



# Bellevue Planning Commission

**Wednesday, July 22, 2015**

6:30 to 9:30 p.m. ■ 1E-113

City Hall ■ 450 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Bellevue

## Agenda

### Regular Meeting

- |           |  |        |
|-----------|--|--------|
| 6:30 p.m. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Call to Order</b><br/><i>Michelle Hilhorst, Chairperson</i></li><li><b>2. Roll Call</b><br/><i>Michelle Hilhorst, Chairperson</i></li><li><b>3. Public Comment*</b><br/><i>Limited to 5 minutes per person or 3 minutes if a public hearing has been held on your topic</i></li><li><b>4. Approval of Agenda</b></li><li><b>5. Communications from City Council, Community Council, Boards and Commissions</b></li><li><b>6. Staff Reports</b><br/><i>Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Planning Manager</i></li><li><b>7. Draft Minutes Review</b><br/>June 24, 2015<br/>July 8, 2015</li><li><b>8. Study Session</b></li></ol> |        |
| 7:00 p.m. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A. Downtown Transportation Plan</b><br/>Provide information about Code referrals from the Downtown Transportation Plan<br/><i>Kevin McDonald, Senior Planner, Transportation</i></li></ol>  | Pg. 1  |
| 7:20 p.m. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>B. Downtown Livability</b><br/>Review the CAC recommendations and evaluate potential "early wins"<br/><i>Patti Wilma, Community Development Manager; Emil King, Strategic Planning Manager</i></li></ol>  | Pg. 11 |
| 8:20 p.m. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>C. Eastgate Land Use Code</b><br/>Review of LI and EG-TOD potential land uses<br/><i>Erika Rhett, Senior Planner</i></li></ol>  | Pg. 19 |
|           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>9. Public Comment*</b> - <i>Limited to 3 minutes per person</i></li></ol>   |        |

- 9:00 p.m. | **10. Next Planning Commission Meeting**  
Sept. 9 –
  - Eastgate Land Use Code
  - NPDES Stormwater Code Review**11. Adjourn**

*Agenda times are approximate*

### **Planning Commission members**

Michelle Hilhorst, Chair  
John deVadoss, Vice Chair  
Jeremy Barksdale  
John Carlson

Aaron Laing  
Anne Morisseau  
Stephanie Walter

John Stokes, Council Liaison

### **Staff contact:**

Paul Inghram 452-4070  
Michelle Luce 452-6931

*\* Unless there is a Public Hearing scheduled, "Public Comment" is the only opportunity for public participation.*

*Wheelchair accessible. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation available upon request. Please call at least 48 hours in advance. 425-452-5262 (TDD) or 425-452-4162 (Voice). Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711 (TR).*



**DATE:** July 14, 2015

**TO:** Chair Hilhorst and Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** Kevin McDonald, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner, 452-4558  
[kmcdonald@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:kmcdonald@bellevuewa.gov)

**SUBJECT:** Downtown Transportation Plan: Transportation Commission Recommendation and Land Use Code Referrals, Implementation

**DIRECTION NEEDED**

- Action (future)
- Discussion
- Information

Staff will provide the Planning Commission an overview of the Transportation Commission recommendation for the Downtown Transportation Plan, particularly the Land Use Code referrals to the Downtown Livability Initiative Steering Committee, and a review of current and planned implementation.

Land Use Code referrals from the Transportation Commission will be further developed for the Planning Commission's consideration as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative project. At this stage these are presented for information and discussion, future action will be coordinated with Downtown Livability.

**BACKGROUND**

Between 2010 and 2013, the Transportation Commission developed a long-range transportation plan for Downtown Bellevue, called the Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP). Council accepted the Commission's recommendation in October of 2013 and directed the Commission and staff to begin implementation work. In response, the Transportation Commission prepared a number of policy recommendations for the Downtown Subarea Plan and staff initiated small-scale infrastructure projects that are being planned, designed and built. Downtown Subarea Plan policies will be brought to the Planning Commission at a later stage when they can be incorporated with any changes from the Downtown Livability Initiative.

Staff provided a comprehensive briefing on the DTP to the Planning Commission on December 10, 2014, including the public process and Transportation Commission recommendations. In this memo is a summary of the Commission's recommendations, plus a list of the implementation projects that are complete or in the pipeline.

Among the recommendations the Transportation Commission prepared were components of mobility that are based on Land Use Code requirements, and are therefore referred to the Planning Commission (through the Downtown Livability Initiative Steering Committee). These are the topics for future Planning Commission action in preparing Code amendments for recommendation to the City Council.

### **Downtown Transportation Plan – Transportation Commission Recommendation**

To recap the presentation of the Downtown Transportation Plan provided to the Council in 2013, the Transportation Commission developed a comprehensive mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030 and beyond. Recommended transportation system improvements are designed to accommodate the forecast increase of 28,000 jobs and 12,000 residents – representing approximately 75 percent of the planned employment growth in the city, and over 50 percent of the planned residential growth between now and 2030.

The Transportation Commission prepared a suite of compatible mobility options that, together, support Downtown mobility, vitality and livability. As reflected in the plan, improvements must be made across all modes. The economic engine of Downtown Bellevue will be strengthened with a transportation strategy that pays broader attention to the needs of people walking, bicycling and riding transit while continuing to acknowledge that efficient vehicle travel remains critically important. Downtown will become even more attractive and accessible as a place to work, to shop and to call home as well-planned multi-modal transportation enhancements are implemented.

The scope of the Commission’s recommendation includes four modal components that are embedded in an overall theme of enhancing Downtown mobility options:

- **Roadways**

Direction from Council was to accommodate the vehicular travel demand based on anticipated land use and other available modes, and to analyze opportunities for on-street parking, loading and other curbside uses to support businesses and residents. The assumed 2030 transportation network includes roadway capacity projects within and outside of Downtown that support Downtown land use, economic development and mobility.

- **Transit**

The Transportation Commission recommends policies and projects that provide transit coverage to serve the planned land use pattern, the transit capacity to support forecast transit demand, transit speed and reliability enhancements to help bus passengers move throughout Downtown, and transit passenger comfort, access and information to support and improve ridership.

- **Pedestrians**

In Downtown Bellevue, the pedestrian environment affects mobility, economic development and quality of life. Breaking down a person’s walk trip into its essential components enabled

the Transportation Commission to recommend specific enhancements: intersections designed to comfortably accommodate increasing numbers of people walking in Downtown; mid-block crossings to make it safer and comfortable for people to cross wide arterials between signalized intersections; sidewalks and curbside landscaping that serve as the fundamental pedestrian infrastructure, and through-block connections that provide walkable and inviting corridors through Downtown superblocks.

- **Bicycles**

Mobility and access for people on bicycles is dependent on a comprehensive network of on-street bicycle facilities and wayfinding plus short-term on-street bicycle parking and long-term, secured commuter parking in garages. To accommodate people riding bicycles for both commuting and recreation, recommended policies and projects support connectivity within Downtown as well as to neighborhoods and regional facilities such as the I-90 Trail and the future Eastside Rail Corridor Trail.

### **Downtown Transportation Plan – Referrals**

Within the components of the Downtown pedestrian environment are three areas that are specifically addressed in the Land Use Code – touched on by the Transportation Commission as they addressed Downtown mobility issues - and referred to the Planning Commission via the Downtown Livability Initiative Steering Committee. The major referrals are: sidewalk width and landscaping, the design of through-block connections, and the design and function of the Pedestrian Corridor. Minor referrals are related to on-site bicycle facilities, curbside parcel/freight loading/unloading, and curbside passenger pick-up/drop-off. These are transportation-related items that would be implemented through Land Use Code changes as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative.

#### Sidewalk width and Landscaping

- **Sidewalk Width**

Sidewalks in Downtown Bellevue provide fundamental infrastructure for pedestrian mobility and incorporate urban design features that enhance livability. The Downtown Land Use Code (20.25A.060 Walkways and sidewalks) prescribes the width of sidewalks and the landscaping treatment adjacent to the street – thus this topic was in the purview of the Downtown Livability Initiative Steering Committee, and now the Planning Commission. The Transportation Commission recommends increasing the required sidewalk width along certain heavily travelled sidewalk segments such as along 106th Avenue NE, where 20-foot wide sidewalks are recommended (including a 4-foot curbside landscape area) to accommodate pedestrians, window shoppers, and café seating on this designated “Entertainment” avenue. Please see Attachment 1 for recommended sidewalk width changes throughout Downtown. Attachment 2 is a recommended comprehensive Downtown sidewalk and landscape plan.

- **Landscaping**

Along streets where a buffer from traffic would make it more comfortable for people to walk with traffic nearby, the Transportation Commission recommends installing a continuous

landscape planter with street trees along the curbside edge of the sidewalk; instead of planting street trees in tree grates as currently required in the Land Use Code. This landscape treatment is popular with pedestrians where it has been implemented along portions of Bellevue Way, NE 4th Street, 112th Avenue NE and other Downtown streets, and it is a good growing environment for street trees. A landscaped planter with street trees is also recommended for 100th Avenue NE and 101st Avenue NE to provide a nice environment for people to walk between the Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Park. Refer to Attachment 1 for recommended changes to the landscape buffer and Attachment 2 for a comprehensive Downtown sidewalk and landscape plan.

### Through-Block Connections

Through-block connections help to break up the Downtown superblocks into more manageable sizes for pedestrians by providing walkways between or sometimes through buildings. The Land Use Code requires that through-block connections be incorporated in new development; design guidelines are provided and basic wayfinding is required. In practice, the design of the existing through-block connections is so variable that people are uncertain as to whether they are welcome, and required public access wayfinding does not let a person know where the through-block connection will lead. To enhance pedestrian navigation, the Transportation Commission recommends some design refinements including: standard public access wayfinding; commonly recognizable paving material or inlays; and universal accessibility according to ADA standards.

### Pedestrian Corridor

The NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian Corridor is a high priority route for people both walking and bicycling, yet the existing design is not entirely accessible to non-motorized travelers in either mode. Sections of the corridor are difficult to navigate for people riding bicycles or using other wheeled users due to narrow passages, steep sections, tight turns, stairs, slippery pavers, and poor sightlines. The Pedestrian Corridor will be an increasingly important connection as new development occurs along the corridor and light rail becomes an anchor destination on the east end.

The Transportation Commission refers a concept design for consideration in the Downtown Livability Initiative that is intended to better accommodate wheeled users. Recommended design components consist of installing special (non-skid) paving treatments, creating gentle grades, incorporating wayfinding and providing general widening to more comfortably accommodate all users. Special consideration is needed in “mixing zones” where people may be moving in different directions or in different modes.

### On-Site Bicycle Parking

Secure parking for those who ride their bicycles to work, or for Downtown residents is an important factor to support commuters and recreational riders. Such “end-of-ride” facilities include sidewalk bike racks, bike corrals, and secure bike parking in buildings and at transit stations. Participants in Downtown bicycle tours expressed support for end-of-ride facilities. The city provides on-street bicycle racks for short-term use. Lincoln Square, the Skyline Tower, Bellevue City Hall and other Downtown buildings have voluntarily installed secure bicycle

parking to meet the demand of employees. The Transportation Commission recommends that the Land Use Code be amended to provide for secure, long-term, on-site bicycle parking as a component of new development, plus lockers and showers to support bicycle commuting.

### Miscellaneous Curbside Uses

A vibrant mixed-use urban center is host to activities within the street right-of-way that cannot always be predicted or planned for. Many of these miscellaneous curbside uses come and go in a flash, while others may require more time and space. It is the latter type that the Transportation Commission addresses with policy and Code recommendations as follows:

- **Curbside Parcel/Freight Loading/Unloading**

Within Downtown, large-scale loading activity typically occurs within on-site locations that are designed and designated for new projects through development review and permit approval. Smaller deliveries may occur on-site or in designated on-street loading zones, and also may occur randomly at the curb or in the center turn lane. The Transportation Commission recommends better integrating on-site loading space and/or creating designated curb loading space through development review. Ensure also that the on-site design and location of loading docks and circulation provide for expeditious loading to encourage this activity to occur on-site rather than on the street.

- **Curbside Passenger Pick-Up/Drop-Off**

Part of the unscripted urbanism of a Downtown Bellevue is the movement of people between vehicles and the sidewalk. While there is no specific “best practice” guidance for managing this activity, active loading or unloading is typically accommodated in designated curbside areas. The Transportation Commission recommends integrating new time-limited curbside space for passenger pick-up and drop-off through development review.

