
# CHAPTER 5 Population and Employment

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines existing population demographics and employment data in Bellevue and considers the potential impacts of each alternative. Population data are from the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), City of Bellevue neighborhood profiles (2021), Census 2020, and 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. For the Wilburton study area, Esri Community Profile Estimates (2022) are used where data are otherwise not available for this geography. Note that Esri Community Profile Estimates are based on small amounts of data and therefore may not be reliable. Data on employment are from the City of Bellevue and the Washington State Employment Security Department. Data on exposure to traffic and contaminated sites are from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EJScreen tool.

This chapter focuses on the capacity and types of jobs in each alternative as well as the location of population in proximity to areas that may have pollution from traffic or contaminated sites. The chapter also includes analysis of the alternatives with respect to the city's Economic Development Plan.

The mitigation section includes features of the alternatives, other city programs and regulations, and other ways to address demographic and employment impacts.

# 5.2 Affected Environment

## 5.2.1 Current Policy and Regulatory Framework

The King County Countywide Planning Policies (2021) include a citywide target of 35,000 new housing units and 75,000 new jobs in Bellevue above 2019 conditions, by 2044. Additional information on the policy and regulatory framework can be found in Chapter 4, *Plans and Policies*.

The city's Economic Development Plan, adopted in 2020, includes a range of desired outcomes, one of which is:

- Employment opportunities and paths to prosperity for a wide range of residents and workers.

Relevant strategies in the plan include:

- **R 1.** Retain and recruit a healthy and diverse retail mix, including neighborhood- and resident-serving businesses throughout the city.
- **R 2.** Encourage the preservation of existing spaces and the creation of new spaces that are suitable for independent retail, neighborhood services, restaurant, and beverage establishments.
- **CE 1.** Enhance Bellevue's leading position in the digital creative sector and encourage linkages with the traditional creative sector where possible
- **SB 3.** Encourage the preservation of existing spaces and the creation of new spaces that are suitable for small businesses.

The plan also includes a Foundational Strategy to "encourage a variety of housing choices within the city."

## 5.2.2 Current Conditions

### POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

#### Population, Households, and Occupancy

The following is a summary of population, household, and occupancy data. Additional housing information can be found in Chapter 7, *Housing*.

The Washington OFM estimates Bellevue's 2022 population at 153,900 people, making it the second-largest city in King County. The estimated population of the Wilburton study area is 546, according to Esri's Community Profile for 2022.[1]

Per OFM 2022 estimates, there are approximately 65,891 housing units in Bellevue. Per 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, 93.9 percent of units in Bellevue are occupied. The average household size for the city overall is 2.48 persons (2021 ACS 5-year estimates). The average household size for renter-occupied units, per 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, is 2.25, and the average household size for owner-occupied units is 2.68.

According to City of Bellevue calculations, there were 64,000 housing units in the 2019 base year. 31,300 housing units (40 percent) were within low-density residential neighborhoods, while 29,700 were located within Mixed Use Centers (38 percent); 27,900 (36 percent) housing units were in transit-proximate areas, which overlap with Mixed Use and Neighborhood Centers in some places (see **Figure 5-1**). 400 units were in the Wilburton study area.

