the I-405 freeway, the Civic Center would be in the core development area of either the No Action Alternative or Alternative 1, and help soften the visual effects of increased building bulk. It could likely require the use of existing city-owned property, as well as the acquisition of additional property to develop a park. The



development pattern under the No Action Alternative is unlikely to provide the mixed-use activity necessary for a successful public space of this scale.

Neighborhood Green

In the Neighborhood Green option, there would be multiple, smaller public spaces spread throughout the Study Area. Such spaces could include public plazas, neighborhood parks, or other types of public spaces (such as the creek, wetland, or lake features shown in the Natural Network option). The Neighborhood Green option presents the best opportunity for the integration of public spaces at a scale proportional to anticipated development in the different alternatives. Smaller spaces distributed throughout the area would provide easier access to open space for the workers and residents of the area.

This option would be more beneficial for the action alternatives since the projected growth and an emphasis on mixed uses will provide the active building edges or “outer parks” necessary for such distributed spaces to function well. The activity generated under the development increases in Alternatives 1 and 2 can integrate these smaller parks into the neighborhood fabric. Of the two, Alternative 2 is more likely to successfully implement this option due to higher levels of development beyond the transit node (especially along the eastern edge) and a greater distribution of mixed uses throughout the Study Area.

Eastside Rail Corridor Linear Park

This option would expand public space along the Eastside Rail Corridor and create nodes of activity along the linear park, including the area where it links to the Grand Connection. This would build off planned public assets, and development of this type of open space amenity would be less tied to redevelopment activity. Adjacent buildings could be integrated with the Linear Park to provide enhanced amenities, particularly in Alternatives 1 and 2 where mixed use is emphasized. Alternative 2 anticipates mixed use on both sides of the ERC, which will provide the best opportunity for integration with the neighborhood. Residents and workers in the eastern half of the Study Area or in the vicinity of the Grand Connection would have the best access to this open space.



Natural Network

The Natural Network option would result in multiple, smaller public spaces spread throughout Wilburton in areas where it is possible to enhance, expose, and utilize the natural features of the area such as the lake, wetland, and creek. Access and usability of these spaces may depend on their locations in relationship to surrounding development, similar to the Neighborhood Green option. Under No Action Alternative, existing BelRed development regulations require the enhancement of the natural network in the north end of the Study Area. However, the development pattern under the No Action Alternative is unlikely to provide the building edges that can activate these spaces. Since the natural features are in fixed locations, they may be near, but not integrated with, redevelopment areas. Neighborhood character and scale under Alternatives 1 and 2 are more compatible with this option.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES EVALUATION

As described in the Introduction, there are three performance standards for Aesthetics, shown in Exhibit 3.8-10 along with a summary of how each alternative performs.

Exhibit 3.8-10 Evaluation Framework: Comparison of Alternatives–Aesthetics

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2
Increased opportunities for skyline and water views	▼	●	▲
Height of development, location of roads, and landscaping abutting surrounding neighborhoods creating an appropriate transition to areas of greater or lower density	▼ Downtown & BelRed	▲ Downtown & BelRed	▲ Downtown & BelRed
	▲ Residential areas to east	● Residential areas to east	▼ Residential areas to east
Concentration of development and activity at perimeter of neighborhoods creating an appropriate transition to areas of greater or lower activity	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above

▲ Strong Emphasis ● Moderate Emphasis ▼ Weak Emphasis



Performance measures related to opportunities for skyline and water views are likely to vary among alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative, there are partial views of the peak of Mt. Rainier but no water view. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the partial view of the peak of Mt. Rainier may be obstructed but views of Lake Bellevue are higher; tower spacing standards could help reduce potential impacts. New views from upper stories would be created. To the extent there are rooftop public gathering areas, this could increase views.

Under all alternatives, the most likely areas for redevelopment are centrally located near the Eastside Rail Corridor or 116th Ave NE. The No Action Alternative has the least development intensity in general and the lowest allowed heights, so it results in the least abrupt transition to abutting surrounding neighborhoods, but likewise does not offer focal points or improved streetscape. Alternative 1 concentrates development around a central node, with a moderate emphasis on height, new roads, and landscaping in the Study Area which may improve individual experience of focal points and streetscape. Transitions to the residential area to the east are more distinct than for the No Action Alternative, and standards addressing upper story stepbacks, ground floor open space, landscaping, floorplate size, and architectural design could help reduce impacts.

Future zoning under Alternative 2 allows for the greatest intensity of development in the Study Area. Although new development is likely to be focused away from the perimeter, there will be increased heights in areas abutting neighborhoods. This results in a strong emphasis on height, new roads, and landscaping in the Study Area as improvements to focal points and streetscape experiences. Alternative 2 provides the most change in height to neighborhoods to the east. Building spacing, bulk reduction, as well as measures identified for Alternative 1 would likely be needed (standards addressing upper story stepbacks, ground floor open space, landscaping, floorplate size, and architectural design could help reduce impacts).

Grand Connection Performance Measures

Regarding user experience, see Grand Connection Options above.



VIEW IMPACTS

A discussion of each of the selected viewpoints under each alternative is presented below.

Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and NE 12th Street–Looking South to Lake Bellevue

No Action Alternative

From this perspective, existing structures and extensive vegetation block views of Lake Bellevue. The height and scale of new development under the No Action Alternative would be consistent with other development in the Study Area and would not exceed current height limits.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would add additional development south of the Lake, but the buildings around the Lake and views to the Lake itself will remain unchanged compared to the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 2

Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would add taller buildings to the south of the Lake, but preserve the built environment around the Lake. Views of Lake Bellevue will be unchanged and remain the same as the No Action Alternative.

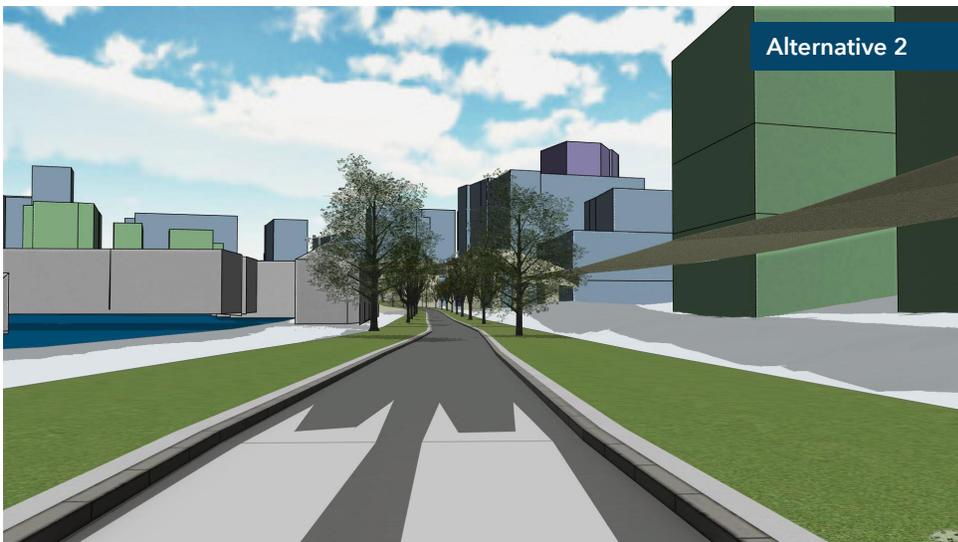
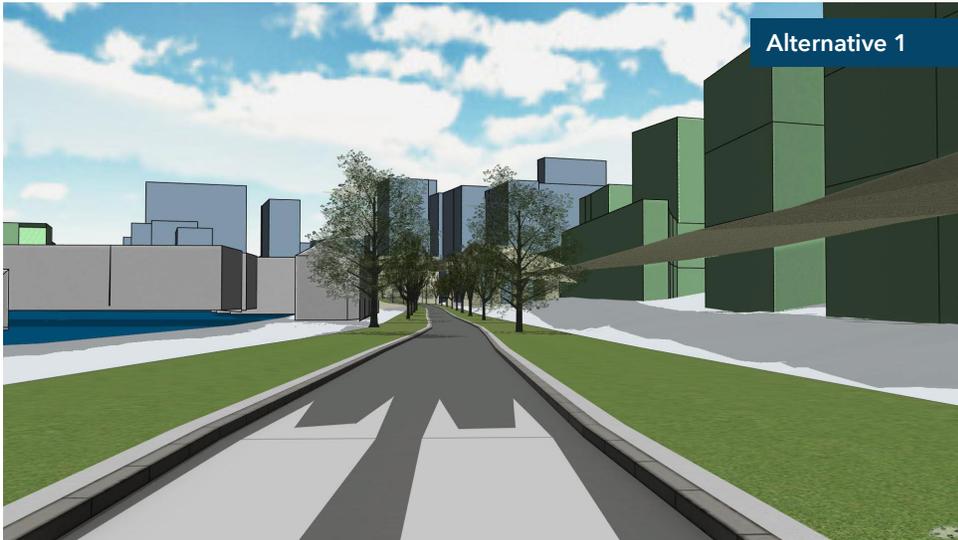


Exhibit 3.8-11
Intersection of Eastside
Rail Corridor and NE
12th Street—Looking
South to Lake Bellevue

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Intersection of NE 12th Street and 120th Avenue NE–Looking Southwest to Lake Bellevue

No Action Alternative

From this perspective, the No Action Alternative would preserve the street level view of low-rise buildings around the Lake. Views of the Lake itself would continue to be obstructed by these buildings as well as existing vegetation.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would preserve the street level view of low-rise buildings around the Lake. Buildings of greater height and bulk can be seen further south but this would not affect view from the street across to the Lake beyond the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 2

Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would preserve existing views from the street to the Lake and development around the shoreline. Buildings of greater height and bulk could be seen further south but this would not affect the view from the street to the Lake.