### **Downtown Transportation Plan - Implementation**

Council provided funding through the CIP adopted in December 2014 to implement the Downtown Transportation Plan. The genesis of the list of implementation projects in the table in Attachment 3 – plus other projects not yet programmed - was largely through public engagement during the planning process; including several walking and bicycling tours of Downtown and to the regional trail system. Council authorized funding in part to provide for “exceptional” access to the Downtown light rail station, formally known now as the Bellevue Downtown Station. Other projects will improve access to the East Main Station, and conversations have taken place with the East Main Station Area Planning CAC.

### **NEXT STEPS**

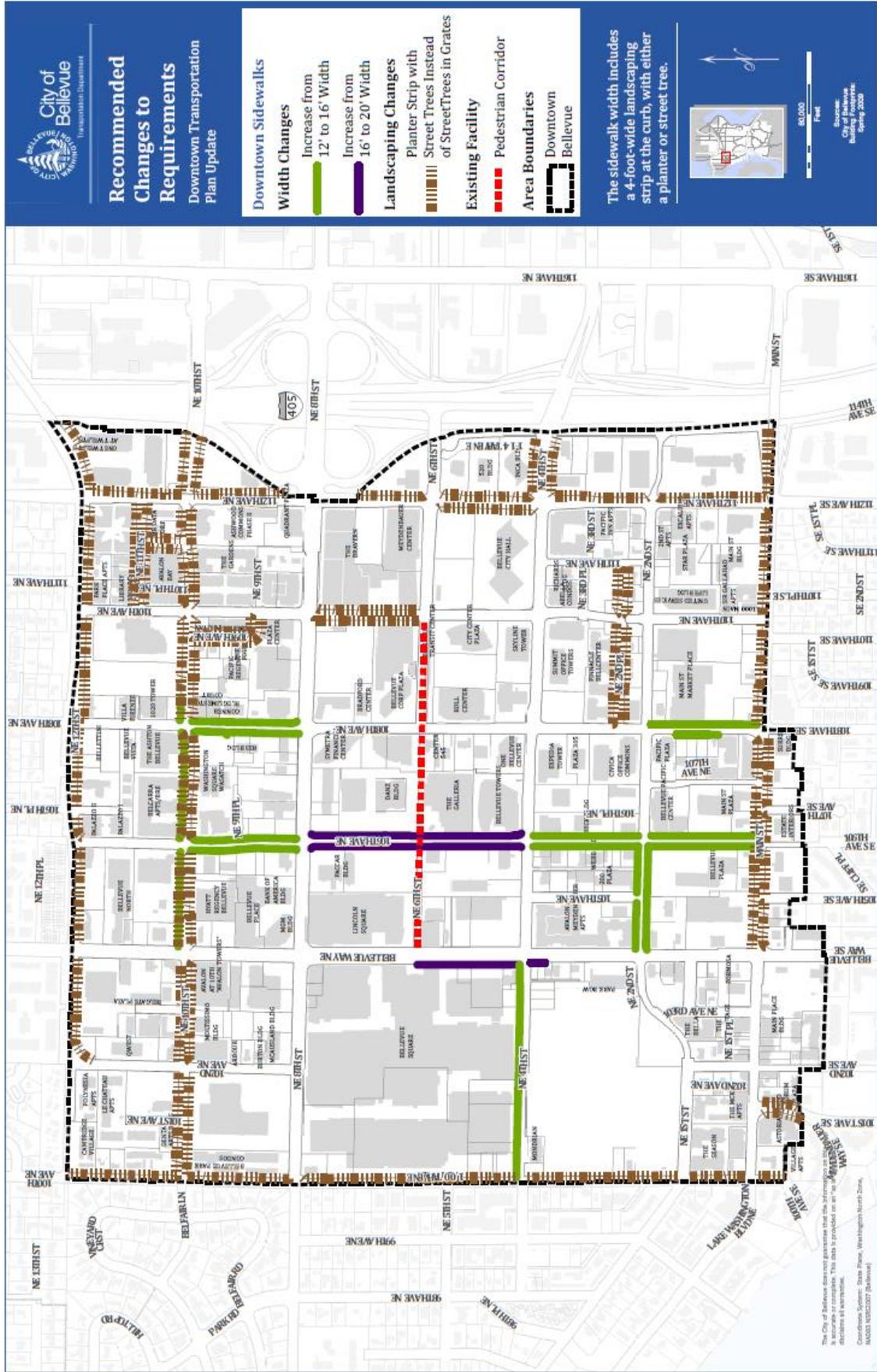
It is anticipated that the Planning Commission will incorporate referrals from the Transportation Commission in a consolidated recommendation to amend the Land Use Code that will include amendments originating from the Downtown Livability Initiative. In addition, the Planning Commission will integrate Transportation Commission recommendations for Downtown Subarea

Plan transportation policy amendments, integrated the with other policy amendments generated through the Downtown Livability Initiative.

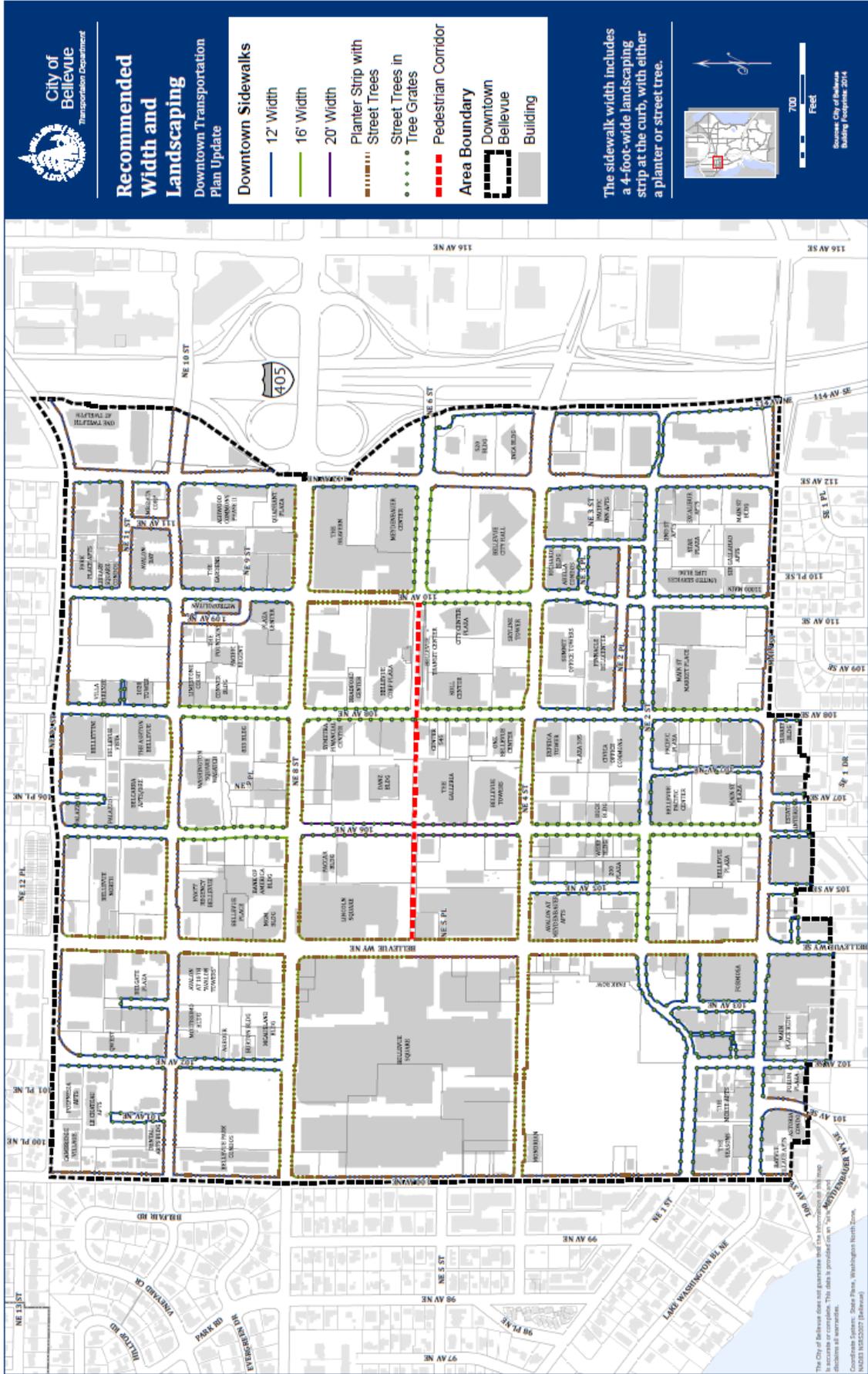
## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Recommended changes to sidewalk width and landscaping
2. Comprehensive sidewalk and landscape map with recommended changes
3. Implementation projects

# ATTACHMENT 1



# ATTACHMENT 2



### ATTACHMENT 3

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
108 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at Main Street southbound bike lane and extended landscaped median	Complete	Q2 2015
Bicycle wayfinding on 108 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE between Downtown and the I-90 Trail	Complete	Q2 2015
112 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE northbound bike lane at NE 8 <sup>th</sup> Street	Design complete. Concrete work at corners complete.	Road paving and lane striping planned for August 2015
Bellevue Transit Center improvements to enhance transit rider comfort, access, and information	In Design  Grant awarded from King County Metro to enhance transit access	Must be complete prior to the end of September, 2016
106 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at NE 6 <sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian Corridor intersection improvements	Design pending	2016
102 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE at NE 1 <sup>st</sup> Street intersection improvements for access to the Downtown Park	Design complete	Installation coordinated with improvements to the Downtown Park.
100 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at NE 1 <sup>st</sup> street intersection improvements for access to the Downtown Park	Design complete	Installation coordinated with improvements to the Downtown Park.
Corridor studies for 106 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 108 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Main Street to integrate components of the Transit Master Plan, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, intersection and mid-block crossing improvements identified in the Downtown Transportation Plan, and exceptional pedestrian access to the light rail stations.	RFP pending for consultant services  The Transportation Commission will be involved in the corridor studies, as will Downtown stakeholders and the general public.	2015-2016
110 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at NE 7 <sup>th</sup> Street mid-block crossing	Design pending  Pedestrian crossing analysis complete	TBD
110 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at NE 5 <sup>th</sup> Street mid-block crossing	In Design  Coordinating with Sound Transit East Link construction	TBD





July 15, 2015

**SUBJECT**

Downtown Livability Initiative – Land Use Code Update

**STAFF CONTACT**

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*Planning and Community Development*

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM PLANNING COMMISSION**

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

**At the July 22<sup>nd</sup> Study Session the Commission is requested to:**

- 1. Continue discussion of the CAC recommendations covering:**
  - Building Height and Form

Staff will complete description of building height and FAR recommendations and, inter-relationships between recommendations, areas identified for additional analysis, and those to be considered in other City efforts.

- 2. Discussion of a 2-phased LUCA process:**
  - straightforward “early win” amendments
  - complex amendments requiring additional analysis and outreach

The Planning Commission and Councilmember Stokes have expressed interest in making progress with the Downtown Livability Land Use Code Update by moving ahead with some code amendments that can be relatively easily processed and be considered “early wins”. Though some recommendations by the CAC were unanimous they require continued analysis and significant outreach. Others are more straightforward and potentially could be processed by the end of the year. Factors to consider are:

- Level of complexity
- Level of impact
- Level of interest from stakeholders and CAC

- Likelihood that early amendments will be useful between the time of early adoption vs. waiting and processing all amendments as one package

Attachment A is a table describing a range of CAC recommended and staff recommended code amendments for discussion.

We anticipate the Planning Commission's work to extend into the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016. The Commission will ultimately form a recommended Code and design guideline package to transmit to Council for final action.

## **BACKGROUND**

Council launched the Downtown Livability Initiative in 2013 to update the Downtown Land Use Code. A Council-appointed CAC was tasked with developing recommendations that built upon the City's successes and furthered the vision of the Downtown Subarea Plan. The Downtown Land Use Code has not been significantly updated since its inception in 1981 and does not reflect changes to the Downtown Subarea Plan that occurred in 2004.

### Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Recommendations

The Final Report of the Downtown Livability CAC details the process, community engagement, and full set of recommendations developed by the group. Public outreach for the Downtown Livability Initiative involved a concerted effort to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholder communities. The CAC's recommendations are those of the group as a whole and, for each topic, include a reference to their relationship to livability.

The CAC set a broad framework for moving forward, and recognized that much additional work was needed to develop the fine-grain details needed for technical Code amendments. The recommendations represent the culmination of the CAC's work, but are a mid-point in the overall process.