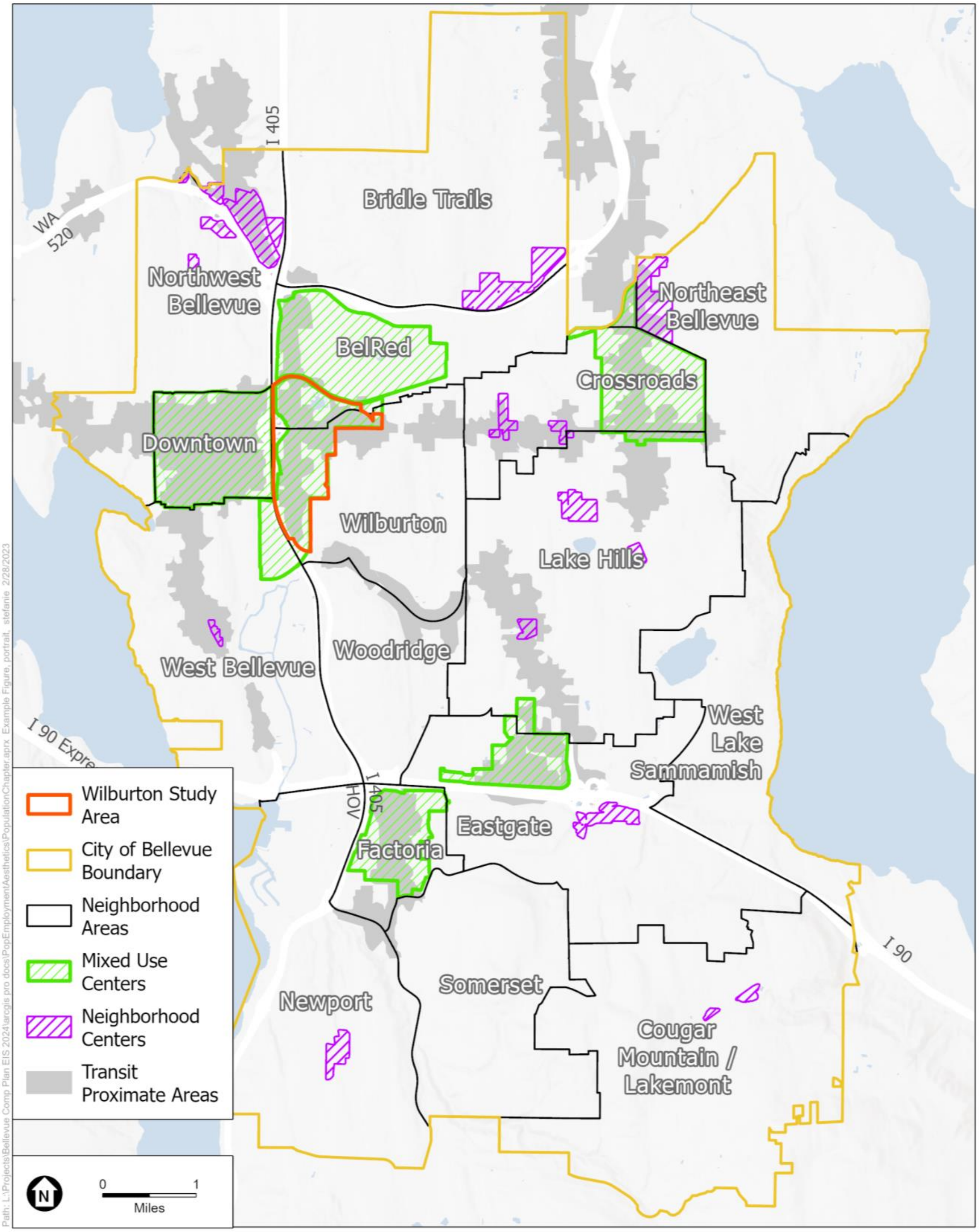
Per the 2021 Bellevue "Neighborhood Profiles," the average household size and vacancy rate vary by neighborhood. Vacancy rate by neighborhood is as high as 12 percent in Downtown and as low as 2 percent in Crossroads and BelRed. The Wilburton study area has an estimated 2022 vacancy rate of 2.9 percent. Average household size ranges from 1.7 (BelRed) to 3.1 (Cougar Mountain/Lakemont and Somerset). In the Wilburton study area, Esri estimates that the 2022 average household size is 1.63.

## Age

The median age in Bellevue is 37.9 years, with 21 percent of the population under 18 and 14 percent of the population over 65 (American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates).

This varies by neighborhood: neighborhoods with the highest share of youth under 18 include Cougar Mountain/Lakemont, Eastgate, Newport, Somerset, and West Lake Sammamish, while the lowest share is in BelRed and Downtown. In several neighborhoods, more than 15 percent of the population is over age 65: this includes BelRed, Newport, Northeast Bellevue, Northwest Bellevue, Somerset, and West Lake Sammamish (City of Bellevue Neighborhood Profiles 2021).

[1] Esri's Community Profile data are based on a small amount of data and may not be reliable. The senior living facilities in the Wilburton study area may not be included in this figure.




SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

FIGURE 5-1 **City of Bellevue Geographies**

The median age in the Wilburton study area is 40.1 as of 2022, per Esri Community Profile estimates. There are few existing residences in the Wilburton study area, and the two senior living facilities (Aegis Living and Husky Senior Care) likely contribute to a higher median age than the city overall.

## Race/Ethnicity

In the city overall, per Census 2020 estimates, white residents make up 44 percent of the population, Asian residents 41 percent, Black or African American residents 3 percent, American Indian or Native American residents less than 1 percent, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander less than 1 percent. Five percent of residents identify as two or more races, and 1 percent identify as some other race. Seven percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino (see **Table 5-1**).

TABLE 5-1 **Bellevue Population: Race and Ethnicity**

| Census Race and Ethnicity Category | Citywide (%) | Wilburton Study Area (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Not Hispanic or Latino | 93% | 95% |
| *White* | *44%* | *44%* |
| *Black or African American* | *3%* | *3%* |
| *American Indian or Alaska Native* | *<0.5%* | *<0.5%* |
| *Asian* | *41%* | *43%* |
| *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander* | *<0.5%* | *<0.5%* |
| *Some Other Race* | *1%* | *2%* |
| *Two or More Races* | *5%* | *8%* |
| Hispanic or Latino | 7% | 5% |

SOURCE: Census 2020; Esri Community Profile Estimates 2022 (Wilburton study area). Note that Esri Community Profiles are based on a small amount of data and may not be reliable.

Per Bellevue Neighborhood Profiles (2021), Crossroads has the highest percentage of nonwhite residents (64 percent) and Hispanic/Latino residents (13 percent) of any neighborhood in Bellevue. Asian residents make up more than 40 percent of the population in the Bridle Trails, Crossroads, Northwest Bellevue, Somerset, and Wilburton neighborhoods.[2] The Factoria and Wilburton neighborhoods have the highest percentage of Black residents, at 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

The Wilburton study area population is 44 percent white and 43 percent Asian, and 5 percent of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino (Esri Community Profiles).