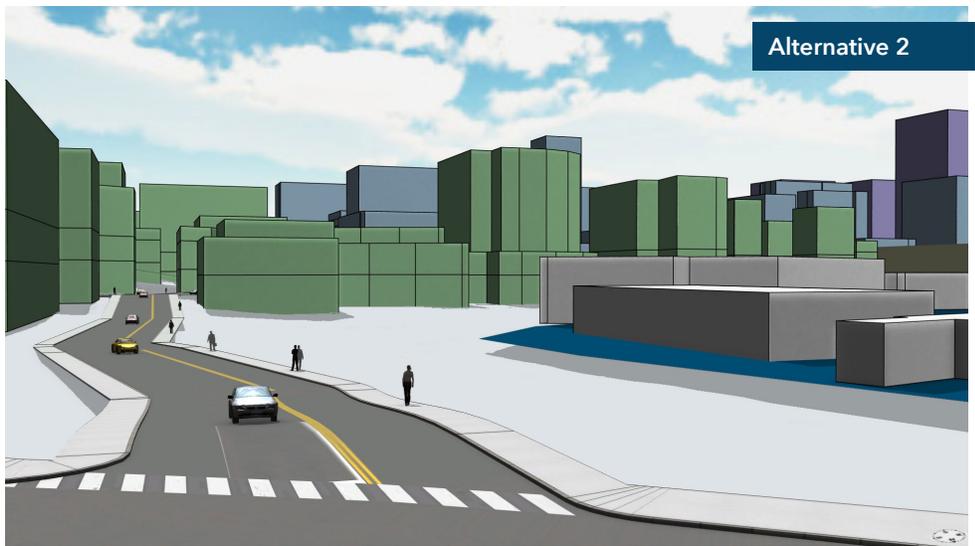
No Action Alt.

Exhibit 3.8-12
Intersection of NE 12th
Street and 120th Avenue
NE-Looking Southwest
to Lake Bellevue

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Alternative 1



Alternative 2



I-405 at NE 10th—Looking Southeast to the Proposed Grand Connection and Mt. Rainier

No Action Alternative

From this perspective, there is a partial view of the peak of Mt. Rainier and Newcastle Hill to the South. Under the development in the No Action Alternative, no changes to the view are likely.

Alternative 1

New mid- to high-rise development in the study area could increase the scale of development seen from this perspective. Landscaping treatment of the Grand Connection as well as the modulation of building volumes could be used to mitigate the visual effect of increased heights. However, Alternative 1 would still represent a substantial increase in development intensity over existing conditions, and could alter the view from the location. The increase in development under Alternative 1 could have the potential to partially obstruct the partial view of the peak of Mt. Rainier and Newcastle Hill in the distance.

Alternative 2

New high-rise development under Alternative 2 would substantially increase the scale of development seen from this perspective. Landscaping treatment of the Grand Connection as well as the modulation of buildings could help mitigate the visual effect of increased heights. However, Alternative 2 would still represent a substantial increase in development intensity over existing conditions, and could alter the view from the location. The substantial increase in development under Alternative 2 has the potential to significantly obstruct the partial view of the peak of Mt. Rainier and Newcastle Hill in the distance.



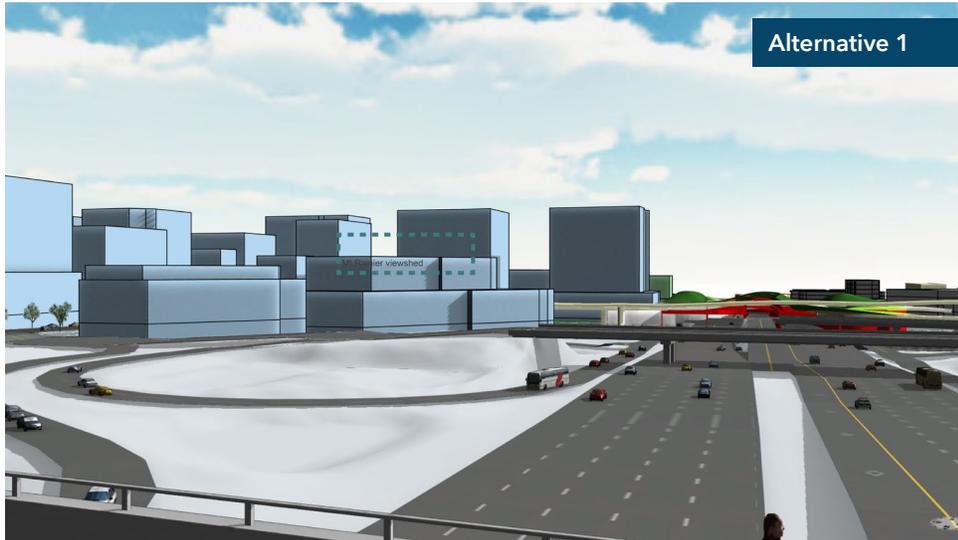
No Action Alt.



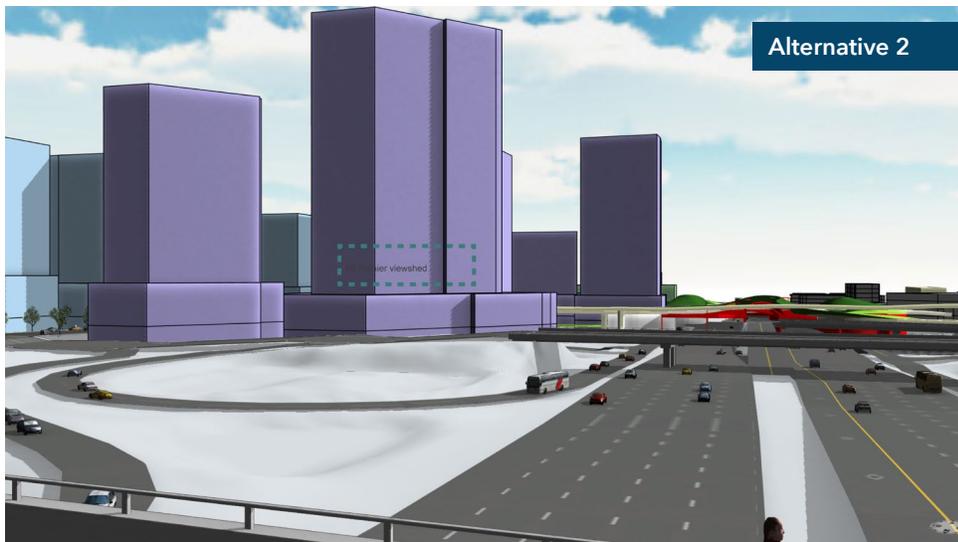
Exhibit 3.8-13
I-405 at NE 10th—Looking
Southeast to the Proposed
Grand Connection
and Mt. Rainier

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

Alternative 1



Alternative 2





Intersection of NE 8th Street near 124th Ave NE—Looking West

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, low-rise development (heights range from 30' to 60') on either side of NE 8th Street allows a distant view of the downtown skyline. Existing vegetation along the street and topographical change partially narrow the view corridor.

Alternative 1

New development would replace existing low-rise structures on either side of the street and would be approximately twice and up to four times as tall as existing structures in the area (heights range from 70' to as high as 250'). New development under Alternative 1 would represent a substantial increase in building scale over the No Action Alternative, and increased building height could partially obstruct views of the downtown skyline from street level. Increased sidewalk widths and upper-level stepbacks can reduce visual bulk as well as create opportunities for views. Additional development can also create a sense of enclosure and smaller scale for a pedestrian-oriented street-level environment.

Alternative 2

New development would replace existing low-rise structures on either side of the street and could be approximately four to five times as tall as existing structures in the area (heights can range from 120' to 250'). New development under Alternative 2 would represent a substantial increase in building scale over the No Action Alternative, and increased height would significantly obstruct views of the downtown skyline from street level. Increased sidewalk widths and upper-level stepbacks can reduce visual bulk as well as create opportunities for views. Additional development can also create a sense of enclosure and smaller scale that can create a more pedestrian-oriented street-level environment.