Hard copies of the CAC's Final Report and Land Use Code Audits have been provided to the Commission. All project materials may be found on the Downtown Livability web page at: [www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm)

Based on Council direction on May 26, 2015, the Planning Commission commenced their review of the Downtown Livability Citizen Advisory Committee's (CAC) recommendations for Downtown Land Use Code updates. At the June 24<sup>th</sup> and July 8<sup>th</sup> Study Sessions the Commission learned about the CAC recommendations covering the following topics:

- Public Open Spaces
- Pedestrian Corridor
- Design Guidelines
- Amenity Incentive System
- Station Area Planning
- Building Height and Form

- Downtown Parking
- Other Topics (mechanical screening, food trucks, etc.)

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Commission is off for the month of August. Work will pick up again in September including a walking tour (open to the public) scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup>. This will build upon the April 22, 2015, Downtown walking tour a number of the current Planning Commissioners participated in.

A joint workshop with the City Council focusing on the Amenity Incentive System is being scheduled potentially for November 16<sup>th</sup>.



ATTACHMENT A

**Assessment of Downtown Livability Potential “Early Wins”**

Topics	CAC Report Ref.	Early Use (prior to major LUCA) 1 likely - 5 not	Difficulty 1 easy - 5 hard	Notes from staff regarding critical path issues and relationship to other portions of the code
Extend the Pedestrian Corridor east to 112th Ave NE/I-405	<i>STG. 1,2 Pg. 21-22</i>	5	3	<i>Updating the Pedestrian Corridor Design Guidelines is feasible in the near-term and could reference pedestrian connections and open space through the City Hall block will be part of “Grand Connection” work. . The light rail station would not be subject to the change but future development on the Metro Site would be affected.</i>
Require increased weather protection investments both public and private along the Pedestrian Corridor	<i>STG. 1,2 Pg. 21-22</i>	5	5	<i>The requirement for increased weather protection will potentially necessitate an adjustment to base FAR, the incentive system, or other portions of the code. New projects along the corridor would fall under new code.</i>
Amenity Incentives System - Revise code to require all buildings to provide weather protection along all sidewalk frontages	<i>STG. 2 Pg. 39</i>	3	5	<i>A broader discussion is intended for design elements that might be moved to “requirements”; weather protection was one that the CAC recommended. An assessment is yet to be done to see if any new requirements, including weather protection, necessitate an adjustment to as-of-right base densities/heights, the incentive system, or other portions of the Code.</i>
Rezone DT-OLB district along 112th/I-405 by extending existing MU zoning on west side of district	<i>Pg. 52-53</i>	5	5	<i>The CAC recommendations outline height and FAR changes for the DT-OLB District for further study. There are important facets to this work involving view corridors, massing against the freeway, floorplate sizes, traffic analysis, etc. There are also accompanying design guidelines for the east side of 112th Avenue and incentive system provisions that relate to the height/FAR changes that need updating.</i>
Equalize the FAR for residential and	<i>Pg. 58-59</i>	2	4	<i>This is a significant change for Downtown Bellevue. Transportation modeling is yet to be reviewed with the Planning Commission and public. There are also issues to be</i>

ATTACHMENT A

Topics	CAC Report Ref.	Early Use (prior to major LUCA) 1 likely - 5 not	Difficulty 1 easy - 5 hard	Notes from staff regarding critical path issues and relationship to other portions of the code
commercial in the MU district				<i>resolved relating to allowable floorplates for nonresidential in the MU District for taller, more dense buildings as recommended by the CAC.</i>
Parking - Initiate a comprehensive Downtown parking study to inform potential changes to parking regulations	<i>Pg. 62</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Staff will be discussing this new work item as part of a larger discussion with Council on planning initiatives in the July timeframe.</i>
Parking - Address Old Bellevue parking code issues	<i>Pg. 62</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>In process</i>	<i>This item relating to the code fix for retail/restaurant spaces less than 1,500 square feet in Old Bellevue will be brought back to Council for their review and action in the near-term. Code Amendment by CC in process.</i>
Range of Permitted Uses – staff recommendations ready for review.	<i>Not analyzed by CAC. Discussed in focus and stakeholder groups.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Respond to changes in Downtown population needs, market and trends. Provides flexibility and eliminates process.</i>
Vacant sites and buildings - maintenance and treatment.	<i>Not analyzed by CAC. Discussed in focus and stakeholder groups.</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>CAC didn't see this as a big issue but staff, Downtown residents and business owners have complained and requested some remedy.</i>
Design Guidelines: Mechanical equipment and solid waste location and screening.	<i>STG. 2 Pg. 30</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Relates to ensuring that all building frontages are pedestrian-friendly</i>
Sidewalk café location / intrusion into required walkway.	<i>Discussion Pg. 29 Not analyzed by CAC. Discussed in focus groups.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Compliance with ADA and Trans. Dept. standards. CAC did not analyze this specifically but did discuss adequate sidewalk widths in the context of open space and streetscape.</i>
Design Guidelines: Signage for publically accessible spaces –	<i>Discussion Pg. 13</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>CAC discussion covered need for designing and signing in a way that makes space feel like part of the public realm.</i>

ATTACHMENT A

Topics	CAC Report Ref.	Early Use (prior to major LUCA) 1 likely - 5 not	Difficulty 1 easy - 5 hard	Notes from staff regarding critical path issues and relationship to other portions of the code
require for all new and existing spaces				
Landscaping: Add Reference adherence to Parks Dept. BMP's and update tree plate/ plant list. Identify streets to have curbside planting	<i>Not discussed by CAC</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Updates plant/tree types calling for materials best for urban settings. Meets intent to implement Great Streets. Will speak to soil volumes, planting and protection methods, maintenance methods, etc.</i>





July 22, 2015

**SUBJECT**

Eastgate/ I-90 Land Use Implementation – Light Industrial and Transit Oriented Development  
Land Use Analysis

**STAFF CONTACT**

Erika Rhett, AICP, Senior Planner, [erhett@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:erhett@bellevuewa.gov) 452-2898  
*Planning and Community Development*

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM PLANNING COMMISSION**

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

At this study session, the Planning Commission is requested to provide direction on the uses to be allowed in the Light Industrial (LI) and Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development (EG-TOD) zones. No formal action is requested at this time. This input will be used to draft the land use code that will return for Planning Commission review later this year.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2012 Council accepted the vision and recommendations of the Eastgate/I-90 Land Use and Transportation Project Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The Planning Commission recommended amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to implement the CAC's vision. Proposed amendments for Eastgate were included in the Comprehensive Plan Update scheduled for adoption on August 3rd.

At the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Planning Commission kicked off the final phase of the implementation process by reviewing the CAC vision and the proposed land use code amendment work program. Tonight's meeting will focus on review of land uses in the Light Industrial (LI) and Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development (EG-TOD) zones.

Additional background information on this project is available on the web at: [www.bellevuewa.gov/eastgate-corridor.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/eastgate-corridor.htm). On this site there are links to review materials, presentations, and project reports from the previous phases of the project including the CAC review and the Comprehensive Plan review by the Planning Commission. As materials are prepared for the Land Use Code review, they will be posted to this site as well.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Light Industrial Zone*

Provide direction as to whether non-industrial land uses should be limited within the Light Industrial zone.

### *Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development Zone*

Provide direction on the appropriateness of uses within the new Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development zone.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This is the first of several sessions that will review proposed alternatives for land use code amendments to implement the Eastgate CAC recommendations in the Light Industrial and Transit-Oriented Development zones. Future sessions will review:

- land uses in the new office and neighborhood mixed-use zones to direct changes to the zoning code
- corridor design and form to identify potential development standards and design regulations
- redevelopment economics to explore maximum Floor Area Ratio and alternatives for a public benefit system

In addition, a walking tour of the future Transit Oriented Development area is tentatively planned for September.

Planning Commission direction will be used to develop proposed land use code amendments that will return for commission review in the later in the year and be subject to a public hearing. Staff will also conduct public outreach during this process.

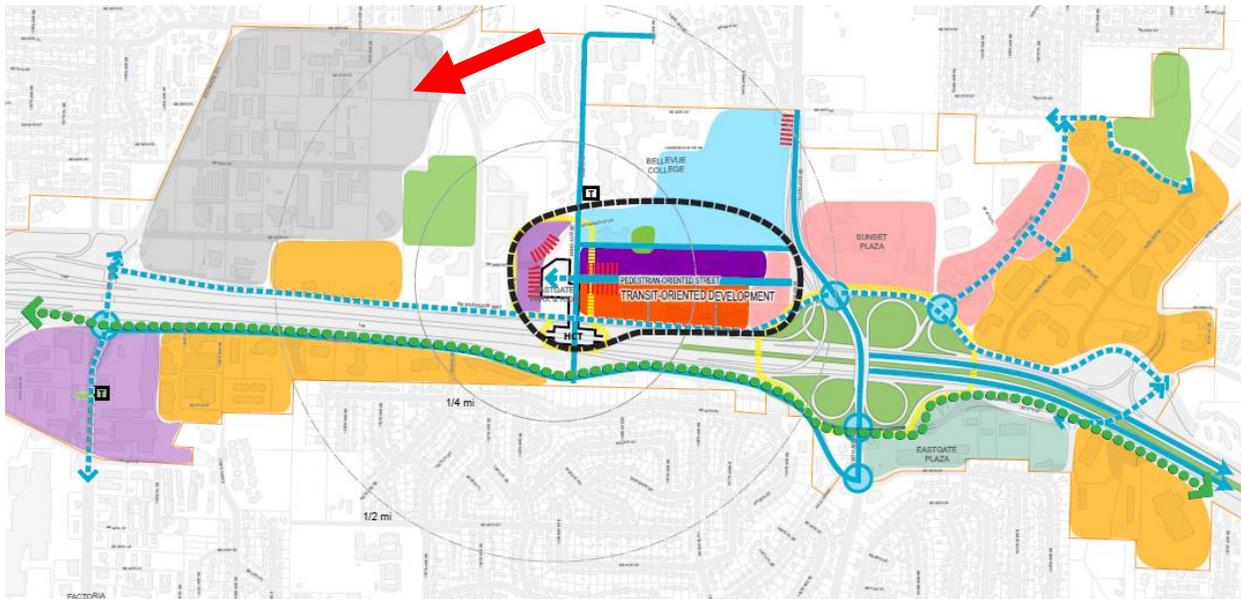
## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Light Industrial Use Analysis
- B. Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development Analysis

A copy of the *Eastgate Citizen Advisory Committee Final Report*, April 5, 2012, will be handed out to commissioners at the meeting.

## EASTGATE/I-90 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE ANALYSIS

There is Light Industrial land in the Richards Valley, which is in the northwest corner of the Eastgate study area, shown in grey on the map below. Light Industrial land use is defined as: *A land use designation that provides for the location of a broad array of activities, including manufacturing, wholesale trade, research and development, and distribution activities. Sales of goods and services subordinate to permitted activities and low traffic-generating uses that sell bulky or large scale items are appropriate. Auto sales and rentals are appropriate only in certain locations.*<sup>1</sup> Although Richards Valley has the largest concentration of Light Industrial zoning in the city, there are other properties zoned Light Industrial in Bellevue, primarily in areas adjacent to I-405.



### *Citizen Advisory Committee Vision and Recommendations*

The Eastgate Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) clearly supported the retention of most of the Richards Valley industrial area.<sup>2</sup> In the vision, the Richards Valley is recognized as an important

<sup>1</sup> This definition comes from the Comprehensive Plan, set for adoption on August 3, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The CAC recommendation supported a change in land use from industrial to office for the properties along Eastgate way, which included properties occupied by Allied Moving and Storage, the Humane Society, and a vacant piece owned by King County. In the original vision this would encourage the continuation of office uses along Eastgate Way. However, during Planning Commission review of land use, it was decided to leave the Allied Moving and Storage and Humane Society parcels in industrial land use. The Allied parcel supports a warehouse building accessed from an internal drive off SE 32<sup>nd</sup> Street in Richards Valley, not from Eastgate Way, making it appropriate for industrial use. The Humane Society is a non-profit providing public service with its animal shelter. It has plans to expand operations, including the construction of new buildings and facilities. The nature of the use is more suited to an industrial area than an office environment, and in discussion Humane Society leadership, they preferred to keep the existing land use designation to ensure predictability of permitting for their expansion. As a result, the King County site was the only parcel in industrial land use that was recommended for office use by the Planning Commission.

site for light industrial and warehousing uses for Bellevue. The proximity to Bellevue College and technology oriented businesses in the I-90 corridor make it an ideal site for research and development uses and for flex-tech uses which combine traditional office and industrial uses and support advanced manufacturing.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Citywide Industrial Lands Analysis*

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, Bellevue conducted a Light Industrial Lands Analysis. Since 2000 Bellevue has rezoned most of its industrial lands to mixed use or office uses, so the purpose of the analysis was to examine the need for industrial lands in Bellevue. It found that Bellevue's industrial lands have little regional value, but some value in supporting technology uses (a key sector of the city's economy) and other local businesses. In the last decade the number of new businesses in Bellevue formed around traditional industrial uses like manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, and construction businesses is small compared to new businesses in professional, scientific, and technical services. Maintaining some light industrial lands could be a good strategy to support future businesses expansion and attraction for technology companies and small-scale industrial uses that need the support of a local supply chain, skilled labor force, opportunities for artisanal manufacturing, and advanced manufacturing<sup>4</sup>. Light industrial lands are also used to support services such as auto shops, tool rentals, and other uses that may require outdoor storage or could result in minor external impacts, but these types of uses are also typically allowed in other commercial land use areas as well.