Compared to the city as a whole, the BelRed, Cougar Mountain/ Lakemont, Downtown, Newport, Northeast Bellevue, West Bellevue, West Lake Sammamish, and Woodridge neighborhoods have a higher share of white residents (Bellevue Neighborhood Profiles 2021).

## Language

According to 2021 ACS 5-year Estimates, about 46 percent of Bellevue residents over age 5 speak a language other than English at home, and 15 percent speak English less than "very well"; 27 percent speak Asian or Pacific Island languages, 4 percent speak Spanish, 12 percent speak Indo-European languages other than Spanish, and 1 percent speak other languages (see **Table 5-2**).

TABLE 5-2 **Bellevue Population: Language**

| | Citywide (%) |
|---|---|
| Speak English less than "very well" | 15% |
| Speak a language other than English at home: | 46% |
| *Speak Asian or Pacific Island Languages* | *27%* |
| *Speak Spanish* | *4%* |
| *Speak Other Indo-European Languages* | *12%* |
| *Speak Other Languages* | *1%* |

SOURCE: American Community Survey 2021 (5-year estimates). These data only include residents over age 5.

As described in Bellevue's 2021 Neighborhood Profiles, all Bellevue neighborhoods have at least 9 percent of the population who speak English less than "very well", with Crossroads having the highest proportion (25 percent). Other neighborhoods with a high percentage of residents who speak English less than "very well" include Woodridge (16 percent), Somerset (16 percent), Bridle Trails

[2] The Wilburton neighborhood and Wilburton study area are not the same geography. The Wilburton study area is a subsection of the Wilburton neighborhood.

(17 percent), Wilburton (18 percent), Lake Hills (18 percent), and Factoria (19 percent).

The Crossroads neighborhood also has the largest proportion of residents speaking another language at home (59 percent): 28 percent of Crossroads residents speak an Asian or Pacific Island language, 10 percent speak Spanish, 25 percent speak an Indo-European language (other than Spanish), and 2 percent speak other languages.

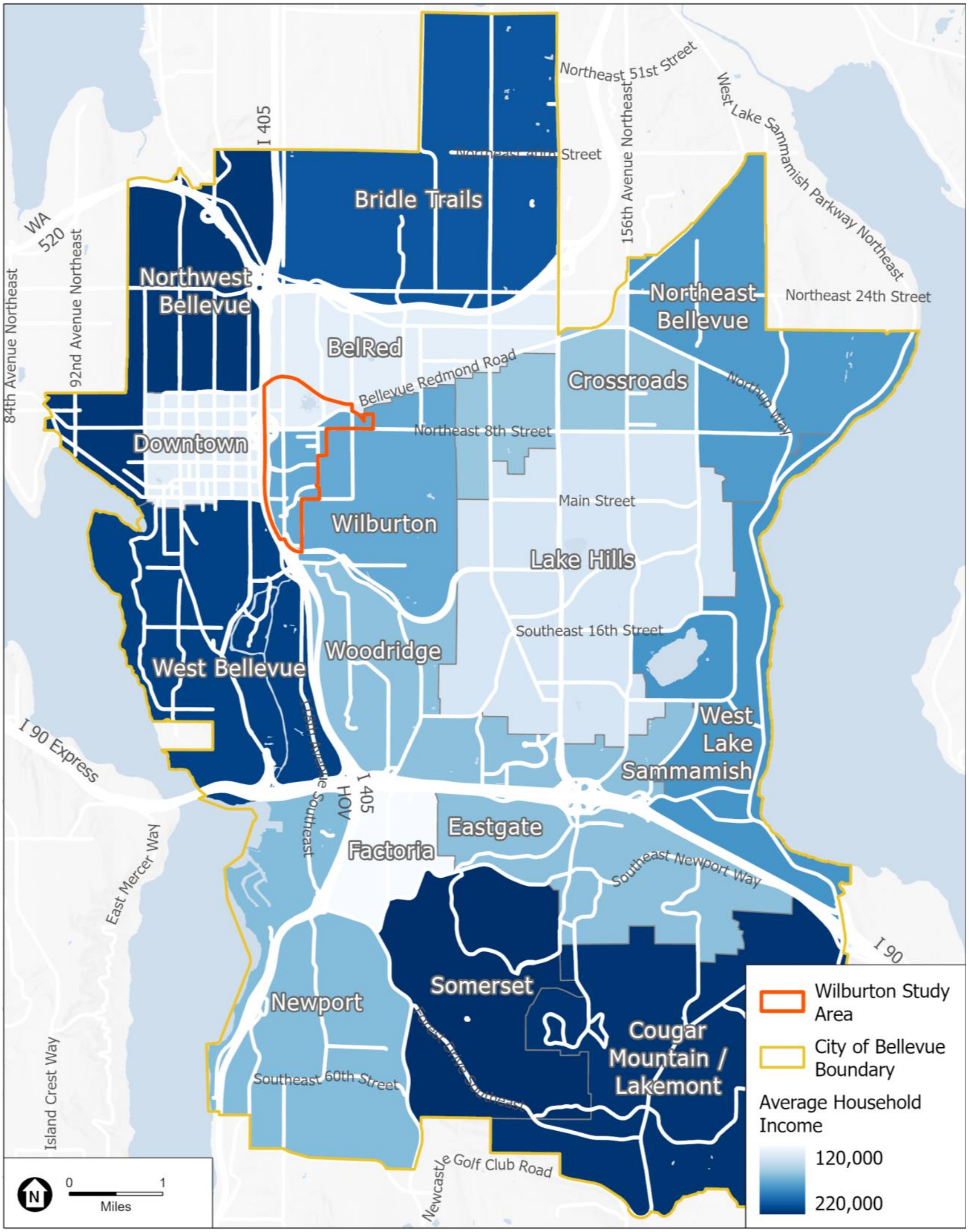
Neighborhoods with more than 25 percent of the population speaking an Asian or Pacific Island language include Cougar Mountain/Lakemont, Crossroads, Eastgate, Factoria, Northwest Bellevue, Somerset, and Wilburton. Somerset has the highest percentage of Asian or Pacific Island language speakers, at 37 percent. Spanish speakers are most prevalent in the Crossroads (10 percent) and Lake Hills (10 percent) neighborhoods. Neighborhoods with the highest share of population speaking an Indo-European language other than Spanish include Bridle Trails (21 percent) and Crossroads (20 percent).