No Action Alt.

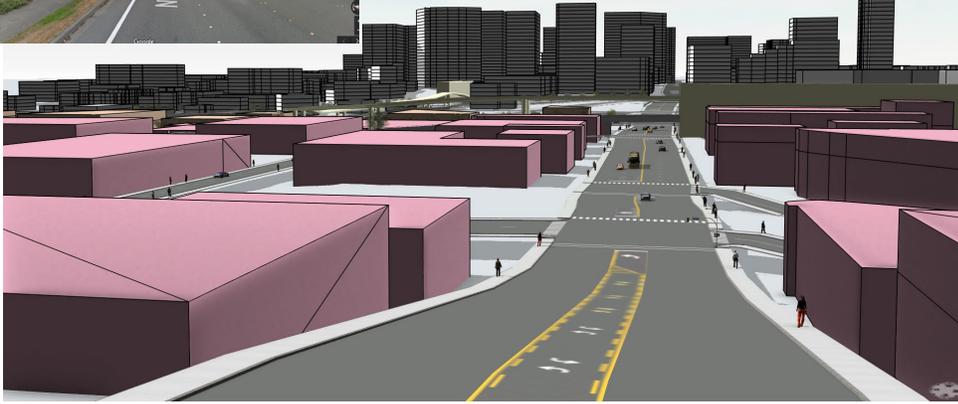


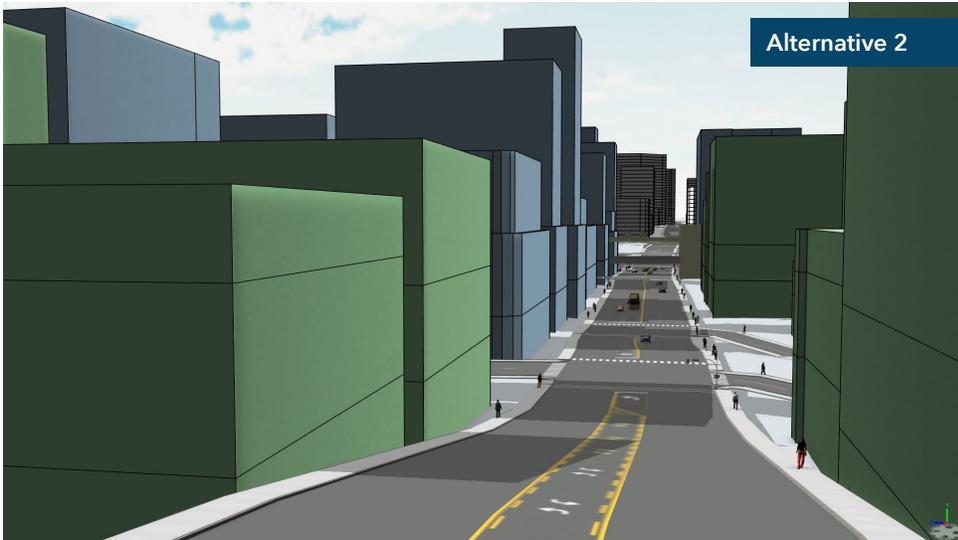
Exhibit 3.8-14
Intersection of NE 8th
Street Near 124th Ave
NE—Looking West

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

Alternative 1



Alternative 2





I-405 at NE 6th—Looking Southeast to the Proposed Grand Connection and Mt. Rainier

No Action Alternative

From this perspective, the No Action Alternative would have a partial view of Mt. Rainier's peak and Wilburton Hill in the distance. Topography and existing vegetation narrow the views slightly under existing conditions. Low-density development under the No Action Alternative would not be tall enough to obstruct views beyond existing conditions.

Alternative 1

Development under Alternative 1 would replace existing low-rise structures along 116th Ave NE. These buildings may partially obstruct the partial view of Mt. Rainier's peak and Wilburton Hill in the distance.

Alternative 2

Development under Alternative 2 would replace existing low-rise structures along 116th Ave NE which will likely significantly obstruct the partial view of Mt. Rainier's peak and Wilburton Hill from this location. Buildings under Alternative 2 may be tall enough to obstruct views beyond the No Action Alternative and Alternative 1. Upper-level setbacks and other design standards could help minimize the effect of development on the view.



No Action Alt.

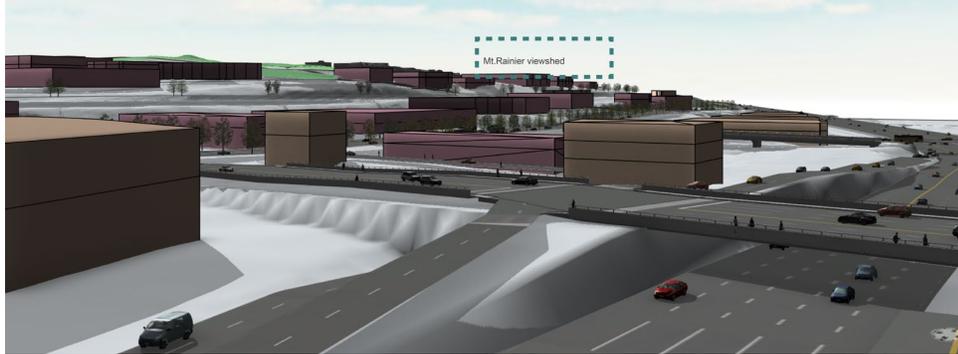
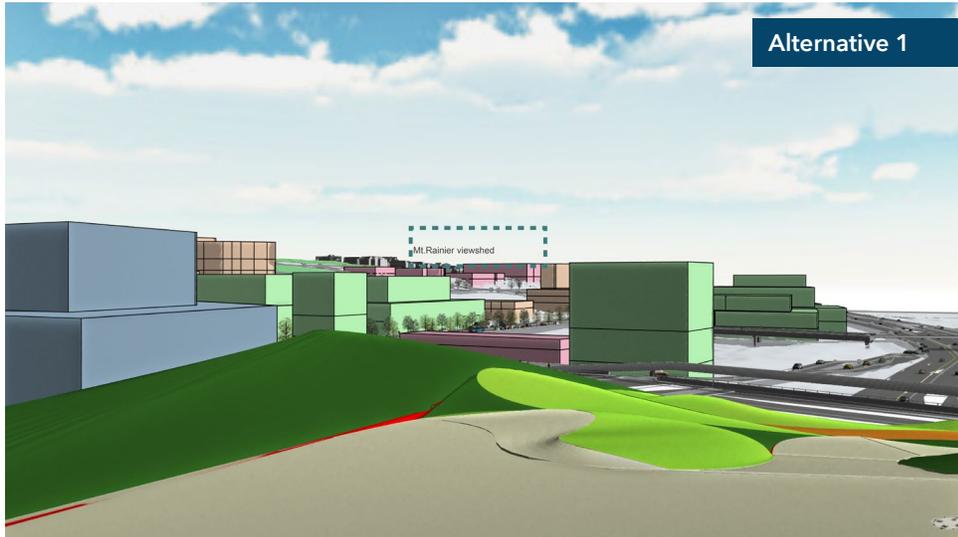


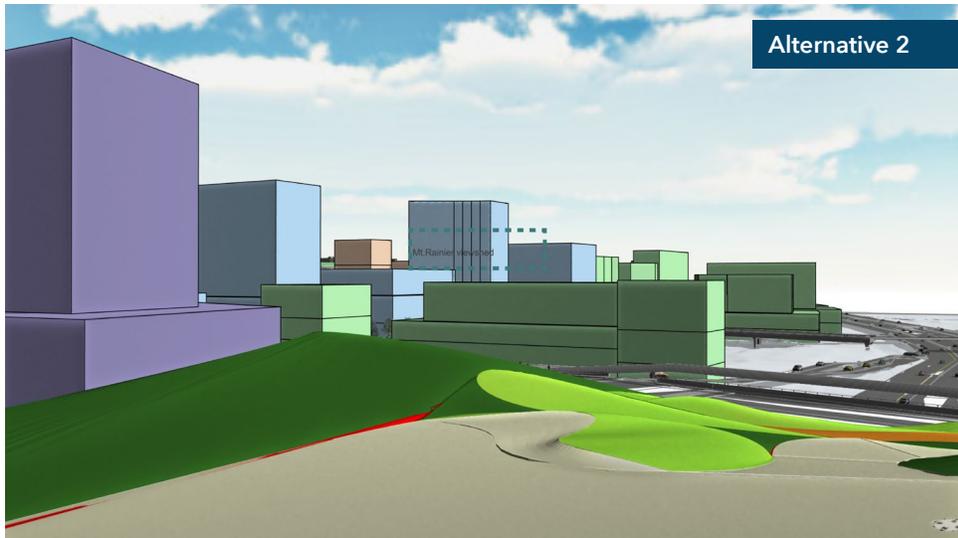
Exhibit 3.8-15
I-405 at NE 6th—Looking
Southeast to the Proposed
Grand Connection
and Mt. Rainier

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

Alternative 1



Alternative 2





Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and NE 6th Street–View Looking West

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the view from this perspective would be of the downtown skyline in the distance, with some partial obstruction due to vegetation. Under the No Action Alternative, this perspective would also include the roadway improvement of the NE 6th extension to 120th Avenue NE and the proposed elevated light rail line.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1, the view corridor to the downtown skyline in the distance would be narrowed and the view significantly obstructed under Alternative 1. With development under Alternative 1, this perspective would also include the roadway improvement of the NE 6th extension to 120th Avenue NE and the proposed elevated light rail line.

Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, the view from this perspective would be of development along NE 6th Street and along 120th Ave NE and the roadway improvement of the NE 6th extension to 120th Avenue NE. Like Alternative 1, the view corridor to the neighborhood of Wilburton Hill in the distance would be narrowed and the view significantly obstructed under Alternative 2.

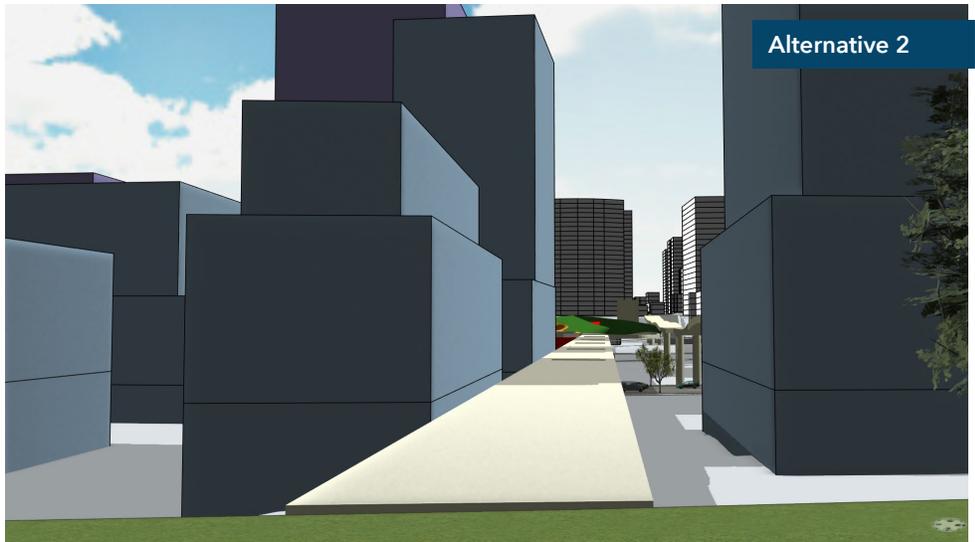
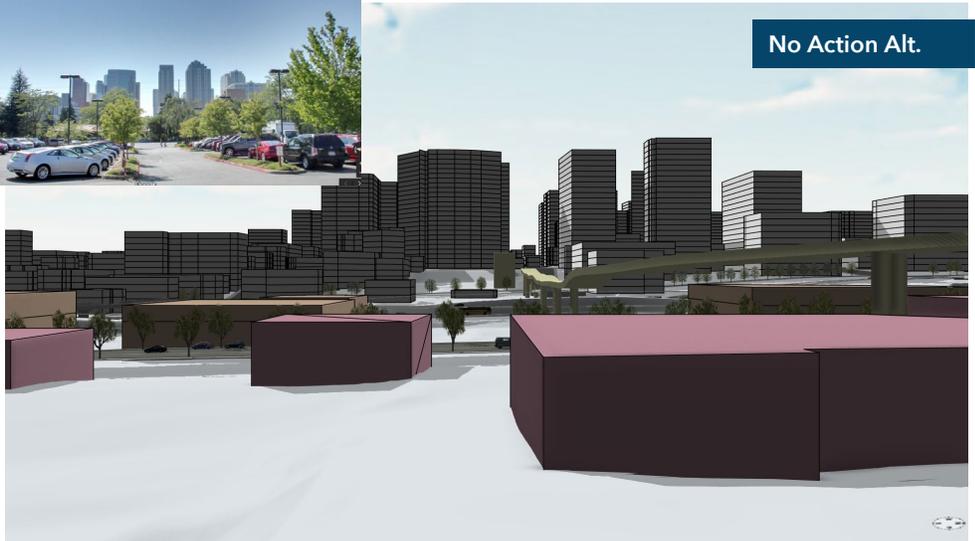


Exhibit 3.8-16
Intersection of Eastside
Rail Corridor and NE 6th
Street—View Looking West

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



NE 5th Street between 120th Ave NE and 124th Ave NE—Looking West

No Action Alternative

From this perspective, the No Action Alternative would have a view of the downtown skyline with some obstruction due to the curve of the street and tall vegetation that partially blocks sightlines.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would add significant development on either side of the street. From this perspective, Alternative 1 could obstruct the view of the downtown skyline. Tower spacing, and upper-level setbacks on buildings, especially those at the base of the hill could diminish obstructions to the view.

Alternative 2

Due to the building height increases under Alternative 2, the view corridor to the downtown skyline from this location could be significantly narrowed, more so than Alternative 1. Tower spacing, and building modulation with upper-level setbacks could help minimize this effect.



Exhibit 3.8-17
NE 5th Street between
120th Ave NE and 124th
Ave NE—Looking West

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



View from City Hall–Looking East

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the view from this location is of Wilburton Hill in the distance.

Alternative 1

Development under Alternative 1 could partially obstruct the view of Wilburton Hill from this location. Building bulk modulation and upper-level setbacks could diminish obstructions to this view.

Alternative 2

Development under Alternative 2 could significantly obstruct the view of Wilburton Hill from this location. Building bulk modulation and upper-level setbacks could diminish the obstructions to this view.



No Action Alt.

Exhibit 3.8-18
View from City Hall—
Looking East

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Alternative 1



Alternative 2



Intersection of Main Street and 112th Ave NE—Looking East

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the view from this location is of low-rise development and Wilburton Hill in the distance. Development under the No Action Alternative would have no effect on the current views from this location.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 the view from this location would be of taller development. New development under Alternative 1 is likely to be visible from this viewpoint, and could be tall enough to partially obstruct the view from this location beyond existing conditions and the No Action Alternative. There could be a slight change in the perception of the view of the ridge line given the increase in development that will be visible from this location.

Alternative 2

Redevelopment under Alternative 2 would alter the view from this viewpoint, compared to the No Action Alternative and Alternative 1. Future development under Alternative 2 would be visible from this viewpoint, and new buildings could be tall enough to significantly obstruct the view of the ridge line from this viewpoint. Building modulation and upper level stepbacks can be used to mitigate the effect on the view.



No Action Alt.



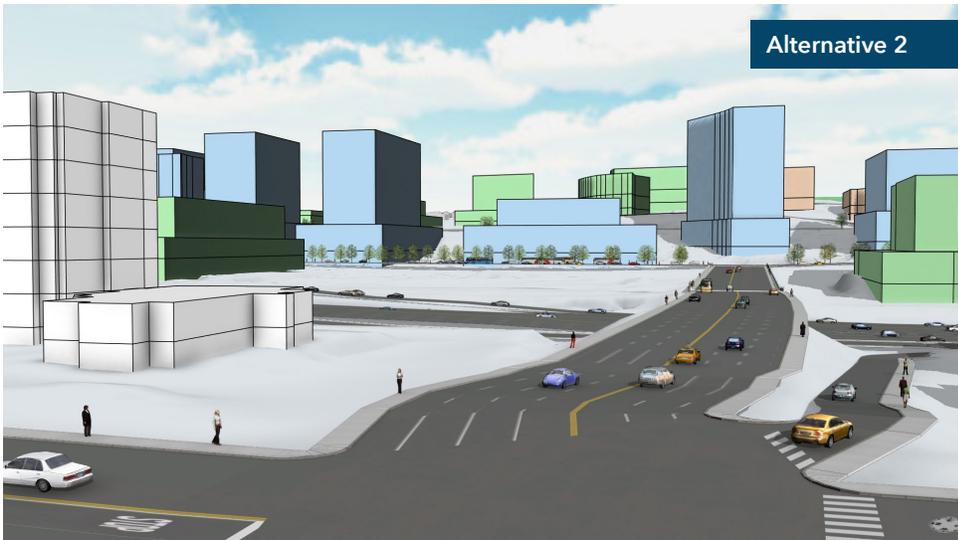
Exhibit 3.8-19
Intersection of Main
Street and 112th Ave
NE-Looking East

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

Alternative 1



Alternative 2





Intersection of Main Street and 116th Ave NE–View Northeast

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the view from this location is of existing development along 116th Ave NE.