#### *Economic Development Plan*

Bellevue's *Economic Development Plan*, adopted in 2014, identifies core clusters that support Bellevue's economy: knowledge-based industries, retail, and tourism. There are few linkages between these clusters and light industrial uses, but as the nature of manufacturing changes there may be an opportunity for advanced manufacturing uses to support the professional, scientific, and technical sector of knowledge-based industries through research and development and other facilities. Specifically the plan identifies the potential for opportunity clusters that involve clean tech, biotech, and life sciences. Eastgate is important to Bellevue's *Economic Development Plan* as an affordable alternative to Downtown and for the potential for collaboration and linkage with Bellevue College. Key cluster industries identified for the Eastgate/Factoria area include:

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<sup>3</sup> Flex-tech spaces are typically needed for companies where the whole process of product development and manufacturing takes place in one space. Concept, design, and engineering and sales and marketing may require office space, whereas product development and manufacture may need more traditional industrial space. Since many of the products are tech-related, housing the entire process in one location allows for innovation, nimbleness, and iterative design.

<sup>4</sup> From the *Light Industrial Land Analysis* by BERK (March 2014): *Advanced manufacturing produces plastic and metal components and other products, including 3D printing. These types of businesses rely on high skilled employees, and the production process is linked closely with designers and engineers in producing prototypes and products for technical devices, often in small amounts, as opposed to mass production, which is usually done abroad.*

information technology (IT), tech start-up, aerospace, and retail (retail auto sales and Factoria mall).

*Richards Valley Use Analysis*

The Richards Valley is the last remaining concentration of Light Industrial (LI) zoned property in Bellevue. Nearly all of the uses that are allowed in the LI zone are also allowed in the General Commercial (GC) zone, and many are also allowed in the Community Business (CB) zone as well. The only major distinction is that the LI zone permits most manufacturing uses outright, whereas other zones only allow them as subordinate or conditional uses. Richards Valley has a wide mix of uses in this area including warehousing, storage yards, construction wholesale (including showrooms), marijuana production, small manufacturing, auto repair, indoor recreation (e.g. dance, gymnastics, martial arts), and the King County transfer station. Few of the uses require LI zoning.

Minor changes to support research and development uses and flex-tech development styles would implement the vision of the Eastgate CAC and potentially allow the opportunity for industrial lands to support the growing technology cluster in Bellevue. Market forces would determine the highest and best use for LI zoned land.

- Research and Development. Implementing the CAC recommendation to support research and development would involve a simple fix. Currently research and development is only allowed if included in a multi-function building or complex. Removing this restriction could allow freestanding research and development uses in the Light Industrial zone.
- Flex Tech. It is unlikely that changes are needed to support flex tech. Flex tech is more descriptive of building form rather than use. Although, advanced manufacturing processes are likely to need flex tech spaces as it often includes both office and industrial uses. Most industrial uses are allowed already in LI, including common advanced manufacturing sectors such as furniture and fixtures, plastic products, stone/clay/glass/ceramics, computers and electronic equipment, medical equipment, and the catch-all category of miscellaneous light fabrication. As for the office part of the use, typical office uses involved with flex tech are allowed, such as business services, administrative offices, computer related services, and research and development. However, these services are only allowed if included in a multi-function building or complex. This seems to support the concept of flex-tech without changes.
- Economic Clusters. Although service use changes are probably not needed to support flex-tech and advanced manufacturing, it may be worth considering removing the restriction for services such as business services, computer related services, and research and development to colocate in multi-function buildings and complexes. Such service uses

could support the economic clusters identified for Eastgate, including IT, tech start-ups, and aerospace. The question remains whether or not these uses are needed in the industrial area.

- Non-industrial Uses. If there was a desire to bank land for future light industrial needs, consideration should be given to limitations on non-industrial uses, especially those that are unlikely to support key economic clusters. Some types of recreational, wholesale, and retail uses tend to locate in areas where large spaces are available and rents are comparatively inexpensive. Although these uses are allowed in other zones, such as community business (CB) or general commercial (GC), once they are established in an industrial area these uses take space that could be used for future industrial use.

The Richards Valley is home to many of these types of uses already, including dance and martial arts studios, racquet clubs and shooting ranges in the recreational category, as well as wholesale/retail uses like landscaping materials, construction supplies, or home improvement showrooms and sales. Most retail uses are limited to a maximum of 50,000 square feet per business (shown below with an \*).

<b>Allowed Recreational Uses</b>		<b>Allowed Wholesale and Retail Uses</b>	
Nature Exhibitions: Aquariums, Botanical Gardens and Zoos	C	Wholesale Trade: General Merchandise, Products, Supplies, Materials and Equipment	P
Drive-In Theaters	C	Wholesale Trade: Motor Vehicles, Primary and Structural Metals, Bulk Petroleum	P
Recreation Activities: Skating, Bowling, Gymnasiums, Athletic Clubs, Health Clubs, Recreation Instruction	P	Lumber and Other Bulky Building Materials Including Preassembled Products	P*
Camping Sites and Hunting Clubs	C	Hardware, Paint, Tile and Wallpaper	S*
Private Leisure and Open Space Areas Excluding Recreation Activities Above	P	Farm Equipment	P*
<b>KEY:</b> P – Permitted Use A – Conditional Use (decided by Administrator) C – Conditional Use (decided by Hearings Examiner) S – Subordinate Use (must be with another use) *Retail limited to maximum of 50,000 sq.ft. per business		Autos	A*
		Trucks, Motorcycles, Recreational Vehicles <i>Motorcycles = A</i>	P*
		Boats	P*
		Automotive and Marine Accessories	P*
		Furniture, Home Furnishing <i>Limited to locations with on-site warehouses</i>	P*
		Farm Supplies, Hay, Grain, Feed and Fencing, etc.	P*
		Garden Supplies, Small Trees, Shrubs, Flowers, Ground Cover, Horticultural Nurseries and Light Supplies and Tools	P*
		Pet Grooming	P*
		Computers and Electronics	P*

If the commission wished to limit non-industrial businesses in the LI zone, it could do so in a variety of ways:

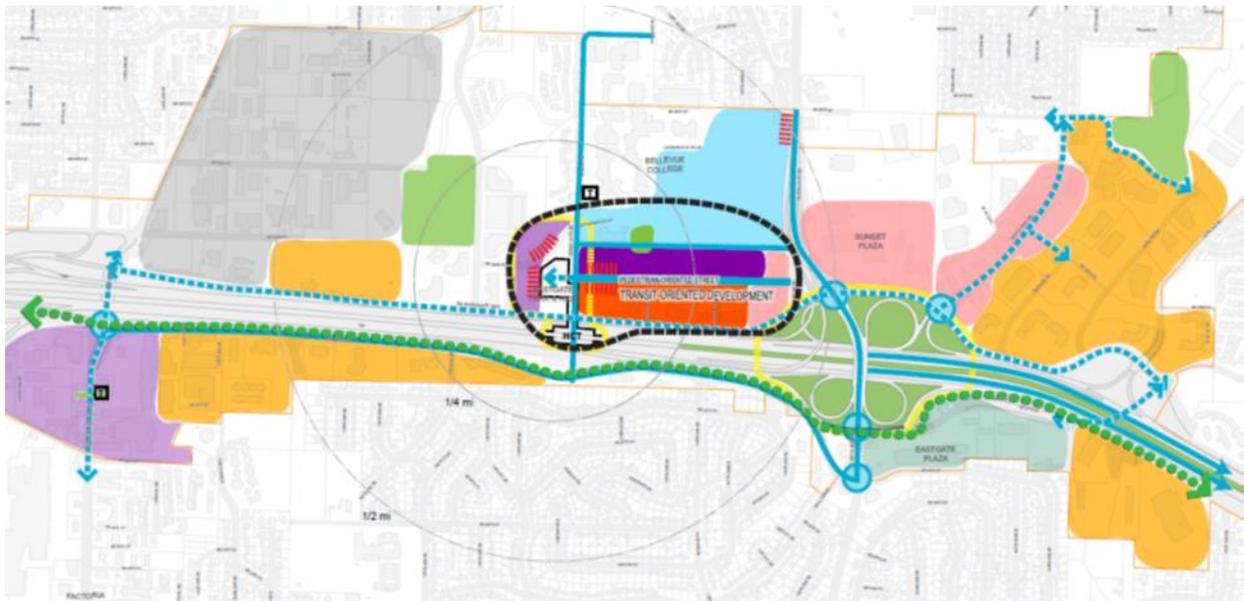
- Eliminate non-industrial uses in the LI zone. New uses of these types would not be able to establish themselves. This would make some existing businesses in the Richard's Valley non-conforming uses. That would mean a business could not expand the use (for example, adding additional showroom space for retail sales or an additional class room in a dance studio), but the use would be allowed to continue. The business could be sold to new owners, or closed for a short time (less than a year) and the same use could be continued.
- Restrict non-industrial uses. Restrictions could include limitations on the size or extent of the use, requiring the use to be colocated or subordinate to allowed uses, or requiring conditional use approval. New uses in the LI zone would need to follow the limitations and requirements, creating barriers to entry that may make the LI zone a less attractive for non-industrial uses. Existing non-industrial uses may or may not meet the restrictions. Those that did not may be limited in their ability to expand their business.

*Discussion Questions*

- Should services such as business support, computer related services, and research and development be restricted to multi-use buildings?
- Should non-industrial uses, in particular recreation and wholesale/retail uses, be limited in the LI zone? If limited, to what extent?

## EASTGATE/I-90 EASTGATE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT LAND USE ANALYSIS

The Transit-Oriented Development area is located in the heart of the Eastgate corridor, shown below in the multi-colored bean shape. Eastgate Transit Oriented Development (EG-TOD) is a new land use defined as: *A land use designation in the Eastgate subarea designed to provide for a mix of office, housing, retail, and services. Multiple uses are encouraged to create a concentration of activity that supports transit service and retail development.*<sup>1</sup> The land use will also result in the creation of a new EG-TOD zone, which will be unique to this area.



### *Citizen Advisory Committee Vision and Recommendations*

The Eastgate transit-oriented development (TOD) area is identified in the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) recommendation as the focal point of the Eastgate/I-90 corridor. It is intended to be the center of activity, with the highest intensity mix of residential, office, and commercial uses, as well as the site of the greatest growth. A pedestrian-oriented street will connect the adjacent Eastgate Park and Ride with the TOD area and is envisioned as a vibrant and active environment of cafes, shops, gathering spaces, and conveniently located services with high density residential and office uses above. Bellevue College will be connected with the TOD area by a terraced hill climb that acts as both a pathway and a recreational amenity. The size of the TOD area is naturally limited by the I-90 freeway to the South, Bellevue College to the north, and 148<sup>th</sup> (which is elevated) to the east, keeping the area compact in size.

<sup>1</sup> This definition comes from the Comprehensive Plan, set for adoption on August 3, 2015.

*Economic Development Plan*

Bellevue’s *Economic Development Plan*, adopted in 2014, identifies core clusters that support Bellevue’s economy: knowledge-based industries, retail, and tourism. Continued economic success is Bellevue relies on several factors, one of which involves fostering a diverse range of attractive built environments throughout the city. Another success factor is taking a leadership role in fostering collaboration. Eastgate is important as an affordable alternative to Downtown and for the potential for collaboration and linkage with Bellevue College. Key cluster industries identified for the Eastgate/Factoria area include: information technology (IT), tech start-up, aerospace, and retail (retail auto sales and Factoria mall).