In 13 of the 16 Bellevue neighborhoods, Mandarin Chinese is the most spoken non-English language. In the other three neighborhoods (BelRed, Crossroads, and Lake Hills), Spanish is the most spoken non-English language.

## Income

Per 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, the average (mean) household income in Bellevue is $192,078, and the median income is $140,252 (see **Figure 5-2**). This is substantially higher than the King County mean income ($145,743) and median income ($106,326). In the Wilburton study area, per Esri 2022 estimates, the mean household income is $167,039 and the median is $125,378.

Per the 2021 Neighborhood Profiles, neighborhoods with the lowest mean household income include Factoria ($122,313), BelRed ($131,799), and Downtown ($132,215). The highest average household incomes are in Somerset ($221,222), Cougar Mountain/ Lakemont ($219,219), and Northwest Bellevue ($218,6230). Some neighborhoods may have lower mean household incomes due to a larger share of one-person households, whereas some higher earning neighborhoods may have more households with dual incomes.




SOURCE: City of Bellevue Neighborhood Profiles (2021)

FIGURE 5-2 **Mean Income by Neighborhood**

## EMPLOYMENT

According to the Bellevue Economic Development Plan (adopted in 2020), the job growth trend in Bellevue is outpacing population growth. Bellevue has also become the second largest business center in Washington, after Seattle. However, since the publication of the Bellevue Economic Development Plan, employment has declined following national trends, likely due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. While some major Bellevue employers have slowed hiring or reduced their employee numbers in recent years, Bellevue is expected to remain an economic engine for the region.

### Jobs

Bellevue is a regional employment center with more than twice as many jobs as housing units. Job numbers grew between 2013 and 2018, with more than 17,500 new jobs created in Bellevue (according to the city's Economic Development Plan). Approximately 5,000 of these jobs were in Information Technology, which is consistent with Bellevue's reputation as a major technology innovation and engineering center.

As of 2019, there were nearly 149,000 jobs[3] in Bellevue (according to the Puget Sound Regional Council), with approximately 47 percent in Office jobs, 15 percent in Retail, 8 percent in Food, 8 percent in Services, 7 percent in Medical, 6 percent in Education, 4 percent in Government, 3 percent in Industrial, and 3 percent in Other sectors (see **Table 5-3)** (City of Bellevue 2023).

The Wilburton study area includes about 9,400 jobs (7 percent of all jobs in Bellevue), with about 41 percent of these jobs in the Medical sector and 23 percent in the Office sector (see **Table 5-4**) (City of Bellevue 2023). Several large medical facilities and office buildings are located in the Medical Institution and Medical Office zones within the Wilburton study area.

[3] This jobs number is based on covered employment (work that is covered by unemployment benefits when a worker becomes unemployed). King County uses covered employment to determine whether Bellevue is meeting its housing target. Other data sources may use other methods and therefore have differing job numbers.