Alternative 1

New mid-rise development on 116th Avenue NE would increase the scale of development and create an urban character along the street. New buildings in this area would be up to 120 to 250 feet tall, much taller than the 55 feet that would be allowed under the No Action Alternative. As shown in Exhibit 3.8-20, the width of 116th Avenue NE and the presence of extensive streetscape vegetation could be used to mitigate the effect of taller buildings. However, Alternative 1 would still represent a substantial increase in development intensity over existing conditions, and would alter the street-level experience at this location by increasing visual bulk along the streetscape. Building modulation and treatment of the ground floors of buildings could increase pedestrian comfort by providing a sense of enclosure while adding safety with “eyes on the street.” These strategies can eliminate any negative effect of increased bulk on the street-level experience.

Alternative 2

New high-rise development on 116th Avenue NE would increase the scale of development and alter character of the street. New buildings in this area would be up to 120 to 250 feet, with isolated locations up to 350 feet tall, significantly taller than the 55 feet that would be allowed under No Action Alternative and the 100-240 feet anticipated under Alternative 1. As shown in the exhibit, the width of 116th Avenue NE and the presence of extensive streetscape vegetation could be used to mitigate the effect of taller buildings. However, Alternative 2 would represent a substantial increase in development intensity over existing conditions, and could alter the street-level experience at this location by increasing visual bulk along the streetscape. As in Alternative 1, building modulation and treatment of the ground floors of development can increase pedestrian comfort by providing a sense of enclosure while adding safety with “eyes on the street.” These strategies can eliminate any negative effect of increased bulk on the street-level experience.



Exhibit 3.8-20
Intersection of Main
Street and 116th Ave
NE-Looking Northeast
Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Intersection of Eastside Rail Corridor and SE 1st Street—Looking South

No Action Alternative

New low-rise construction would replace existing development on the east side of the street. While taller than existing structures on the site, the height and scale of new development would be similar to other buildings in the area and would not exceed current height limits. Topography and existing vegetation already reduce sightlines in this location. Development under the No Action Alternative would have no additional change to these sightlines.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would add development that encloses the corridor with no impact to views from this location.

Alternative 2

Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would add development that encloses the corridor with no impact to views.



Exhibit 3.8-21
Intersection of Eastside
Rail Corridor and SE 1st
Street—Looking South

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017





Bellevue Botanical Garden–Looking Northwest

No Action Alternative

From this perspective, while there is a potential view of the downtown skyline, in effect, extensive vegetation blocks sightlines so that very little of the skyline is visible.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would add significant development opportunity that could narrow and partially obstruct the view corridor to the downtown skyline from this perspective. The impact of development on views may be minimal, however, because the view is partially obstructed due to extensive vegetation under the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would add significant development that could partially obstruct and narrow the view corridor to the downtown skyline from this perspective. The impact of development on views may be minimal, however, because the view is partially obstructed due to extensive vegetation under No Action Alternative.



No Action Alt.

Exhibit 3.8-22
Bellevue Botanical Garden—
Looking Northwest

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Alternative 1



Alternative 2



NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER IMPACTS

No Action Alternative

With a mix of land uses and building form very similar to the existing conditions, no significant changes to neighborhood character are anticipated under the No Action Alternative. Over time, infill development and redevelopment in the study area would gradually lead to a more intense development pattern, but the current low-rise character would be maintained.

Alternative 1

Development under Alternative 1 would be characterized by substantially taller high-rise development in areas that currently have relatively low height limits. Since the Study Area is a low-intensity suburban neighborhood, high-rise development would fundamentally change the visual character of some portions of the study area, compared to the minimal changes under Alternative 1.

Height increases will be concentrated in a node around the Wilburton light rail station, Eastside Rail Corridor, and Grand Connection. Height increases along 116th Avenue NE would also affect neighborhood character in this north-south corridor. North of Main Street, height limits would increase from 55 to 100 feet (on the eastern side) and 160 feet (on parcels to the west). This would allow a fundamentally different type of building construction than currently allowed, which would result in an overall more urban visual aesthetic and a more pedestrian-oriented experience in these areas. South of Main Street, height changes would be less pronounced. Building heights would increase slightly on properties adjacent to the freeway but remain similar to the No Action Alternative on the south-eastern edge near the park along 118th Avenue NE.

Alternative 2

Effects on neighborhood character associated with Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 1, but greater in magnitude. Similar to Alternative 1, building height increases would be concentrated in the area around the Wilburton light rail station, Eastside Rail Corridor, and Grand Connection, but the increases would be more linear, and concentrated along a spine of 116th Avenue NE, as well as areas around NE 6th Street. Building heights would increase up to 250



feet along 116th Avenue NE from current limits of 55 feet, changing the character of this corridor. Isolated locations along the west side of 116th Avenue NE could exceed 300 feet. Similar to Alternative 1, building heights would be lower in the northeastern and southeastern edges of the Study Area, but would rise to 100 feet on the northeast and between 55 and 100 feet on some parcels in the southeastern edge. This would allow a fundamentally different type of building construction than currently allowed, which would result in an overall more urban visual aesthetic and a more pedestrian-oriented experience in these areas.

HEIGHT, BULK, AND SCALE IMPACTS

No Action Alternative

As described in Chapter 2, the No Action Alternative represents the lowest future development intensity of the three alternatives. This alternative would result in a slight increase in development density and intensity as additional growth occurs in the Study Area, consistent with adopted growth targets and current land use regulations. The No Action Alternative would retain current zoning and associated height limits in the Study Area, thereby having minimal impact on height, bulk, and scale. As the area grows, building forms are likely to remain similar to the forms that exist today. Since some properties in the study area are not developed to the full height allowed under current zoning, some overall increase in building heights could occur, primarily near the Medical Institution District where BelRed zoning is applicable.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would result in an increase in development density and intensity as additional growth occurs in the Study Area. As described in Chapter 2, Alternative 1 would increase building height limits across much of the Study Area to create additional capacity for housing and jobs beyond current zoning.

Building heights are likely to increase from a range of about 20 to 75 feet (with building heights up to 200 feet in the Medical Institution District) under existing conditions and the No Action Alternative to a range of about 55 to 250 feet to accommodate additional growth and development. Buildings of greatest bulk and height will be concentrated in a node around the Wilburton light rail station,



Eastside Rail Corridor, and Grand Connection with heights in the 200 to 250 feet range. Building heights would also range from 120 to 160 feet along 116th Avenue NE. Given the acreages of redevelopable parcels in the Study Area, most buildings would likely be under 160 feet in height, with the greatest potential for height increases above that in the node around the Wilburton light rail station, Eastside Rail Corridor, and Grand Connection.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would result in a substantial increase in development density and intensity in the Study Area. As described in Chapter 2, Alternative 2 would increase building height limits across much of the Study Area to create additional capacity for housing and jobs beyond current zoning. Building heights may reach as high as 450 feet under Alternative 2, but only in a concentrated transit oriented development area around NE 6th Street west of 116th Ave NE near the interstate (Exhibit 2-4). The vast majority of development is expected to develop at a height of 120-250 feet.

SHADOW IMPACTS

This section provides shading diagrams for the No Action Alternative as well as Alternative 1 and 2, based on allowed building heights and potential building envelopes. Impacts specific to each of the noted public areas, and selected shading diagrams are described below. It is likely that there will be significant shading during the winter months, when the sun is at its lowest altitude. Given that the majority of residents are more likely to be spend more time outdoors in the summer, spring and fall, the shadow analysis looks at shading conditions during morning hours in those times of the year.

Shadow Analysis Summary

Because of its distance from the Study Area, as well as its position to the south of the Study Area, the Bellevue Botanical Garden will not be shaded by development in the Study Area in the morning hours in spring, summer, or fall under any of the alternatives. Similarly, residential development east of the Study Area will not be shaded in the morning hours in spring, summer, or fall under any of the alternatives.



Exhibit 3.8-23 Shadow Analysis of Study Area (Summer AM)–No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-24 Shadow Analysis of Study Area (Summer AM)–Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-25 Shadow Analysis of Study Area (Summer AM)–Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Development under the No Action Alternative will not shade the Eastside Rail Corridor in the morning hours in summer, spring or fall. Increased building heights under Alternatives 1 and 2 could result in increased shading during morning hours at certain locations along the Eastside Rail Corridor. Taller buildings along 120th Avenue NE could increase shading conditions on the Eastside Rail Corridor under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2.

Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor, Botanical Garden, and Wilburton Hill Park

No Action Alternative

Because of its distance from the Study Area, as well as its position to the south of the Study Area, the Botanical Garden will have minimal shading from development in the Study Area. Redevelopment adjacent to the northwestern corner of the park under the No Action Alternative will not affect shading in the Botanical Garden or on the Eastside Rail Corridor at this location and is unlikely to have any significant impacts. See Exhibit 3.8-26 and Exhibit 3.8-27.

Alternative 1

Because of its distance from the Study Area, as well as its position to the south of the Study Area, the Botanical Garden will have minimal shading in the morning hours in spring or fall due to development in the Study Area. Redevelopment adjacent to the northwestern corner of the park under Alternative 1 will not affect shading in the park or on the Eastside Rail Corridor at this location. No significant impacts to shading impacts are anticipated at this location under Alternative 1. See Exhibit 3.8-28 and Exhibit 3.8-29.