*Use Analysis*

Currently the TOD area is dominated by office buildings, which should continue to be allowed as the zoning changes. The Eastgate corridor is currently home to several tech-related businesses and, with lower rents than downtown, is a likely location for tech start-ups. Bellevue College also offers a number of programs related to the tech field including a Bachelor of Science degree, several Associates degrees, and a number of technical degrees and certificates. City economic development staff indicated that the following features support IT clusters and start-ups: co-working spaces, data centers, office space, research and development, component manufacturing, processing, and repair, flex-tech space, uses that activate street life, bicycle repair, and recreation and amusement uses.

The TOD area presents an opportunity to create an active and attractive mixed-use center that supports, and is supported by, corridor businesses, local residents, and Bellevue College. There are several other zones in the city with a similar purpose that might be useful to compare in deciding which uses to allow in the Eastgate TOD (see the chart that follows).

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Purpose<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Comparability</b>
Downtown Multiple Use District  DNTN-MU	<i>The purpose of the Downtown-MU Land Use District is to provide an area for a wide range of retail activity, low intensity offices, Downtown support services, and residential uses [outside of the Downtown core]. Multiple uses are encouraged on individual sites, and in individual buildings, as well as broadly in the district as a whole.</i>	This zone provides a lower intensity mixed use zone than the core of Downtown, but is more intense than what is planned for the Eastgate TOD.

<sup>2</sup> From the Bellevue Land Use Code.

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Purpose<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Comparability</b>
<p>BelRed Office/Residential Nodes</p> <p>BR-OR BR-OR1 BR-OR2</p>	<p><i>The purpose of the Bel-Red-OR Land Use District is to provide an area for a mix of office, housing and retail uses, with office as the predominant use.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the Bel-Red-OR-1 Land Use District is to provide an area for a mix of office, housing and retail uses within the core of a nodal area, with offices as the predominant use. The district is limited in extent in order to provide the level of intensity appropriate for areas in close proximity to the highest levels of transit service within the Bel-Red area.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the Bel-Red-OR-2 Land Use District is to provide an area for a mix of office, housing and retail uses, with office as the predominant use. The district is located within a node but outside the node’s core, and building heights provide for a transition between the node’s core and areas outside the node.</i></p>	<p>These zones anticipate a mixed use environment with office as a predominant use and with proximity to a transit station. Intensities are higher than, the Eastgate TOD area.</p>
<p>BelRed Residential Commercial Nodes</p> <p>BR-RC-1 BR-RC-2 BR-RC-3</p>	<p><i>The purpose of the Bel-Red-RC-1 Land Use District is to provide an area for a mix of housing, retail, office and service uses within the core of a nodal area, with an emphasis on housing. The district is limited in extent in order to provide the level of intensity appropriate for areas in close proximity to the highest levels of transit service within the Bel-Red area.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the Bel-Red-RC-2 Land Use District is to provide an area for a mix of housing, retail, office and service uses. The district is located within a node but outside the node’s core, and building heights provide for a transition between the node’s core and areas outside the node.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the Bel-Red-RC-3 Land Use District is to provide an area for a mix of housing, retail, office and service uses, with an emphasis on housing. The district is located within a node but in close proximity to mature, stable neighborhoods, and is thus appropriate for transitional heights.</i></p>	<p>These zones are mixed uses with an emphasis on housing and proximity to transit. Intensities are higher than, the Eastgate TOD area.</p>

*Manufacturing uses*

Manufacturing uses, with the potential for offsite impacts, are typically not good neighbors in compact, urban zones. In the Downtown zones the only manufacturing uses allowed are printing and publishing and handcrafted products manufacturing. No manufacturing uses are allowed in the comparable BelRed zones. However, small, craft manufacturing of handcrafted products such as pottery or artisanal production food and beverages are recognized as a growing trend in manufacturing. Such economically valuable uses can add interest and help activate urban areas with facilities like brew pubs, coffee roasters, or bakeries. Allowing handcrafted products manufacturing and food and beverage products manufacturing. Perhaps the use could be conditioned in some way to ensure that the use is compatible with the TOD area, for example to ensure that a brewery had a tasting room and pub and not just a bottling plant.

*Recreation uses*

Recreation uses provide activity and support community gathering, both of which help to create a vibrant, urban environment. Most recreation uses suitable to compact, urban areas are allowed in the BelRed and Downtown zones such as libraries, museums, art galleries, theatres, night clubs, video arcades, bowling, health clubs, and public and private parks. Larger recreation activities like kennels, fairgrounds, driving ranges, camping, and drive-in theaters are prohibited. In the limited area of the Eastgate TOD, following this general pattern is appropriate. However, there are few uses that require more discussion to determine if the potential scale of the use is appropriate for the TOD area (see the following page).

The following uses could vary widely in size, but could take up quite a significant portion of the TOD area, which is only about 40 acres. Nature exhibitions and public assembly uses are appropriate in Downtown, where they provide an amenity to both locals and visitors and where there is enough space in the district to accommodate a full range of uses. In a smaller district, though, a large scale use could dominate the district and prevent a full range of uses from developing. The Recreation Activities listed below, though, take up a lot of space but only provide a local amenity, making them not a good fit for Downtown, but more acceptable in a mixed use neighborhood setting. However, with the proximity to Bellevue College and the lack of many of these types of uses in the Eastgate corridor, some uses such as auditoriums, recreation centers, pools, or clubs should be considered. For Eastgate these uses should probably be limited in some way, either by prohibiting the use, or some aspect of the use, by requiring limitations on size and extent of the use, by requiring conditional use approval, or by only allowing the use if subordinate to another permitted use.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	Downtown Multi Use	Bel-Red Office Residential/ Nodes	Bel-Red Residential Commercial Nodes
	DNTN MU	BR-OR/ OR-1 OR-2	BR-RC-1 RC-2 RC-3
Nature Exhibitions: Aquariums, Botanical Gardens	P		
Public Assembly (Indoor): Sports, Arenas, Auditoriums and Exhibition Halls but Excluding School Facilities	P	A	
Recreation Activities: Golf Courses, Tennis Courts, Community Clubs, Athletic Fields, Play Fields, Recreation Centers, Swimming Beaches and Pools		A	A

*Residential Uses*

A full set of residential uses is allowed in both the Downtown and BelRed zones including multi-family units, hotels/motels, and a full range of senior housing from independent living to nursing home care. Downtown allows group quarters but not rooming houses and BelRed allows the opposite. Given the proximity to Bellevue College and the potential for the TOD area to host student housing, rooming houses and group quarters should be considered within this new zone.

Rooming house is defined as: *A non-owner-occupied dwelling that is subject to multiple leases or in which rooms are offered for rent or lease on an individual room basis.*

Group quarters are not defined in Bellevue’s Land Use code, but are defined by the US Census Bureau as: *A group quarters is a place where people live or stay that is normally owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. These services may include custodial or medical care as well as other types of assistance, and residency is commonly restricted to those receiving these services. People living in group quarters are usually not related to each other. Group quarters include such places as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, workers’ dormitories, and facilities for people experiencing homelessness.*

*Resource Production Uses*

Resource production uses such as agriculture, cannabis production, fish or poultry production, and mining are prohibited in all of Downtown and BelRed because these uses are inconsistent

with a compact, urban environment. The only resource use allowed is veterinary clinics and hospitals. Veterinary uses should also be the only resource use allowed in the Eastgate TOD.

### *Service Uses*

Mixed use environments provide a wide range of services that support nearby residents, workers, and employers. A full complement of services is allowed in the Downtown and BelRed zones, including: finance and real estate, personal services like dry cleaning and beauty salons, health and medical care, day care, government offices and police stations, schools, churches, social services, offices, computer programming, and research and development. Services that are space intensive or not consistent with a compact environment are prohibited, such as cemeteries, warehousing, construction services, or correctional institutions. EG-TOD should follow this pattern for allowing service uses.

### *Transportation, Utility, and Communications Uses*

This set of uses determines where transportation, utility, and communications infrastructure should be allowed. Downtown and BelRed have a consistent approach that the EG-TOD zone should mimic. Uses such as parking garages, park and rides, local and regional utilities, transit facilities, and wireless communication are allowed. Some of the uses are limited in size or require a conditional use permit to ensure they are well integrated into the area and to control potential impacts. Uses such as solid waste disposal and hazardous waste treatment and storage, which should not be located in a compact area, are prohibited.

### *Trade Uses (Wholesale and Retail)*

Much like with service uses, trade uses are abundant in mixed use environments to provide a wide range of goods to nearby workers, residents, and employers. In Downtown and BelRed this includes: hardware, variety and department stores, convenience stores, apparel, furniture, restaurants, drug stores, groceries, florist, sporting goods, book stores, and pet shops. Wholesale uses and bulky goods like lumber are prohibited. It would be appropriate to follow the same principle within the EG-TOD zone. Downtown also allows retail auto, boat, and motorcycle sales. Although vehicle sales are an important use in the Eastgate corridor, including the area immediately adjacent to the EG-TOD zone, it would be inappropriate in the compact TOD area.

### *Discussion Questions*

- Are there any manufacturing uses that should be allowed in the EG-TOD zone?
- Which recreational uses should be allowed in the EG-TOD zone? Should they be limited or conditioned in any way?
- What is the appropriate size and intensity of public assembly uses allowed in the EG-TOD zone?
- Which residential uses are the best fit for the EG-TOD zone and for supporting housing for Bellevue College?



## Planning Commission Schedule

July 22, 2015

The Bellevue Planning Commission typically meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. and are held in the Council Conference Room (Room 1E-113) at City Hall, unless otherwise noted. Public comment is welcome at each meeting.

The schedule and meeting agendas are subject to change. Please confirm meeting agendas with city staff at 425-452-6931. Agenda and meeting materials are posted the Monday prior to the meeting date on the city's website at:

<http://www.bellevuewa.gov/planning-commission-agendas-2014.htm>

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Tentative Agenda Topics</u></b>
August	<i>No Commission meetings in August</i>
Sept 9	Eastgate Land Use Code NPDES stormwater code review
Sept 16	<i>Potential retreat date</i>
Sept 23	Downtown Livability/Land Use Code
Oct 14	Eastgate Land Use Code Downtown Livability/Land Use Code
Oct 28	Downtown Livability/Land Use Code
Nov 11	<i>No meeting – Veterans Day</i>
Nov 18	Eastgate Land Use Code Downtown Livability/Land Use Code
Nov 25	<i>No meeting</i>
Dec 9	Eastgate Land Use Code Downtown Livability/Land Use Code
Dec 23	<i>No meeting</i>

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

June 24, 2015  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Laing, Commissioners Barksdale, Carlson, Hilhorst, deVadoss, Walter

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Morisseau

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Emil King, Patti Wilma, Department of Planning and Community Development

COUNCIL LIAISON: Not Present

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Chair Laing who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Morisseau who was excused.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Andrew Miller spoke representing the ownership interest for the property at the northwest corner of Main Street and 112th Avenue NE, the former site of the Lexus dealership. The site is 200 yards north of where the new East Main light rail station will be located. He voiced concern that even though light rail is coming to the city, true transit-oriented development principles are not being implemented. The large investment of public funds should include a good return. Station area planning starts with identifying the walkshed, or the properties within the distance people are willing to walk to and from the station. The success of a station will be measured in ridership and in order to be successful the walkshed area will need to include density and an intensity of uses that will drive light rail ridership. Walkshed, ridership, density and station success are terms no one seems to be using. The Downtown Livability Initiative was a great idea but it put in place some blinders that led to some zoning recommendations that are not quite appropriate. A purposeful decision was made not to look south of Main Street where the light rail station will be located, so the Downtown Livability Initiative recommendation for the corner of Main Street and 112th Avenue NE was to continue lower density and heights. The East Main station area planning CAC has been handed a study area that does not include anything north of Main Street in deference to the Downtown Livability Initiative work. Therefore the Downtown Livability Initiative did not consider the implications of the light rail station, and the station area planning process is not considering the implications of the full walkshed. The owner of the

property on the northwest corner of Main Street and 112th Avenue NE is proposing additional height and FAR. In fact, allowing additional height and FAR on all three corners of the intersection could be accomplished while retaining the wedding cake zoning approach that respects Surrey Downs. The intersection is in fact a gateway, both into the city and the East Main district. It is also directly in the middle of the walkshed for the East Main station. Something special should happen there, but nothing will unless a group like the Planning Commission decides to take on the issue holistically. With additional height and FAR the property owner could work hand in hand with Wig Properties, owners of the Red Lion site, to make the walkshed a place where people will want to be, in turn making the East Main station successful.