TABLE 5-3 **Jobs by Sector Citywide, 2019**

| Sector | Percent of Total Jobs |
|---|---|
| Education | 5.8% |
| Food | 7.5% |
| Government | 3.6% |
| Industrial | 3.1% |
| Medical | 7.0% |
| Office | 46.6% |
| Retail | 15.3% |
| Services | 8.0% |
| Other | 3.1% |
| ***Total*** | ***100.0%*** |

TABLE 5-4 **Jobs by Sector in the Wilburton Study Area, 2019**

| Sector | Percent of Total Jobs |
|---|---|
| Education | 0.8% |
| Food | 9.3% |
| Government | 1.3% |
| Industrial | 0.3% |
| Medical | 40.7% |
| Office | 22.9% |
| Retail | 19.1% |
| Services | 4.2% |
| Other | 1.5% |
| ***Total*** | ***100.0%*** |

In 2019, Mixed Use Centers in Bellevue contained 95,000 jobs (69 percent of all jobs in Bellevue) and Neighborhood Centers included 8,600 jobs (6 percent of all jobs in Bellevue). About 61 percent of citywide jobs were within transit-proximate areas and 5 percent were in low-density residential areas (City of Bellevue 2023). Note that these geographies overlap to some extent (see Figure 5-1).

According to Bellevue's 2021 Neighborhood Profiles, the highest proportion of worker occupation type in any given neighborhood is Management, Business, Science, and Arts. At least 52 percent of workers in each Bellevue neighborhood work in these occupations, with the highest percentage Downtown (78 percent). Services occupations are most prevalent in Factoria (20 percent) and Lake Hills (18 percent), and Sales and Office occupations are most common in Newport (21 percent) and Northwest Bellevue (20 percent).

### Commercial Square Footage

Existing commercial square footage citywide totaled 50,700,000 square feet in 2019. Of this, 62 percent is in Mixed Use Centers. The Wilburton study area currently has 3,100,000 commercial square feet (6 percent of citywide) (City of Bellevue 2023).

52 percent of commercial square feet lies within transit-proximate areas, and 11 percent is within low-density residential areas. Only 6 percent of commercial square feet are in Neighborhood Centers (City of Bellevue 2023).

Of all Bellevue neighborhoods, Downtown has the most commercial square footage at 17,300,000 square feet. BelRed has the second highest (8,500,0000 square feet), and Eastgate has the third highest (6,400,000 square feet) (City of Bellevue 2023).

# 5.3 Potential Impacts

This section reviews potential population and employment impacts for each alternative. Table 5-6, below, provides a high-level summary of the findings.

## 5.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

In addition to a general analysis of population and employment impacts, two thresholds of significance are included in this chapter:

- **Economic vision:** The action would result in conflicts between the mix of jobs and the city's economic vision.
- **Exposure to contaminated sites and traffic:** The action would result in population growth in areas with high exposure to contaminated sites and proximity to traffic. This threshold focuses on the exposure of people to these impacts, rather than the impact to the environment itself, which is detailed in Chapter 8, *Air Quality and GHG Emissions*.

## 5.3.2 Impacts Common to All Alternatives

### POPULATION

All alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, will result in housing growth; however, the amount of capacity varies across alternatives. For the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternatives, the capacity for housing growth is higher than the citywide growth target of 35,000 new housing units by 2044. The potential impacts identified for the No Action Alternative and Action Alternatives include analysis of the "build-out" housing unit capacity associated with each alternative. It is not expected that the "build-out" housing capacity would all occur by 2044, but the EIS nonetheless assumes this growth when evaluating potential environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives. A discussion of the alternatives' impacts on housing and displacement can be found in Chapter 7, *Housing*.

Alternative 3 shows the greatest housing capacity of the alternatives: 95,000 more housing units than 2019. Using the 2022 citywide occupancy rate (93 percent) and household size (2.48), this equates to a population capacity range of 95,000 residents (No Action Alternative) to 219,000 (Alternative 3) residents. All the alternatives create more opportunities for affordable housing (see Chapter 7, *Housing*) and therefore could result in more housing opportunities for households with incomes below 80 percent Area Medium Income (AMI). This is especially true under the Action Alternatives. The Action Alternatives also provide for more diversity in housing types, which could attract a wider range of incomes and household sizes to Bellevue.

Population in the Wilburton study area is also expected to grow under all the alternatives, with capacity for 300 new housing units (or approximately 580 residents[4]) under the No Action Alternative, and substantially more new units (between 9,200 and 14,300) under the Action Alternatives. The housing capacities in Alternatives 2 and 3 equate to a population capacity of 27,330–27,530 residents in the Wilburton study area.

[4] For the Wilburton study area, all housing capacity under all alternatives is for multi-family housing. For this reason, all population analysis for the Wilburton study area uses the average household size for multi-family units of 2.07. The citywide occupancy rate of 93 percent is also used for these calculations.

## EMPLOYMENT

All alternatives would result in a greater capacity for jobs. For the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternatives, the capacity for job growth is higher than the citywide growth target of 70,000 new jobs by 2044. The potential impacts identified for the No Action Alternative and Action Alternatives include analysis of the "build-out" job capacity associated with each alternative. It is not expected that the "build-out" job capacity would all occur by 2044, but the EIS nonetheless assumes this growth when evaluating potential environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives.

The city's job target of 70,000 jobs by 2044 is consistent across all alternatives. This increase in jobs could result in an influx of residents of working age. Alternative 3 would see the largest job capacity of the alternatives, with a capacity for 200,000 new jobs. All the Action Alternatives would have capacity for more than double the regional target.