Alternative 2

Because of its distance from the Study Area, as well as its position to the south of the Study Area, the Botanical Garden will have minimal shading in the morning hours of spring or fall due to development in the Study Area. Redevelopment adjacent to the northwestern corner of the park under Alternative 2 will not affect shading on the Eastside Rail Corridor during morning hours in the spring at this location, but there could be slight shading in the morning hours in fall. No significant impacts to shading impacts are anticipated at this location under the Alternative 2. See Exhibit 3.8-30 and Exhibit 3.8-31.



Exhibit 3.8-26 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Park (Spring AM)—No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

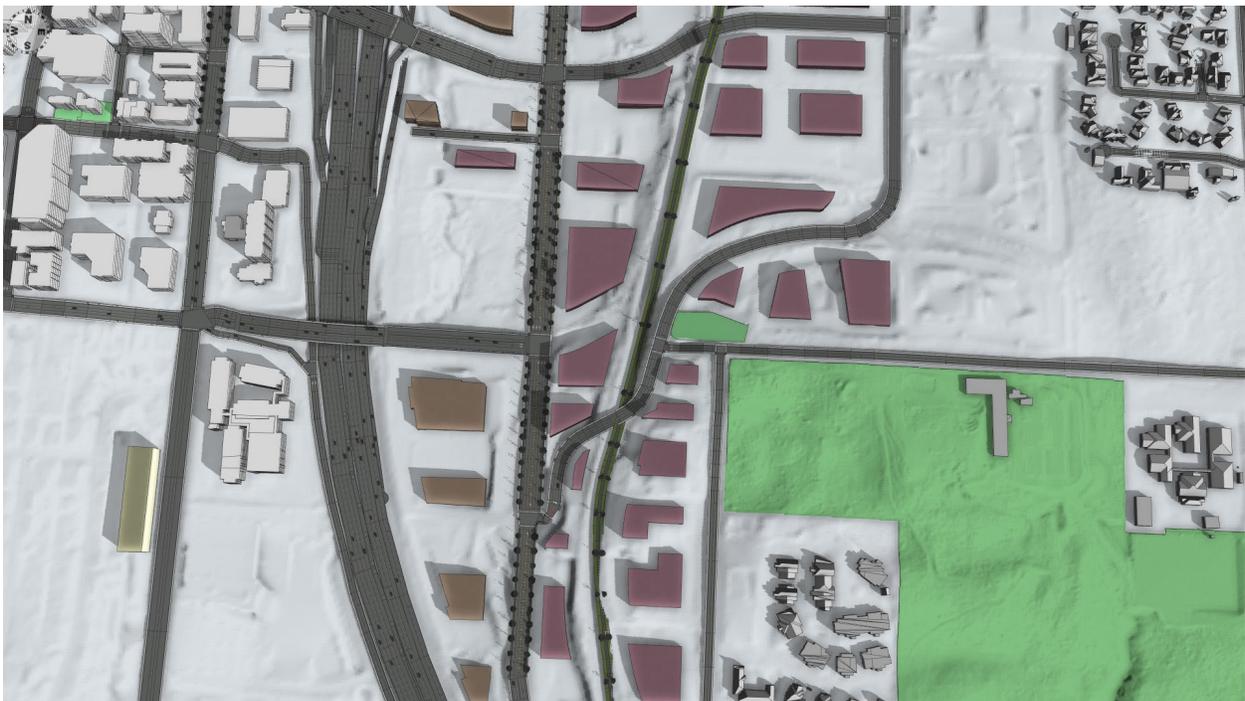


Exhibit 3.8-27 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Park (Fall AM)—No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-28 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Park (Spring AM)—Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

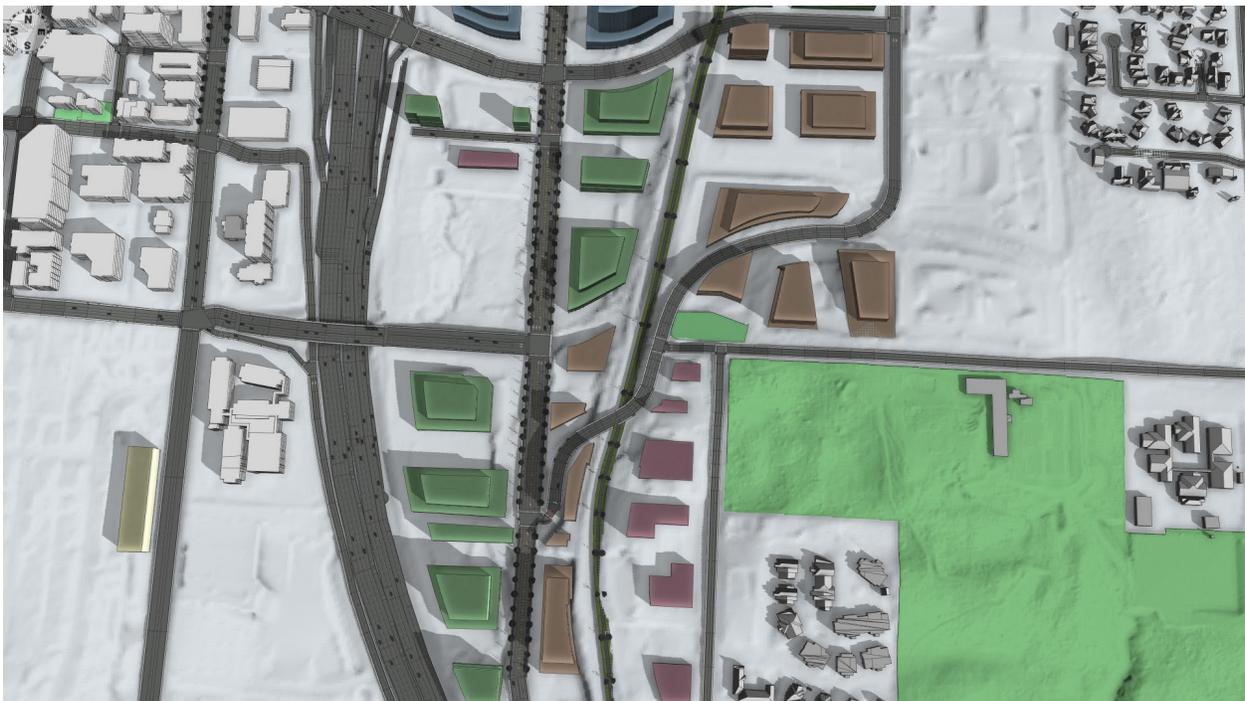


Exhibit 3.8-29 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Park (Fall AM)—Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-30 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Park (Spring AM)—Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

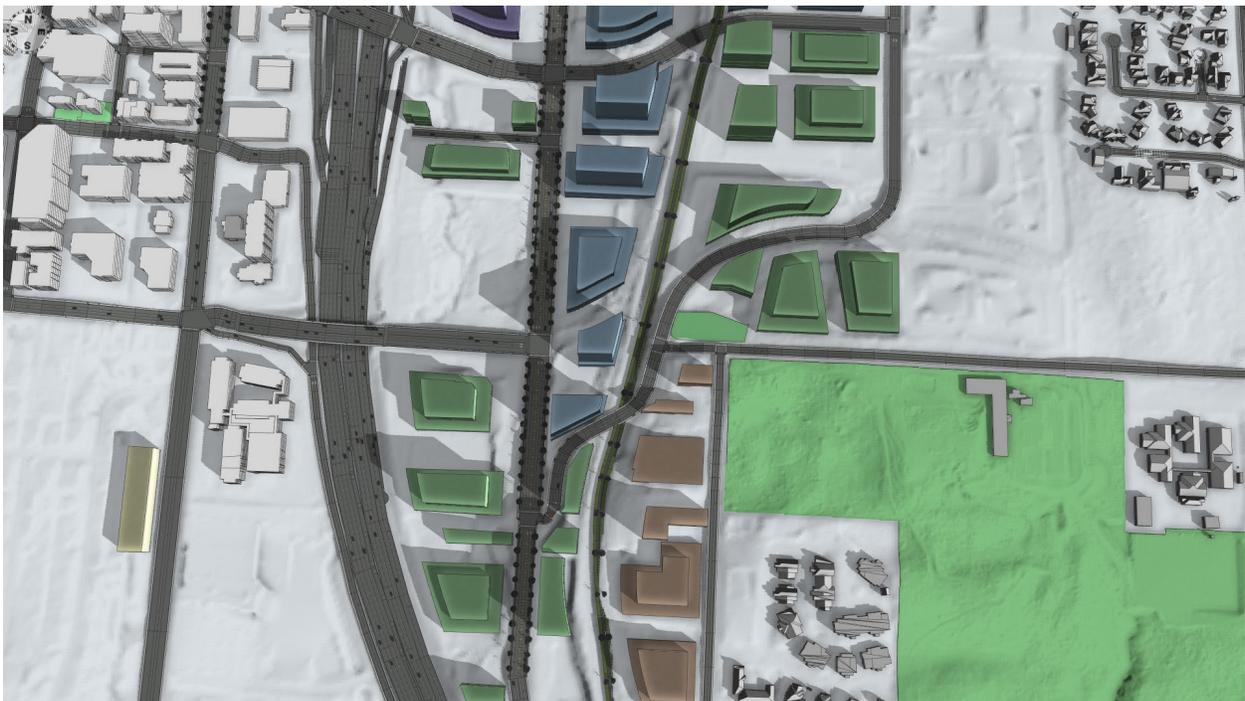


Exhibit 3.8-31 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Park (Fall AM)—Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development

No Action Alternative

Given the low-rise nature of anticipated buildings, redevelopment under the No Action Alternative is unlikely to cause a significant increase in shading effects at this location. See Exhibit 3.8-32 and Exhibit 3.8-33.

