

BELLEVUE 2044

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation Environmental Impact Statement, Spring 2023

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is the vision for how our city grows and makes investments. The Plan guides city decisions about where we locate housing and jobs, and where we invest in transportation, utilities, parks, and other public assets. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update occurs every 8-10 years. Bellevue's most-recent periodic plan update occurred in 2015 with a horizon year of 2035. This update looks out to the year 2044.

Why is the city doing a Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update?

Washington State's Growth Management Act requires fast growing counties and the cities within them to review and, if needed, revise their comprehensive plans and development regulations every 8-10 years to ensure their plans and regulations comply with the requirements of the act. Bellevue has experienced significant growth in the last decade and is planning for continued growth in population and employment. More people mean increased demand for public and private spaces as well as utilities, transit, and other critical services.

The city's current Comprehensive Plan was built around an overall growth strategy to focus a majority of new growth in Bellevue's Downtown, which is a designated Regional Growth

Center, East Main, and the BelRed area. The remainder of the growth was planned for other mixed-use areas, such as Eastgate, Crossroads, Factoria, and other multifamily and commercial areas across the city. This growth strategy resulted in transportation investments around six new light rail stations as well as other infrastructure and capital facilities.

The current work to update the city's Comprehensive Plan will plan for growth of at least an additional 35,000 housing units and 70,000 jobs by the year 2044.

What is SEPA?

SEPA stands for the State Environmental Policy Act. SEPA is in Chapter 43.21C RCW (Revised Code of Washington) and is a Washington state law that helps agency decision-makers, applicants, and the public understand how a proposal would affect the environment.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is an informational document that provides the city, public, and other agencies with environmental information to be considered in the decision-making process. The city has determined the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) to prepare an EIS. For this update, the EIS will describe:

- Existing conditions in the city
- Proposed alternatives (e.g., new policies and growth strategies)
- Potential significant, unavoidable, and adverse impacts
- Mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts

What is the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process?

The DEIS analyzes the particular environmental concerns that were identified during the scoping phase. A separate analysis is prepared for each alternative. The purpose of the analysis is to estimate the nature, severity, and duration of impacts that might occur and to compare the impacts of the alternatives. The DEIS is made available to the public for review and comment. The city is looking for comments on the analysis of the affected environment, the impact analysis for each of the alternatives included in the DEIS, and potential mitigation measures for each of the alternatives.

How did public comments during the scoping period inform the DEIS?

Several changes were made to the alternatives in response to comments received during the scoping period. The Detailed Scoping Comment Summary posted on the city's website

describes all comments received in more detail, including an appendix with every comment. Below is a summary of common themes we heard:

Expand the BelRed Medical Office Node (BelRed MO-1) designation north of NE 12th

Street: All three alternatives expand the BR-MO-1 node increasing height and floor area ratio (FAR) allowance north of NE 12th Street.

Increase densities and height in BelRed: Further expansion of high-density node designations, primarily in Alternative 3.

Increase amount of residential allowed in the BelRed Medical Office Node area:

Increased allowance for residential within 0.5 miles of light rail in Alternative 3.

Expand low-density zoning: Increased density both in Neighborhood Centers and in multifamily areas to allow more mid-scale housing options.

Add density in areas with good transit access, as well as more housing options: The density assumed in Alternatives 2 and 3 for changes in areas with good access to transit, Neighborhood Centers, or major employment centers was increased to a low multifamily level.

Allow additional density in the lowest density areas of the city: Alternative 3 now allows increased dwelling units per acre to match other low-density areas of the city. This could allow large parcels within low-density areas to create additional housing while maintaining open space and natural areas.

Increase affordable housing incentives or requirements: Both approaches are being analyzed, but Alternative 3, which had previously matched Alternative 2's approach, was adjusted to reflect a stronger approach to a mandatory program and to analyze a wider variety of affordable housing approaches. Additional assumptions around affordable housing, such as continuation of existing programs, will be utilized in the economic analysis as well.

Increase housing capacity in the Wilburton study area: All three Wilburton study area alternatives increase density and allowance for residential uses. Alternative 3 was adjusted to include additional capacity along the east side of 116th Avenue NE, along 120th Avenue NE, and around Lake Bellevue.

Study extension of NE 6th Street to 120th Avenue NE: Alternative 0 now analyzes an extension of NE 6th Street to 116th Avenue NE. Alternative 3 now analyzes an extension of NE 6th Street to both 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE.

Retain medical focus across from Overlake Medical Center and Kaiser Permanente Bellevue Medical Center: All alternatives were adjusted to study primarily medical office uses in this area.

How can the community submit public comments on the DEIS?

The city issued a Notice of Availability (NOA) and request for comments on the DEIS on April 27, 2023. The 45-day public comment period begins 8:00 AM on Thursday, April 27, 2023, and ends at 4:30 PM on Monday, June 12, 2023.

The city will accept comments through an online portal, by email, by mail, or verbally at three public meetings in May and June. The city will host two in-person meetings at Crossroads Community Center on May 23 and Bellevue City Hall June 1. A virtual public meeting will also be held on May 18, 2023.

A court reporter will be in attendance at all three public meetings to transcribe comments.

What are the environmental elements will the city analyze in the DEIS?