All alternatives increase the role of Mixed Use Centers as key areas of employment, with between 76 and 79 percent of total job capacity (compared to 62 percent of existing jobs). The share of job capacity in Neighborhood Centers also remains fairly constant, at 3 to 4 percent across all alternatives (compared to 4 percent of existing jobs).

All the alternatives also result in an increase in the share of job capacity in transit-proximate areas (from 61 percent today to 64–66 percent). All alternatives, including No Action, result in a decrease in the share of job capacity in low-density residential areas (5 percent of existing jobs, down to 2 percent of job capacity in all alternatives). The job mix would vary under each alternative due to different zoning and land use policies.

Under all the Action Alternatives, the Wilburton study area share of citywide job capacity increases substantially. As reflected in the No Action Alternative, 5 percent of Bellevue's job capacity is in the Wilburton study area. Under the Action Alternatives, the Wilburton study area would have capacity for 15 to 17 percent of potential Bellevue jobs. This capacity for new Wilburton study area jobs for the Action Alternatives would range between 38,100 and 44,800. The No Action Alternative, in comparison, sees a total capacity for 3,900 jobs.

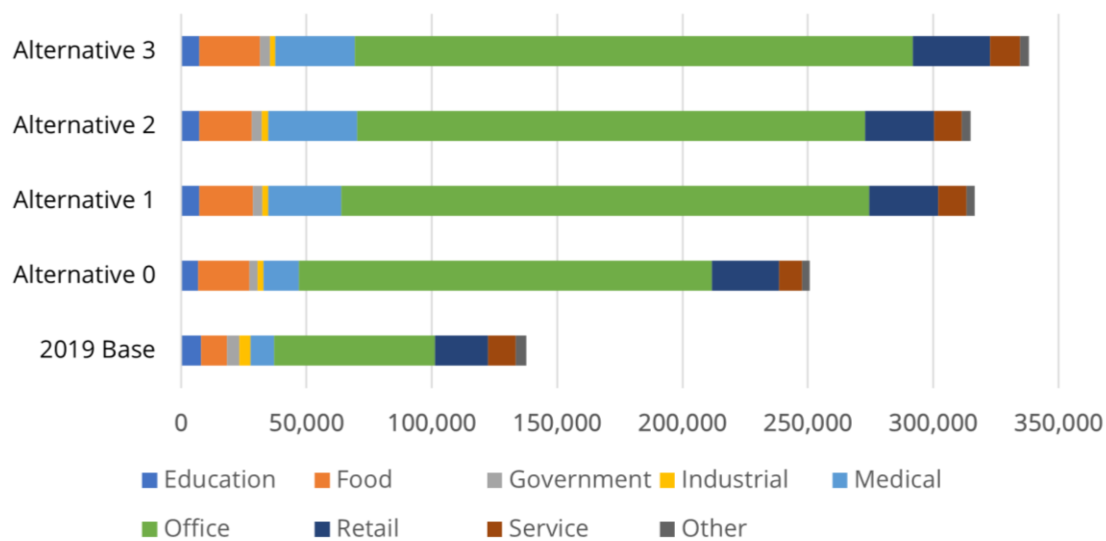
## CITY'S ECONOMIC VISION AND JOB MIX

Strategies in the Economic Development Plan (as described in Section 5.2.1, *Current Policy and Regulatory Framework*) suggest that a mix of job types, a diverse retail mix, and thriving digital and creative industries are priorities relating to employment. The plan also supports encouraging a variety of housing choices.

As of 2019, there were 148,560[5] jobs in Bellevue, with approximately 47 percent in Office jobs, 15 percent in Retail, 8 percent in Food, 8 percent in Services, 6 percent in Education, 4 percent in Government, 3 percent in Industrial, 7 percent in Medical, and 3 percent in Other sectors.

Under the No Action Alternative, the job capacity citywide includes 66 percent Office, 11 percent Retail, 8 percent Food, 4 percent Services, 3 percent Education, 1 percent Government, 1 percent Industrial, 5 percent Medical, and 1 percent Other.

The mix of job capacity under the Action Alternatives is consistent for the Services (3–4 percent), Education (2 percent), Government (1 percent), Food (7 percent), and Industrial (1 percent) sectors. Under all the Action Alternatives, Office jobs take up the greatest share of capacity (64–67 percent), with Alternative 1 having the greatest share of Office job capacity. The share of Medical job capacity is also higher under the Action Alternatives (9–11 percent), with Alternative 2 having the greatest share of Medical job capacity (11 percent). See **Figure 5-3**.




SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023

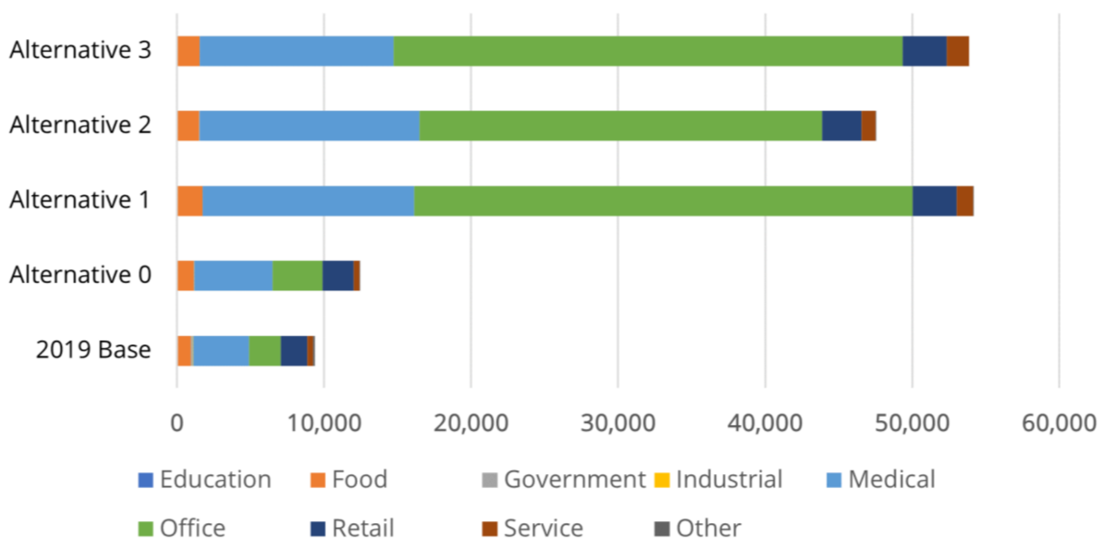
FIGURE 5-3 **Total Job Capacity (Citywide)**

[5] Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, covered employment. Covered employment includes jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance.

Note that although the alternatives create capacity for different job sectors at varying amounts, not all job types would be created at the same rate. The alternatives do not add jobs but set the regulatory conditions that create capacity for jobs.

In the Wilburton study area, capacity for jobs under the No Action Alternative is above the 2019 conditions: the Office sector has 23 percent of current jobs but 27 percent of job capacity, and the Medical sector has 41 percent of current jobs but 43 percent of capacity. The Services, Education, Retail, and Government sectors capacity under the No Action Alternative is slightly smaller than the share of jobs under current conditions, and the Food sector capacity matches the existing share of jobs at 9 percent.

Under the Action Alternatives for the Wilburton study area, the Office sector takes up a larger share (58–64 percent) and the Medical sector's share decreases (24–31 percent). Alternative 3 has the greatest change with 64 percent Office jobs and 24 percent Medical jobs. The Action Alternatives have a consistent share of Retail (6 percent), Services (3 percent), Education (less than 1 percent), Government (less than 1 percent), Food (3 percent), and Industrial (less than 1 percent). See **Figure 5-4**.




SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023

FIGURE 5-4 **Total Jobs (Wilburton Study Area)**

Citywide, all the alternatives grow the share of Office job capacity substantially above existing jobs and reduce the share of Retail, Services, Education, Government, and Industrial job capacity over existing jobs. Food job capacity remains fairly consistent with the current share of jobs at between 7 percent and 8 percent. Retail and

Services job capacity is above existing jobs in all the alternatives. Medical job capacity in all alternatives is higher than the number of existing medical jobs and takes up a larger share of job capacity under the Action Alternatives.

An increased emphasis on Office jobs could support the city's priority to support thriving digital industries but could also have the effect of displacing creative industries (Alternative 3 adds the most capacity for Office jobs). While Retail job *capacity* makes up a lower share than the share of existing Retail *jobs*, all alternatives show capacity for a greater number of Retail jobs than existed in 2019, with the most capacity in Alternative 3. A decrease in the capacity and share of capacity in some industries (Education, Government, and Industrial), however, could reduce the overall diversity of job types under all alternatives. All the Action Alternatives support more housing diversity by adding more variety in allowed housing types and incentives.

## EXPOSURE TO CONTAMINATED SITES AND PROXIMITY TO TRAFFIC

The EPA EJScreen tool provides multiple datasets on pollution that are included in this analysis:

- Traffic Proximity
- Superfund Proximity
- Risk Management Plan (RMP) Facility Proximity (facilities that use extremely hazardous substances)
- Hazardous Waste Proximity

The tool compares each Census block group with all others in the country. So, for example, a Census block group that is in the 80th percentile for traffic proximity has a greater proximity to traffic than 80 percent of other Census block groups in the country.

Most of the areas in Bellevue in the 80th–100th percentile for traffic proximity center around I-405 or I-90. An area around Bel-Red Road also includes some block groups between the 80th and 100th percentile for traffic proximity. All the alternatives include capacity for units in Downtown, BelRed, and Factoria, potentially exposing more residents to the air quality impacts of traffic. The Action Alternatives also add unit capacity to the Wilburton study area and an area of Newport with proximity to I-405. All the alternatives include housing unit capacity within 500 feet of highways, and the Action Alternatives add the most unit capacity. The Action