Alternative 1

Under Alternative 1 the Eastside Rail Corridor near NE 4th Street could receive slight shading during morning hours in spring and a larger amount of shading during morning hours in the fall. Redevelopment under Alternative 1 is likely to increase the shading at this location relative to the No Action Alternative. No shading is likely under development in Alternative 1 for the residential development outside the Study Area. No shading is likely under development in Alternative 1 for existing development around Lake Bellevue. There could be slight shading in a very small area at the eastern edge of the Lake during morning hours in spring and fall, but this is unlikely to shade existing development. See Exhibit 3.8-34 and Exhibit 3.8-35.

Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2 the Eastside Rail Corridor near NE 4th Street could receive shading during morning hours in spring and a larger amount of shading during morning hours in fall. Redevelopment under Alternative 2 is likely to increase the shading at this location. No shading is likely under development in Alternative 2 for the residential development outside the Study Area. No shading is likely under development in Alternative 2 for the existing development around Lake Bellevue. See Exhibit 3.8-36 and Exhibit 3.8-37.



Exhibit 3.8-32 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development (Spring AM)–No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-33 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development (Fall AM)–No Action Alternative

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

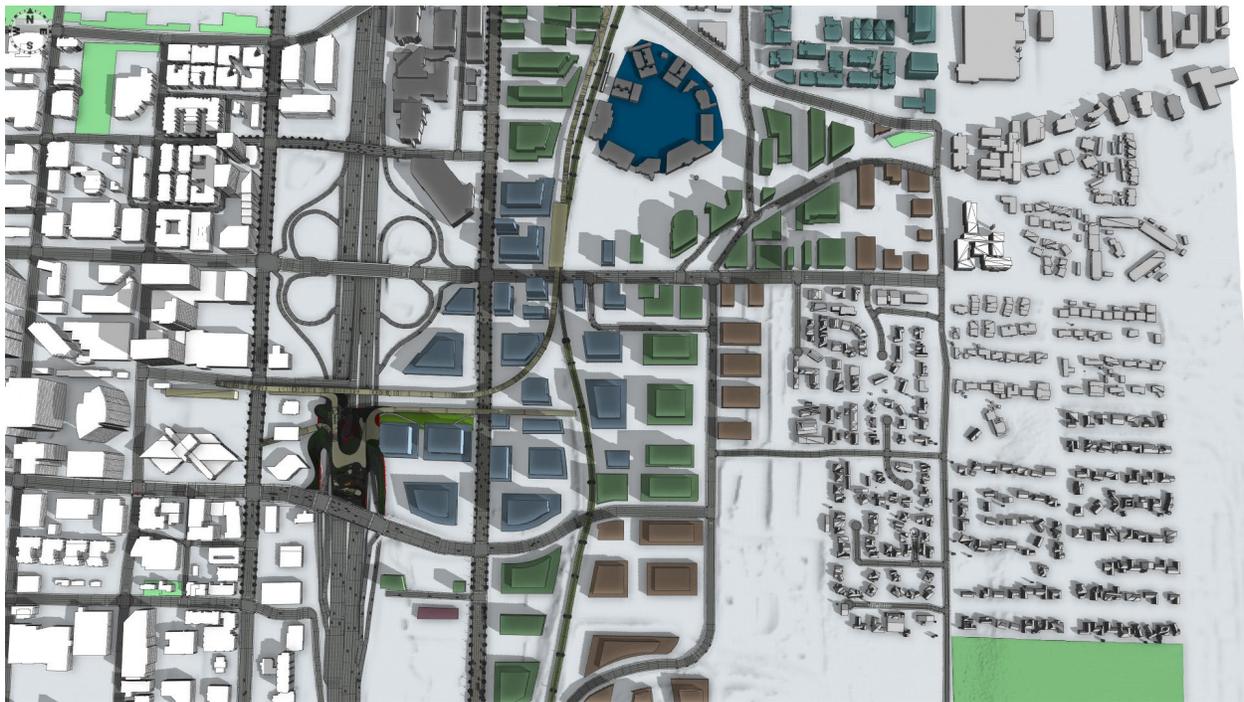


Exhibit 3.8-34 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development (Spring AM)–Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

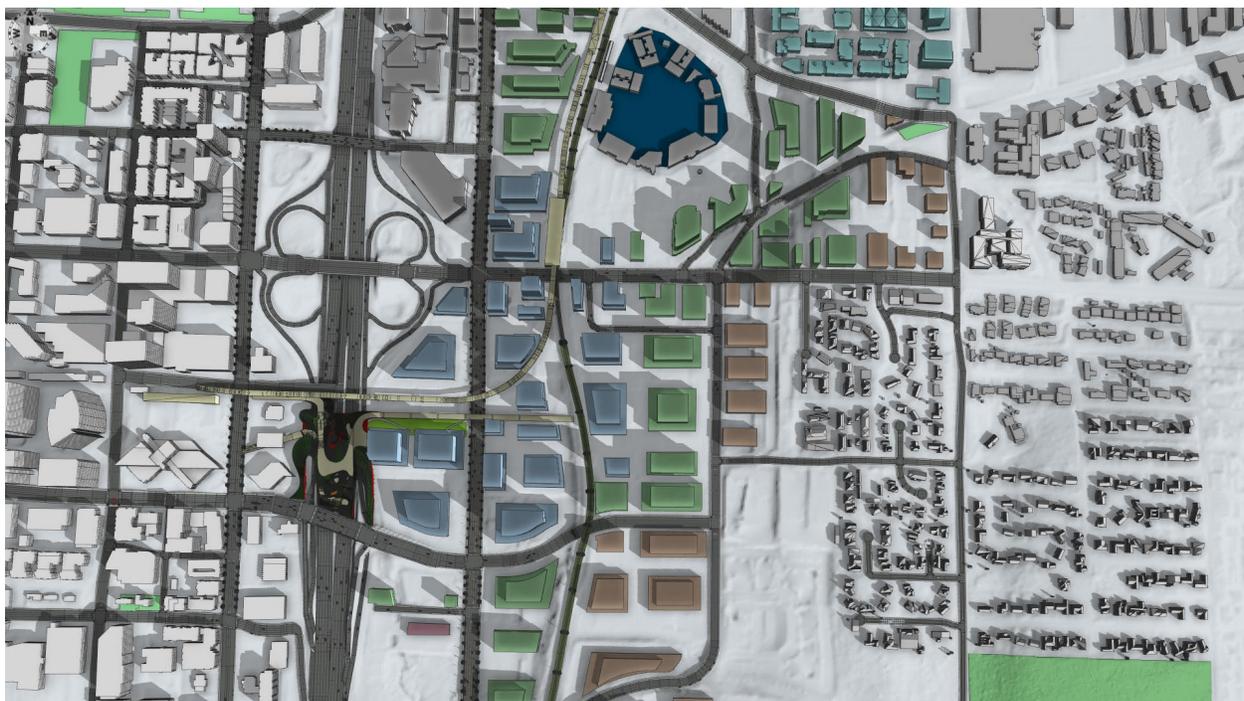


Exhibit 3.8-35 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development (Fall AM)–Alternative 1

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



Exhibit 3.8-36 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development (Spring AM)–Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017