Commissioner Walter asked how much more height and FAR is desired by the property owner. Mr. Miller said of the four corners to the intersection, one will be developed as a park. The Perimeter Districts A and B are in play there and with the park being developed on the south side of Main Street it will become Perimeter A and will serve as the buffer, allowing things to shift a little bit. The area on the northeast corner is currently recommended to go to an FAR of 5.0 and a height of about 200 feet. The Red Lion site would be well served with the same height and FAR. The northwest corner property is split by two perimeter zones, one with an FAR of 3.5 and one with an FAR of 5.0; it should all be 5.0. A high FAR without additional height cannot be used in its entirety. A maximum height of about 200 feet should be given to the site.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Hilhorst, Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said the site in question is within the Downtown Livability Initiative area. As the Commission works through the Downtown Livability Initiative issues, staff will keep the Commission informed as to the work going on by the East Main station area planning CAC to make it easier to see how things match up.

Commissioner Carlson asked what building height is currently allowed for the northwest corner property. Mr. Miller said 55 feet is allowed in Perimeter A and 90 feet is allowed in Perimeter B. The recommendation of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC was to go to 70 feet in Perimeter A and to leave height in Perimeter B unchanged. The building on the property is three stories and about 36 feet tall; the 70 feet would allow for one additional floor. Perimeter B is a throwaway zone in the sense that above a certain height it is necessary to switch from wood frame construction to concrete, but concrete buildings do not pencil out economically until they are taller than 90 feet.

Mr. Bill Herman, a resident of Bellevue Towers, suggested the Commission as it moves ahead with the issue of downtown livability should keep in mind all the stakeholders and the impacts on current residents and employees. Growth equals traffic and according to a recent *Seattle Times* article congestion in the region has increased 52 percent since 2010. It is bad and getting worse. The livability CAC was charged with addressing issues the original plan could not foresee. Their recommendation includes the notion of equalization and increasing the FAR in the Downtown-Mixed Use district to 5.0. To some extent it makes sense to increase height and density near the light rail station as a way of addressing growth through maximizing the use of light rail. The equalization cure, however, could be worse than the disease in terms of impacts. The city should encourage people to live where they work in the downtown, an approach that would require some units to be affordable. Currently less than one percent of the people who work in the downtown actually live in the downtown, and there are a variety of reasons for that. The argument has been made that with more height and FAR the resulting buildings will be taller and skinnier, but there is nothing in the plan that dictates skinnier and the buildings could simply

be taller. Much has been said about open space in association with taller and skinnier towers, but nothing has been said about podiums. The desired open space is at ground level.

Chair Laing clarified that there is no recommendation from the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC for higher heights. There is a recommendation for the city to conduct a study. It is unfortunate that so many downtown residents did not feel sufficiently engaged in the process and hopefully as things move ahead that population will participate and help to inform the outcome. There is a lot of process left and any actual recommendation to the City Council will be developed by the Commission.

Mr. Patrick Bannon, president of the Bellevue Downtown Association, said he served as a member of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC. He said the BDA supports a careful evaluation of the recommendations of the CAC. The current downtown code has been in place for some 30 years and the opportunity is at hand to carefully evaluate what is working and what is not working and thoughtfully propose improvements. The BDA will engage with the Commission throughout the process that hopefully will put the downtown on a firm footing going forward. The downtown residential community alone has grown by some 250 percent since 2005 and stands at close to 12,000. Employment is continuing to grow as well. Building design and the amenities offered in the downtown play an essential role in the health and vibrancy of the city's economy.

Commissioner Carlson asked what portion of downtown households have children. Mr. Bannon said the estimates show there are some 800 school-aged children living in the downtown.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Hilhorst. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and it carried unanimously.

#### 5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

#### 6. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Inghram said the Council is continuing to make progress relative to the Comprehensive Plan update. Most recently they have focused on some of the remaining urban design and utilities issues. The Council is hopeful it will be able to finish its review of the Comprehensive Plan at its meeting on July 6.

#### 7. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW

##### A. March 25, 2015

Commissioner Hilhorst called attention to the last two paragraphs on page 14 of the minutes and asked staff to check the recording to see if something was missing between the discussion of Policy EN-X3 and the Parks and Community Services Board recommendation for a new policy.

There was agreement to postpone approval of the minutes to the next meeting.

##### B. April 22, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Hilhorst. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and it carried without dissent; Chair Laing abstained from voting.

C. June 10, 2015

Commissioner Hilhorst called attention to a correction of the minutes. Commissioner deVadoss and Chair Laing also identified corrections.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

## 8. STUDY SESSION

### A. Downtown Livability

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King reminded the Commission that the work under way is focused on the Land Use Code for the downtown. The process will include circling a review of the downtown subarea plan and the option of making changes to the policies. The recommendations of Downtown Livability Initiative CAC, however, are primarily focused on the Land Use Code. The review of the subarea plan will include the work accomplished through the Downtown Transportation Plan update process.

The Downtown Livability Initiative CAC process included a methodical review and critique of what about the downtown code is working, where there is room for improvement, and what things are just not working. The two-year process included a great deal of public outreach and the interested parties list has more than 700 people on it. The process included walking tours, open houses and focus groups as part of the outreach effort. When the community check-in is reviewed, additional ideas provided by the public about how they would like to stay informed will be talked about.

The final report of the CAC is broken down into topical areas, the same ones the CAC reviewed. Ultimately some of them will be combined in the code and design guidelines to conform to the standard format. At the direction of the Council, a date will be set in the fall for a joint Council/Commission discussion centered on the incentive system for the downtown.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner deVadoss, Mr. King said in walking through the recommendations of the CAC he would take care to identify which are code related and which are not.

Mr. King pointed out that the CAC's final report incorporates the principles established by the Council. The same principles will apply to the work of the Commission along with the new direction given by the Council in May. He said the Commission is tasked with focusing on the code-related recommendations. Any modifications to height and form will need to result in better urban design outcomes after considering all potential impacts.

The CAC recommended additional building height in the core part of the downtown but no additional density. With regard to the Perimeter A district, which is the first 150 feet around the north, south and west edges of the downtown, the CAC recommended an examination of

increasing building heights to 70 feet from the current 55 feet. The Council talked about the issue at length and concluded that any changes made to the district will need to improve the interface from the perspective of the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

Councilmember Wallace made a specific request asking the Commission to look at potential design guidance allowing banks and financial institutions to fall under the heading of what is called pedestrian-oriented frontage. Historically such institutions have had regular banking hours, a single entrance for security reasons, and a less-than-lively storefront. Councilmember Wallace noted that there are design features that could make the institutions more enlivened as their operations methods and hours change. Community Development Manager Patti Wilma added that percentage of a business with a pedestrian-oriented frontage (POF) is exempted from the FAR calculation. In some areas, a percentage of POF is required.

Mr. King said the Council provided direction on two elements relating to parking. First, they want to see fast-tracked a parking amendment related to Old Bellevue, and to that end staff is already at work. The CAC recommended conducting a comprehensive parking study for the downtown and the Council directed that it be included as a planning initiative on the work program.

Mayor Balducci and other Councilmembers highlighted the need for a robust public engagement process, including walking tours, open houses and community check-ins.

Commissioner Hilhorst asked if any of the data generated by past downtown parking studies can be built on. Ms. Wilma said in putting together a presentation for the Council staff will identify the extent of studies done in the past and will make a suggestion as to whether or not a consultant can put them all together and fill in the gaps, or if an entirely new parking study is needed. The study done in 2010 or 2012 focused on commuter parking only; it did not include retail or residential.

Commissioner Walter commented that there will be a lot of land use planning work associated with updating the downtown area codes. It would seem logical to have the parking information in hand as the Commission works through the recommendations of the CAC.

Chair Laing clarified that there was a lot of concern on the part of the CAC regarding residential parking requirements for multifamily. Currently the requirement is for one parking space per unit for an apartment or condominium, and the suggestion has been made by some developers that the ratio could be reduced given that there are an increasing number of residents who choose not to own a car. One of the recommendations from the CAC was to look at what the actual residential parking experience is in Bellevue before acting to lower the parking requirements. The CAC also heard from employers that office environments are changing with the result that in some office spaces there are actually fewer employees per floor. There are questions about what the parking ratios should actually be. Structured parking is expensive to provide and developers do not want to be told they have to build parking that will not get used. At the same time, the CAC expressed concerns about not having enough parking. There are some issues the Transportation Commission has taken up, including street parking and identifying areas where it can be added and where it cannot be added. There have been a lot of parking studies conducted in Bellevue, some dating back to the late 70s. Most of them highlight the need for public parking garages in the downtown. With regard to light rail, the CAC recognized it is coming and will trigger some changes in the way people commute. However, the CAC felt strongly that parking requirements should be not adopted based on the assumption that light rail will reduce the need.

Mr. King said staff will scope out what a new parking study would entail, what it would rely on, what new information is needed, and what it would take to do it.

Mr. King informed the Commission that the first community check-in saw about 50 people attend. It was set up as an open house during which the public could talk to staff about different issues. That was followed by a half-hour presentation on what is in the final report from the CAC and some additional work staff will be doing. Mayor Balducci was present and she added a few introductory comments regarding the Council's thoughts. The presentation was followed by an open question and answer period. The questions raised addressed what the city can do to encourage better design; whether or not continued growth a good idea; the fact that currently the residential being developed is nearly all apartments rather than condominiums; and what the city or developers can do to deal with localized transportation issues. There were also questions asked about the standards applied to hotels, and how to better reach the younger generation living in the downtown.

Mr. King said the final report will include answers given to questions such as what livability means to downtown residents; what is most needed in the downtown; why these chose to live in the downtown; what additional analysis should be done; and ideas for public outreach. Generally people continue to be interested in online information; the importance of having physical public meetings at City Hall; receiving newsletter updates; and talking to people directly at events in the downtown.

Ms. Wilma said during the CAC process a consultant was brought onboard to conduct a full inventory of the open spaces in the downtown, including some interesting sociological assessments of how the spaces are used. The CAC and the public commented that much of what is called open space in the downtown in fact feels private or is hidden away. The recommendations of the CAC include expressing open space by neighborhood and requiring superblocks to be broken up through the use of midblock connections integrated into individual development proposals. One non-code recommendation included looking at the concept of placing a lid over I-405 and develop it with something like a park providing pedestrian and bicycle access; and exploring methods for paying for downtown open space.

The CAC pointed out that there is no open space in the Northwest Village area where QFC is located and recommended finding some. Small plazas with active edges were highlighted as being desirable but not the highest priority. Pea patch community gardens were also highlighted as desirable open space elements along with outdoor pet areas.

Chair Laing clarified that open space needs and elements were identified through a variety of means. The CAC did not, however, recommend coming up with a system that would result in each of the identified needs in each district being addressed.

With regard to the pedestrian corridor, Ms. Wilma said the CAC's code-related recommendations included looking at extending the corridor to the east to 112th Avenue NE to integrate the civic district; providing as much weather protection elements as practicable; looking for ways to activate the corridor with festivals, art and music; looking for opportunities to provide landscaping; and looking for ways to accommodate bicycle and other wheeled users along with pedestrians. The non code-related recommendations included investing in key segments of the corridor, which is primarily private property; encouraging more lighting and wayfinding; looking for partnerships; identify funding to complete the grand connection lid over I-405; and considering a new identity for the corridor by naming it.

Commissioner Carlson asked if the grand connection concept an alternative to or a supplement to a park element spanning I-405. Mr. King said it most likely would be an alternative to the park. Some analysis and conceptual design work has been done on extending NE 6th Street along with a wide pedestrian/bicycle path. A grand connection that included park open space and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity would serve the same purpose, and it would be unlikely to see both connections created.

Ms. Wilma said the grand connection would be more than just a lid over I-405. It is in the early stages of discussion and would ultimately connect Meydenbauer Bay to the Eastside rail corridor, with the pedestrian corridor serving as a key link in the middle. Mr. King pointed out that the Council identified it as a priority at its most recent retreat.

Ms. Wilma said the design guidelines will be approached in three ways: making it more readable by getting away from obtuse language; getting more robust with the criteria for the public realm in terms of sidewalks, landscaping, building podiums, pedestrian circulation, building materials, façade treatments, rooftop mechanical equipment screening, and public views from public places; and transitions to adjacent neighborhoods. The CAC recommended the Commission consider opportunities for flexibility in the guidelines and standards to allow for creativity.