The city has analyzed the following environmental elements in the Draft EIS:

- Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions
- Noise
- Land use patterns and urban form
- Aesthetics
- Relationship to plans, policies, and regulations
- Population and employment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Public services and utilities

What are the additional areas of study that the city is proposing to be analyzed to support the EIS analysis?

The city is providing additional information on:

- Displacement analysis
- Equitable impacts analysis

What is an alternative? How do the draft alternatives relate to the objectives?

Alternatives are different ways of achieving the proposal's purpose and need and serve as the basis for environmental analysis relative to elements of the environment. Potential alternatives have been drafted to give the community an idea about how growth might be

distributed and what form it might take. Key questions for the community to answer related to the potential alternatives during the DEIS phase include:

- What do you think of the alternatives and policies and how they best reflect the city's needs?
- Are the environmental conditions and potential impacts that were identified and studied the right ones? Why or why not?
- What potential mitigation measures would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance environmental quality?
- Is the information in the DEIS accurate?
- Where is additional clarification needed?

How will the preferred alternative be selected?

Alternatives are different ways of achieving the proposal's purpose and need and are the basis for environmental analysis. Environmental analysis is the process of studying each alternative and forecasting impacts on different elements of the environment such as land use and urban form, air quality, and noise.

Plan updates must include an alternative that represents no action. For purposes of the No Action Alternative, it is assumed that development would occur within the City of Bellevue based on the current Comprehensive Plan land use, zoning, and development standards. Action alternatives allow the city to evaluate a range of growth scenarios and test ideas, implications, benefits, and impacts. It is anticipated that the action alternatives will be based on variations of elements such as the amount and distribution of growth, and the implementation of new policies and infrastructure.

This EIS will analyze several alternatives. The Alternatives include a No Action Alternative and three Action Alternatives.

Analyzing different alternatives, and especially the differences between them, allows decision-makers and the public to compare the effects of different options and ultimately to select a preferred alternative which will inform the city's growth strategy.

The action alternatives are described in more detail on the project webpage found at www.bellevuewa.gov/2044-environmental-review.

What happens after the DEIS?

A Final EIS (FEIS) will be issued in 2023 and will include responses to public comments received during the DEIS comment period. The FEIS will study a Preferred Alternative that is within the range of the growth studied in the DEIS alternatives. Following the EIS process, the city will develop specific edits to the Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan that will be the subject of public meetings and public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council.

How did the city determine its housing and job growth targets?

The King County Countywide Planning Policies or CPPs adopt growth targets for jobs and housing units across cities in King County, including Bellevue. The 2019-2044 Bellevue jobs target is 70,000 new jobs. This will accommodate employment growth announced by specific companies and additional growth in the city. The 2019-2044 Bellevue housing target is 35,000 new units. Target setting occurred through a multi-year process in coordination with other cities and the county using policy guidance from Vision 2050, Bellevue's calculated capacity for new development, and the council vision and guidance.

Why is the city proposing analyzing beyond the minimum 35,000 additional housing unit target?

The city is proposing to analyze the impacts of development capacity that would occur beyond the 2044 growth targets (i.e. +70,000 additional jobs and +35,000 housing units). The DEIS will analyze an "informed build-out" scenario under each of the alternatives. In the alternatives studied in the DEIS, the city assumes that all developable or redevelopable parcels are built to a range of expected densities in each of the alternatives. It is very common for cities to have more capacity for development than their growth targets. The additional development capacity beyond the 2044 job and housing targets allows the city to meet its growth targets in different ways, letting potential developers respond to the market demands relating to the type of housing and commercial space and provide flexibility for market demands. The analysis in the DEIS will help the Planning Commission, City Council, and full range of stakeholders understand the potential impacts of development and identify mitigation measures that can be implemented to respond to those impacts when and if the development occurs.

Why is another DEIS for the Wilburton study area being conducted if one was already issued in 2018?

There have been many changes within and surrounding the Wilburton study area that make it challenging to pick up directly from the 2018 DEIS. This current DEIS will consider capacity for additional housing compared to what was analyzed in the 2018 DEIS. In addition, including the Wilburton study area in the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update EIS gives the city the ability to assess and communicate the impacts of the proposed Wilburton study area alternatives within the context of citywide growth.

How is this related to the Wilburton Commercial Area Study that was conducted by a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in 2017-2018?

The Wilburton study area alternatives build off the vision and recommendations from the Wilburton Commercial Area Study while considering updates to housing policy, affordable housing, growth targets, sustainability, equitable access, multimodal transportation, Grand Connection integration and impacts, and universal design. Alternatives will also incorporate the input of stakeholders and community members not previously engaged in the 2017-2018 effort.

Where can I learn more about the plan and the SEPA process?

Visit our website and sign up for project updates: www.bellevuewa.gov/2044-environmental-review

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The City of Bellevue assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and related statutes, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any City of Bellevue program or activity. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated may file a complaint with the ADA/Title VI Administrator. For Title VI complaint forms and advice, please contact the ADA/Title VI Administrator at 425-452-6168.

If you have any questions regarding the ADA statement above or need help, please reach out to ADA Coordinator Blayne Amson, bamson@bellevuewa.gov or 425-452-6168.

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