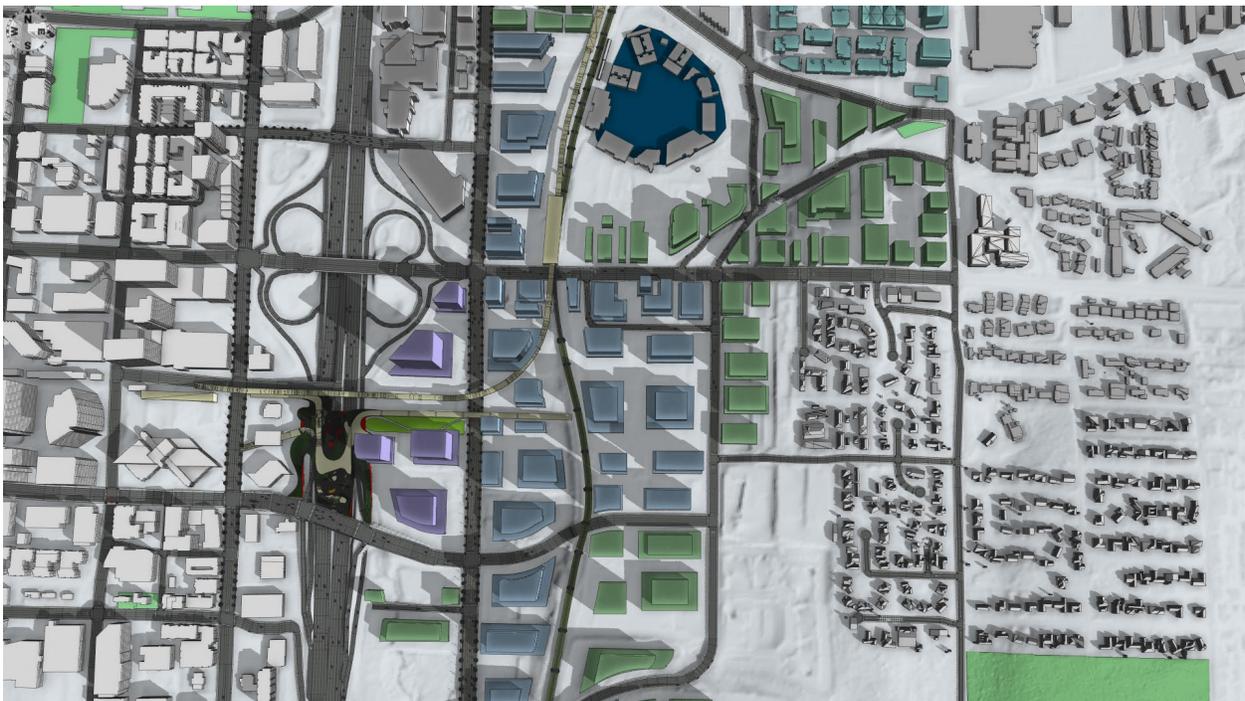


Exhibit 3.8-37 Shadow Analysis on Eastside Rail Corridor and Residential Development (Fall AM)–Alternative 2

Source: NBBJ, CH2M, 2017



LIGHT AND GLARE IMPACTS

No Action Alternative

More buildings and more intense urban development would increase the level of artificial illumination in the Study Area under all alternatives. Given the presence of many commercial uses, including auto dealerships, the Study Area is already an environment with high levels of artificial lighting. As such, the slight increase in lighting conditions under the No Action Alternative is not anticipated to result in significant impacts.

Alternative 1

More buildings and more intense urban development would increase the level of artificial illumination in the Study Area under all alternatives. Given the presence of many commercial uses, including auto dealerships, the Study Area is already an environment with high levels of artificial lighting. As such, the moderate increase in lighting conditions under Alternative 1 is not anticipated to result in significant impacts.

Alternative 2

More buildings and more intense urban development would increase the level of artificial illumination in the Study Area under all alternatives. Given the presence of many commercial uses, including auto dealerships, the Study Area is already an environment with high levels of artificial lighting. As such, the increase in lighting conditions under Alternative 2 is not anticipated to result in significant impacts.



3.8.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

INCORPORATED PLAN FEATURES

- Alternatives 1 and 2 include the Grand Connection terminus, and options would increase public space.
- All alternatives transition building heights from west to east, with relatively lesser heights along the eastern edges of the Study Area, and buffers of vegetation and topography, where the Study Area abuts lower-density residential neighborhoods.

REGULATIONS AND COMMITMENTS

Comprehensive Plan. Current policies in the Wilburton subarea plan address views and design.

Development Regulations. The Bellevue Land Use Code (Title 20 of the City's Municipal Code) establishes zoning and development regulations. These development regulations contain provisions governing the design of buildings, site planning, and provisions to minimize land use incompatibilities. Commercial and mixed-use zones generally contain provisions relating to building form and design, such as height, bulk, scale, density, setbacks, FAR, screening, landscaping, etc. Existing regulations address such issues related to the implementation of the alternatives.

- **Design Standards.** Currently there are no design standards specific to the Wilburton Commercial Area, but a number of design standards apply to parts of the Study Area, including:
 - » Transition Area Design District (part 20.25B LUC) addresses building height, setbacks, landscaping buffers, screening, and signage of commercial and office buildings adjacent to residential zones.
 - » Office Limited Business (OLB) zone (part 20.25C LUC) provides minimum building and landscaping design standards for new development.
 - » Community Retail Design District (part 20.25I LUC) provides minimum standards for building design, site design, internal walkways, and screening for retail districts outside of Downtown, including CB, NB, and NMU zoning.



- » Medical Institution District (part 20.25J LUC) identifies appropriate uses, dimensional requirements, landscaping requirements, streetscape design, site design, and building design for master plans within the Medical Institution area.
- » Light Rail Overlay District (part 20.25M LUC) provides rules and procedures for development of light rail facilities.

These standards work to promote neighborhood character and visual attractiveness, and would be in place under the No Action Alternative as well as Alternatives 1 and 2.

OTHER PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Zoning and Development Regulations. Alternatives 1 and 2 would require new or revised zoning and development regulations for the Study Area. It is anticipated that the zoning associated with these alternatives would be similar to zoning for BelRed, in Bellevue City Code section 20.25D. New regulations would address permitted uses, dimensional requirements, an FAR amenity incentive system, the conversion of non-conforming uses and properties, pedestrian comfort, parking and circulation, landscaping, and the development of streets and sidewalks. These regulations would be crafted with the intent of creating land use compatibility within and adjacent to the Study Area.

Design Standards. Alternatives 1 and 2 would include design standards specific to the Study Area, just as there are design standards specific to Downtown and to BelRed. It is anticipated that design regulations developed to implement Alternatives 1 or 2 would include standards related to building design, pedestrian experience and streetscapes, public spaces, and mixed-use building features in addition to other standards.

Aesthetic and urban design impacts could be further mitigated through implementation of the following measures such as with a custom zone for the Study Area.



Height, Bulk, And Scale

- In areas where new building heights above 55 feet are allowed, require upper-story setbacks to preserve access to light and reduce height and bulk impacts.
- For high-rise development, locate the tallest portions of the building away from the street. The height of lower building podiums along the street frontage and other frontages such as the Eastside Rail Corridor should be limited to ensure smaller scale and pedestrian character at street level.
- Incorporate standards for active and transparent facades for the street-level section of buildings.
- Incorporate standards for roof articulation and design that minimize visual bulk.
- Incorporate through-block connections to break up the bulk of buildings and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Encourage site permeability around public assets such as the Grand Connection, Eastside Rail Corridor, and public spaces.
- Encourage design that breaks up building forms to avoid monolithic buildings that completely block light and views. Slimmer building forms can provide height and development capacity while also maintaining partial views.
- Prioritize streetscape improvements and amenities to maintain an attractive atmosphere for pedestrians.
- Implement development standards that encourage modulation of façades to break up large building facades.
- Implement development standards for maximum façade length or orientation to mitigate the impacts of views and bulk
- Implement development standards for floorplate sizes to mitigate bulk impacts.
- Establish maximum floorplate sizes for towers.
- Establish tower separation standards to mitigate bulk, scale, and view concerns.
- Encourage the layering of materials and massing to create more depth and slimmer building profiles.



Views From Selected Viewpoints

- Require ground-level setbacks, upper-story setbacks, tower separation, or some combination of these to preserve partial views of Mt. Rainier from key public spaces, particularly the ERC and the Grand Connection.
- Require streetscape vegetation along major street corridors and around Lake Bellevue to help screen future development and provide a buffer and sense of enclosure that enhances pedestrian character.
- Implement building height limits and upper-story setbacks along major street corridors in the Study Area to maintain views of the sky and prevent narrowing of the visual corridor, particularly along NE 8th Street.

Shadows

- Require detailed shadow studies for new development adjacent to parks or public spaces analyzed in this EIS to identify project-specific impacts.
- Condition development near parks and open spaces with a combination of the following measures to reduce shading effects:
 - » Height limits within a specified distance of the significant public space, or shade and shadow analysis that demonstrate the preservation of sunlight in public spaces during peak periods of use
 - » Separation of high-rise building massing
 - » Maximum floorplate size
 - » Modification of high-rise tower location and orientation upper-level setbacks.
 - » Floorplate reductions



3.8.5 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Under Alternatives 1 and 2, increased development in the Study Area would have the effect of creating a more urban character and more intensive development pattern. Public space on the Eastside Rail Corridor will experience increased shading from taller buildings compared to the No Action Alternative. More intense development would change the neighborhood character in the Study Area, particularly under Alternative 2.

With the incorporation of proposed mitigation, all alternatives would be consistent with the City's policies in the Comprehensive Plan and Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan regarding protection of public views. However, under all scenarios, private territorial views may be increasingly obstructed.



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