Commissioner deVadoss asked if the CAC looked at the potential of using rooftops as open green spaces. Ms. Wilma said the issue was raised by various stakeholders and ended up on the amenities list as something to consider. The challenge is in assessing the public benefit of something that would be a private space. A green roof can be aesthetically pleasing and a good screening mechanism.

Commissioner Carlson said green roofs and other creative green landscaping can beautify urban areas and should be encouraged. Commissioner Barksdale commented that there are some examples in Seattle of gardens and pet areas on rooftops.

Mr. Inghram said Seattle has a per-unit outdoor/open space requirement. Ms. Wilma said Bellevue does not.

Ms. Wilma said the building/sidewalk relationship guidelines in the current code could use some remodeling. The guidelines relate to how the ground plane and the building wall create a place. There is a hierarchy relating to the degree to which streets are pedestrian oriented, and thirty years ago it was not foreseen that some of the streets would become as heavily residential as they have and there is a clear need to make sure they are pedestrian friendly. Guidelines are needed to address how future midblock connections might be developed and relate to the surrounding buildings. The guidelines also need to address the issue of public views, transitions, walkability and sidewalk widths.

Mr. King said the amenity incentive system dates back to the original downtown code. It currently has 23 items on it, items that development projects can incorporate to receive height and density bonuses. The Commissioners were encouraged to review the section in the code audit that deals with the amenity system to gain a better understanding of what amenities have been historically pursued. It was noted that of the 33 most recent projects, 30 included underground parking, took credit for it, and gained additional height and density as a result; and 28 pursued pedestrian-oriented frontage. The amenities of providing space for non-profits, providing public restrooms, and providing childcare services have never been pursued. The

CAC spent a lot of time seeking public comment on the current system and rather than coming up with a revised amenity system acknowledged the need to have a policy debate and the need to conduct some economic modeling, which will be the focus of the joint session between the Council and the Commission.

Commissioner Hilhorst asked why the childcare amenity has never been pursued. Chair Laing said his hypothesis was that incentives based on uses that could change over time, as opposed to something physical like under building parking or a plaza, are problematic. Should a childcare operation in a space provided by a developer in exchange for bonus height or density fail, the developer could not allow anything to locate in that space other than another daycare. If for whatever reason a daycare simply will not work in that space, the space would need to remain vacant.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that there are daycare facilities located in buildings in the downtown, but none of them came about as a result of the amenity system.

Mr. King said the joint session with the Council will focus on a number of topics, including the legal framework associated with incentive systems; alternative approaches for revising the amenity system; and alternative approaches for having the correct amenities in a growing urban center outside of an incentive system. The CAC had a good discussion about focusing in on those amenities that truly help with the livability of the downtown and turning away from offering bonuses for amenities developers will provide anyway. The CAC was inclined to allow for flexibility to encourage good design, and agreed that the importance of or need for different amenities might vary by neighborhood.

Commissioner deVadoss said there is a growing trend worldwide around the notion of smart cities. He said he was surprised to see nothing included around how to think about the downtown in that context. The idea is to use technology to make cities more livable and the elements relevant to Bellevue should be explored.

Mr. King said several potential new amenities were identified by the CAC. They included signature streets, third places/gathering spaces, upper level plazas, landmark tree preservation, activated rooftops, affordable housing, space in which to create art, iconic features, and pedestrian bridges.

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS

A motion to nominate Commissioner Hilhorst to serve as chair was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner deVadoss. Absent additional nominations, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Laing handed the gavel to new Chair Hilhorst and took a moment to say it had been a pleasure to serve as chair of the Commission. Chair Hilhorst thanked Commissioner Laing for his leadership over the past year.

A motion to nominate Commissioner deVadoss to serve as vice chair was made by Commissioner Laing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson. Absent additional nominations, the motion carried unanimously.

## 10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bill Herman, a resident of Bellevue Towers, commented that Bellevue's amenity system is one of the city's strengths. The CAC focused on the tradeoff of creating value for more amenities. He said whether or not more is better needs to be discussed along with the need for extraordinary amenities that will actually increase livability.

11. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Hilhorst said the next Commission meeting would occur on July 8.

12. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Laing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner deVadoss and it carried unanimously.

Chair Hilhorst adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

July 8, 2015  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice-Chair deVadoss, and Commissioners Barksdale, Laing, Morisseau, Walter

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Hilhorst, Commissioner Carlson

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Patti Wilma, Emil King, Department of Planning and Community Development

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Stokes

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Vice-Chair deVadoss who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Hilhorst and Commissioner Carlson, both of whom were excused.

Vice-Chair deVadoss welcomed new Commissioner Morisseau. Commissioner Morisseau said she was born in Haiti and moved to the United States when she was 17. She said she moved to the Puget Sound area eight years ago. She said she is a structural engineer, her husband works for Microsoft, and they have two daughters.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Andrew Miller, 111 NE Main Street, said he represents the property owner at that address. He noted that the East Main light rail station walkshed extends to the north of Main Street and will affect that area of the downtown, just as that area of the downtown will affect the station. He said FAR is a block of clay that can be molded in many different ways. A high FAR with low height limits results in short, squatty buildings; a high FAR with increased height limits can result in projects that provide more light and air. In the case of the gateway intersection at 112th Avenue and Main Street, something outstanding should be done there. To accomplish that, however, will require increased height and FAR.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Laing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and it carried unanimously.

## 5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Stokes said he was glad to see the work of the Commission regarding downtown livability is under way. He said the study provides the opportunity for the Commission to consider code elements that have been in place for a long time without being revised. The work of the CAC, which included a great deal of input from the public, will inform the Commission's process. Building height and FAR are always contentious issues that the Commission will need to carefully consider. The Council is anticipating receiving from the Commission solid rationale for any recommendation to change the current code.

Councilmember Stokes added that the work done by the Commission relative to updating the Comprehensive Plan was very well received by the Council. The Council is very close to wrapping up that work.

## 6. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said the Council is on the precipice of adopting the Commission's work on the Comprehensive Plan. The Council recommended including in the Urban Design Element a policy about solar access and a sense of openness. One of the Councilmembers proposed a couple of new policies for the Utilities Element dealing with transmission lines, one aimed at avoiding the establishment of new corridors, and one focused on using existing rights-of-way. There was also a policy added about adaptation to deal with climate issues. The anticipation is that the Council will take final action on July 20.

## 7. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW

### A. March 25, 2015

Commissioner Laing noted a number of corrections to the draft minutes. A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Laing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and it carried unanimously.

## 8. STUDY SESSION

### A. Downtown Livability

Commissioner Laing reiterated that he represented a property owner with regard to a code amendment affecting Old Bellevue that is pending before the City Council. He noted that the code amendment has been mentioned in the packet materials, though the issue is not one that is before the Commission. He said he would recuse himself from the conversation regarding downtown parking and asked to hold that particular conversation to the end of the meeting.

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King briefly reviewed the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC recommendations addressed by the Commission on June 24. He asked the Commissioners to consider three questions in working through the remainder of the CAC's recommendations: 1) what topics or items do you see as complicated/controversial versus straightforward; 2) what further information or analysis do you need to accomplish this code update; and 3) what topics or items call for additional targeted public outreach. He briefly reviewed the schedule going

forward; noted that a second Commission/public walking tour will be slated; and said a joint workshop with the Council will be scheduled in the fall to talk about the incentive amenity system.

Mr. King reminded the Commission that the work done by the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC was focused only on the Land Use Code for the 410 acres within the downtown subarea. A methodical review of all six of the light rail stations that will be in Bellevue is under way. The station area planning effort will identify the important issues relative to each of the stations. Some elements of station area planning were, however, incorporated into other elements of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC's work, particularly those relating to the Bellevue Downtown station that will be constructed adjacent to City Hall on the King County Metro site, and the East Main station whose walkshed extends into the downtown subarea.

The Commissioners were reminded that the typical walkshed for transit facilities is a quarter of a mile, a distance that can be covered in five minutes. Within the prime transit-oriented development walkshed, it is important to focus on land uses and how they interface with the station. However, it is also generally recognized that people will walk a half mile or more to a light rail station, so consideration is being given to the land uses within the broader area of influence. The quarter-mile walksheds for the Downtown Bellevue and East Main stations intersect in the area along Main Street between the freeway and 110th Avenue. Both stations will serve portions of the downtown.

The CAC had some good thoughts around how the Downtown Bellevue station will function relative to pedestrian/bicycle connectivity, including how it should interface with the pedestrian corridor and some land use changes that might be appropriate. The changes considered for the Downtown OLB zone clearly had a relationship to the East Main station, but there is a point of view that more could be done in and around the East Main station to the north of Main Street, an area outside the purview of the East Main CAC.

Mr. King said the CAC looked at the desired character of the Downtown Bellevue station area. The Comprehensive Plan of ten years ago included no discussion of a light rail station adjacent to City Hall. The CAC rightfully considered how the light rail station will actually change the character of City Hall, Meydenbauer Center, and the surrounding properties. They also focused on pedestrian/bicycle and transit linkages and how they interface with the light rail station. The street designations in the previous Comprehensive Plan for 110th Avenue NE, 112th Avenue NE and NE 6th Street did not contemplate a heavy pedestrian-oriented use for the site where the station will be. The CAC offered several recommendations relative to transit-oriented development that reinforce the draw for redevelopment in and around a quarter-mile of the station. Sound Transit is making a significant investment in Bellevue and it makes sense for the city to think about how that investment can be capitalized on. The CAC addressed the issues of traffic and parking management as well, but no significant code changes relative to parking were made for the station area. The CAC did, however, highlight the need for a new parking study.

The CAC had some significant recommendations relating to design guidelines. For 112th Avenue NE, the original vision was for a suburban street when the downtown zoning was established 30 years ago, including a requirement for a suburban-type setback from the street. The CAC recognized that a more urban look and feel for that location would be appropriate. Given that the East Main station will be on 112th Avenue SE, the CAC recognized the need for walkability both to the north and south of Main Street.

The CAC also made some significant recommendations about higher density, as expressed by FAR, and allowing for additional building height in the DT-OLB zone. The CAC also recommended extending the pedestrian corridor beyond 110th Avenue NE to 112th Avenue NE to better interface with the light rail station. Also highlighted by the CAC was the need for a non-motorized connection across I-405 in keeping with the boundaries of the station area walkshed.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Barksdale, Mr. King said the front door of Bellevue Square is situated at the western end of the existing pedestrian corridor. The CAC offered five recommendations for enhancing the corridor, including better weather protection, a greener and more pleasant walking environment, the need to program the space, and the need for better lighting and wayfinding identifying the way to connect with both the transit center and the light rail station. As redevelopment occurs, the balance of the pedestrian corridor will be built out. Community Development Manager Patti Wilma added that the intersection where the pedestrian corridor crosses 106th Avenue NE will include a curbless crossing, helping pedestrians to move easily and safely across the street. Also, the walkway to the west of 108th Avenue NE on the pedestrian corridor will be widened and have new lighting installed. Once light rail construction occurs, the intersection where the pedestrian corridor crosses 110th Avenue NE is likely to become a scramble. Some of the clutter will be eliminated from the existing transit center to facilitate moving people through the area more quickly.

Vice-Chair deVadoss asked if any consideration has been given to creating pedestrian crossing tunnels. Mr. King said there have been discussions about subterranean access to the station, though those conversations occurred when the thinking was that the station would actually be in a tunnel under 110th Avenue NE. Once it was determined that the station would be aboveground, talk of tunnel connections died down.

Commissioner Morisseau asked if pedestrian bridges have been considered and she was told by Mr. King that the Council allocated up to \$5 million to look at exceptional station access. A bridge up and over 110th Avenue NE was studied as an option, but the costs associated with such a structure did not appear to be in line with the time pedestrians would save by using it.

Commissioner Laing suggested that consideration should be given to using technology that would freeze the intersection when a train enters the station, allowing pedestrians to scramble in all directions. Mr. King said the direction given from the Council favored an at-grade solution. Consideration has been given to a potential pedestrian bridge connecting the City Hall block with the station and Meydenbauer Center over NE 6th Street.

Turning to the topic of building height and form, Mr. King noted that a section in the report from the CAC explained the relationship between increased height and bulk to the issue of livability. The section flowed both from the CAC's discussions and the Land Use Code audits that were done. The audits highlighted that much of what is in the code is working as intended, but they also shed light on some opportunities for improvement.

The CAC recognized that allowing for additional height and bulk can result in opportunities to create a more distinctive skyline. The height restrictions in place tend to produce a plateaued skyline from some vantage points. Height can encourage more interesting and memorable architecture, but floor plate size and urban form can also help give license to creativity. Many of the CAC's recommendations were built on the notion of allowing for more light and air between buildings, and with additional height comes the opportunity to achieve the permitted FAR in

different architectural formats, opening the door for more ground-level open space.

The CAC discussed the notion of promoting more variability in building heights. Currently many of the downtown zones have a base height and maximum height that has resulted in buildings going up to the same level. The CAC suggested there may be creative ways to average out building height in ways that will achieve more variability in height. The CAC also recognized that height and density can be used to reinforce district identity.

Increasing the allowable height and FAR could result in a "lift" relative to the incentive system. Currently the incentive system is tied to allowing taller buildings and increased FAR. The CAC also recognized the wisdom of adding density around the light rail transit investment, particularly in the DT-OLB zone.

Mr. King said the report from the CAC included principles for guiding height and form which essentially serve as criteria against which changes to the current approach should be weighed. The principles included the notion of additional height or density resulting in better urban design outcomes over the status quo; continuing to distinguish the special market niche played by the downtown core; helping to deliver additional amenities that enhance livability; addressing the impacts that may result from additional height and density; and continuing to provide appropriate transitions between the downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods while promoting better linkages.

Councilmember Stokes asked the Commission to keep in mind that Bellevue is unique in that it is a much bigger city than the population of 134,000 indicates. Bellevue serves as the urban center for the Eastside. Bellevue is projected to continue to grow as an urban center, and that fact needs to be recognized in the context of balancing the needs of Bellevue's neighborhoods.

Commissioner Morisseau asked if decisions to adjust building heights will be made in conjunction with changes to the existing building codes. She pointed out that seismic and wind criteria are affected by height. Ms. Wilma said all planning work is carried out in union with the development services department which implements the adopted International Building Code. No red flags have been raised to date by staff in that department relative to the notion of allowing additional height and bulk, primarily because the amount of height being considered is already contemplated in the International Building Code.

Commissioner Walter said she hoped the discussion going forward will include a focus on what the housing needs are projected to be in the downtown. Seattle is considering doing away with single family zoning, an approach that should not be copied by Bellevue. The designated growth areas of the city should be designed to accommodate the necessary amount of housing while protecting the bordering neighborhoods, all of which are single family.

Councilmember Stokes pointed out that at the same time the city must remember the downtown is a neighborhood as well and must be made livable. While the challenge is unique, the city is up to it.

Mr. King said 3D modeling software was used to build a model of the downtown. All existing buildings were factored in along with all buildings under construction. The model calculated what could happen on the underdeveloped sites under the current code and under what the CAC was contemplating. He shared with the Commissioners one model run showing what redevelopment could look like in the DT-OLB zone along I-405. The model will continue to be

used going forward in analyzing the recommendations of the CAC.

Under the current code, the highest densities and building heights are focused in the core area called the O-1 zone. In that zone, buildings are allowed to reach 450 feet. Office buildings are allowed an FAR of 8.0, while residential buildings have no FAR limit. Each zone surrounding the O-1 district has lower heights in line with the wedding cake approach; the lowest heights and densities are in the A and B perimeter districts surrounding the downtown.

Commissioner Walter asked why residential in the O-1 district has no limit on FAR. Ms. Wilma said the system was set up that way to encourage residential. She said there are limits on floor plate size and that is what controls residential building bulk.

Mr. King said there are two recommendations from the CAC that would have an impact on the amount of development allowed that would be different from what is currently allowed. For the DT-OLB zone the CAC recommended height of up to 350 feet and an FAR of 6.0 for the area between NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street, and height of up to 200 feet and an FAR of 5.0 between NE 4th Street and Main Street. For the MU district, the CAC recommended allowing residential buildings up to 300 feet and non-residential buildings up to 200 feet, and recommended increasing the allowed non-residential FAR to 5.0 to be on par with residential developments.

The current approach relative to the Perimeter A district allows for residential buildings up to 55 feet. The CAC recommended allowing up to 70 feet in the zone. The Council provided direction in May that any changes to the Perimeter A district would need to improve the interface from the perspective of the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

Councilmember Stokes commented that the DT-OLB district faces the freeway, not a residential neighborhood. The freeway itself has changed dramatically since the current zoning was put in place.

Commissioner Laing added that in addition to the freeway there is a fairly significant grade change and the CAC recognized that having additional height and density adjacent to the freeway makes sense. The view of the city for those passing by on the freeway is one that evokes images of about 1973 and from a gateway perspective changes are needed. He also indicated that the proposed building height of 70 feet recommended by the CAC for the Perimeter A district is driven by the fire code and the five-over-one construction style that has five floors of wood-framed construction over a concrete podium that normally accommodates structured parking. The fire code limits wood-framed construction to 70 feet, and concrete and steel buildings do not pencil out financially until about 125 feet. Allowing building height in the zone of up to 90 feet would mean nothing because no one would be able to realize it. The recommendation of the CAC is to conform the zoning to fit with what the market can deliver.

Commissioner Barksdale asked if along with building height in the Perimeter A district consideration will be given to the amount of sunlight that can reach into the downtown. Ms. Wilma said consideration will be given to tower spacing and guidelines having to do with orientation to preserve light and air resources.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Walter, Mr. King said the Land Use Code audit was conducted on the subarea policies, and the Comprehensive Plan update package that is currently before the Council includes no changes to the downtown subarea plan, except for the

discussion about the south boundary.

After the CAC process was completed, staff took a little time to delve a little deeper on a site-by-site basis to determine what the increased height in the Perimeter A district would look like on the ground. In addition to allowing for an additional floor and increased floor-to-ceiling heights, the anticipated outcomes included better maximizing the total FAR potential, enhanced opportunities for street-level activation, improved modulation and building massing proportions, and the potential to add lift to the incentive system for additional public amenities.

The DT-OLB fronts the freeway but also extends to the corner of 112th Avenue NE and NE 12th Street and includes the stormwater detention facility to the south of NE 10th Street. The zone is largely built out but there is some redevelopment potential in the area between NE 8th Street and Main Street. The general philosophy of the CAC was to take the height and FAR development regulations that apply to the area on the hillside to the west of 112th Avenue NE and push them to include the east side of 112th Avenue NE adjacent to the freeway.

Commissioner Barksdale asked if the additional traffic that would result from allowing more height and bulk adjacent to the freeway will result in creating a barrier to getting into and out of the downtown area. Mr. King said some sensitivity testing is being done using the 2030 traffic model. The modeling will look at the impacts under the current zoning and under the proposed zoning to determine the delta.

Mr. King said the anticipated outcomes with regard to the recommendations for the DT-OLB zone include the potential to add density around the investments in light rail, maintaining visibility permeability and protect the view corridors to Mt. Rainier, the opportunity to create a more distinctive skyline, and the potential to add lift to the incentive system for additional public amenities.

The Deep B district is the area to the north of NE 8th Street and south of NE 12th Street and to the east of 100th Avenue NE. Ms. Wilma said it is close to single family in the Northtowne and Vucrest neighborhoods. The lack of development occurring in that area is what led the CAC to address it. The area is lower in elevation than Vucrest and has more of a small town feel in the way it serves as a neighborhood shopping and service area.

Mr. King said the area has seen very little development activity over the last three development cycles. Aside from the Avalon building on the corner of NE 10th Street and Bellevue Way, there has been no significant development take place. Under the current code, the maximum residential height allowed is 90 feet and the maximum FAR is 5.0. The owners of properties in the Deep B district expressed to the CAC a desire to look at something a little new as far as regulating height in the downtown is concerned. Their idea they pitched was to look allowing for variable heights between 160 feet and 240 feet for residential with an average of 200 feet, all without an increase in FAR. The approach would not allow a single parcel to achieve 240 feet; a multiple tower site would be required in order to average their respective heights. The anticipated outcomes included increased opportunities for ground-level open space, variable building heights and opportunities for alleys with addresses, the potential for increased tower spacing to improve light and air, the opportunity to create a more distinctive skyline, and the potential to add lift to the incentive system.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Barksdale, Mr. King said the term “alleys with addresses” originally came up in the 2004 planning effort that updated the downtown subarea

plan. Some alleys in the downtown act primarily as driveways that break up the superblocks, but several businesses actually open on to them. He added that the notion of open space is predicated on the spaces being open to the public but allowed that could be made more clear.

Mr. King said the current code for the MU district allows residential buildings up to 200 feet with an FAR of 5.0, and allows office buildings up to 100 feet with an FAR of 3.0. There are many examples of 200-foot buildings along NE 10th Street. The CAC recommended retaining the maximum 5.0 FAR for residential while allowing an additional 100 feet of building height, and to increase office height up to 200 feet with a maximum FAR of 5.0. While residential would be allowed to go higher, the total square footage for both types of uses would be the same. The anticipated outcomes include increased opportunity for ground-level open space, consolidating building massing for fewer towers, the potential for increased tower spacing to improve light and air reaching the ground level, and the potential to add lift to the incentive system.

Vice-Chair deVadoss acknowledged the volume of detail to think through relative to building height and bulk. He suggested the Commission will need time to digest it. He recommended moving on to the issue of parking and come back to the height and bulk issue at a future meeting.

Commissioner Laing recused himself and left the room.

Ms. Wilma said parking was discussed by the CAC on numerous occasions. In recognition of the various complexities the issue presents, the CAC ultimately decided to recommend a comprehensive downtown parking study. Since 1986 the city has conducted 17 parking studies and surveys, each with a unique focus. The fact is, however, that technology, need and transit have all changed. Staff will be going before the Council in early August to talk about the work plan for both the Planning and Community Development and the Department of Development Services, and part of the discussion will include the notion of including another parking study. A comprehensive study will be costly and could take up to two years to complete. The direction given by the Council will determine what approach to take relative to the gambit of parking options, technologies, demand and management.

Ms. Wilma said the one thing that has moved quickly through the process is the parking amendment for Old Bellevue. In late May staff was given direction from the Council to move ahead with a targeted code amendment to clarify an exemption in the code for restaurants and retail businesses that has resulted in confusion and misapplication because of the terminology used. A public hearing was held on the code amendment on July 6 which covered two options, one identifying 1998 as the sunset year for the exemption, and one accommodating some nonconforming uses by identifying 2006 as the sunset year. The issue will be before the Council in August.

There are some elements of the parking issue that are not overly controversial, including valet parking and Car To Go shared car usage. There is technology available that allows persons to individually rent their parking space for the day. Those are things that could happen immediately.

Councilmember Stokes clarified that what the Council is seeking is an approach that will bring everyone into compliance with the code without triggering adverse impacts on specific building owners.

Ms. Wilma added that the exemption has resulted in a shortfall of about 24 parking stalls. The city has added, however, 25 on-street parking stalls in the meantime. Even so, it still feels like there is an insufficient supply of parking in Old Bellevue.

Commissioner Walter noted that in the Comprehensive Plan update Policy TR-12 was eliminated. She said the comments about parking related to being development friendly were confusing; she said she could not imagine developers not wanting to come to Bellevue. The comment about the amount of parking affecting drive-alone behavior is not true; people do not drive based on whether or not there will be parking available, they drive because they need their cars. Currently there are few viable alternatives to driving alone and the number of parking spaces is unlikely to impact traffic.

Ms. Wilma said there are other topics that were highlighted by various stakeholders that did not get addressed in great detail by the CAC. The list includes issues related to garbage collection and the location of dumpsters; the desire to allow food trucks to operate in the downtown without crowding the streets and obstruct sidewalks; mechanical equipment that vents directly onto the sidewalk; vacant sites and buildings; and permitted uses. With regard to the latter, Ms. Wilma noted that there are more pets per household in the Northwest than there are children, but Bellevue code does not permit doggy daycare uses in the downtown. For each topic there may be quick fixes that could be made to accommodate downtown workers and residents.

Councilmember Stokes said the Bellevue Downtown Association offers tours of different cities. He said he participated in the tours of Denver, Austin and Pasadena and came away with the realization that a real difference in livability can be made in deciding how the sidewalks are to be treated. Downtown Bellevue is a destination place, but everything that can be done should be done to ensure it is safe, comfortable and inviting. Some of the things Kirkland and Redmond have done recently to create more walkable spaces may be applicable to Bellevue.

## 9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kathy Riley, a resident of Bellevue Towers, said downtown Bellevue is a vibrant environment and that is the very reason she chose to move to the downtown. She stressed the need to consider preserving major view corridors in the downtown as growth continues to occur. Views are an important part of downtown livability.

## 10. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

A. July 22, 2015

Mr. Inghram briefly reviewed upcoming agenda items and meeting dates.

## 11. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Walter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barksdale and it carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair deVadoss adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.