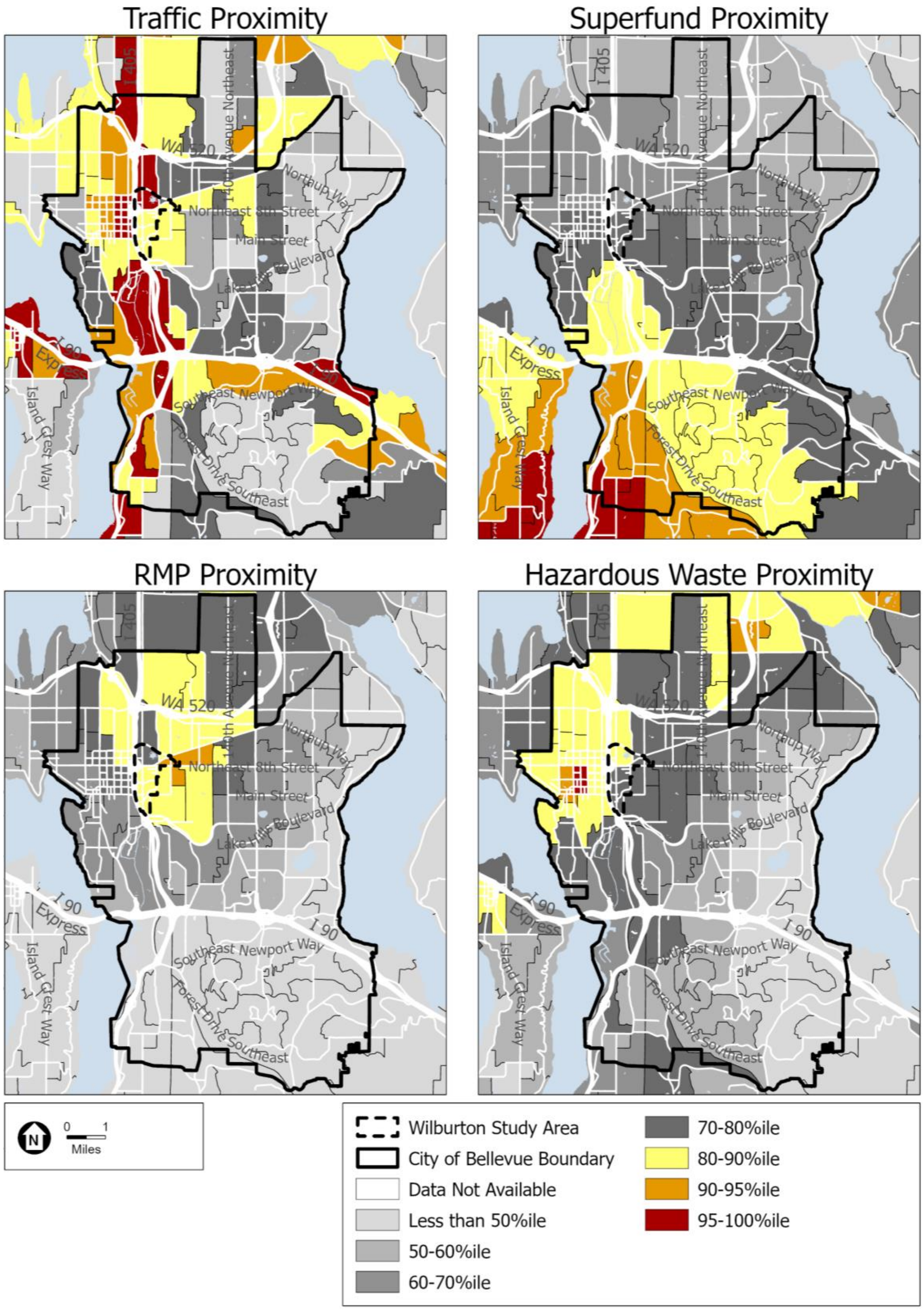
Alternatives would therefore have the greatest impacts of traffic proximity on new residents. See **Figure 5-5** and **Table 5-5**. Further discussion on air quality can be found in Chapter 8, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, and EIS Appendix G, *Climate Vulnerability Index.*

Most of the city is also below the 80th percentile for proximity to Superfund sites, although the southwest portion of the city ranges from the 80th–100th percentile. An existing area of housing unit density is present in the Factoria neighborhood, which is in an area in the 80th–95th percentile for proximity to these sites. All the alternatives include housing unit capacity in the Factoria area and a portion of the Newport neighborhood that is in the 90th–95th percentile. Alternative 3 would add the most unit capacity to these areas over the 80th percentile.

Most of Bellevue is below the 80th percentile for proximity to Risk Management Plan sites, although the northern portion of the city in the Wilburton study area and areas centering around Bel-Red Road range between the 80th and 95th percentile. This area already has substantial housing density, and all the alternatives, including the No Action, would add more unit capacity to this part of the city.

Per EJScreen's 2021 data, most of Bellevue is below the 80th percentile nationwide for proximity to hazardous waste facilities, with the exceptions of the northwestern portion of the city, which is in the 80–100th percentile and an area of the Bridle Trails neighborhood, which is in the 80th–90th percentile. The area with the highest percentile is Downtown. There is already an existing area of housing density concentrated Downtown, which has the closest proximity to hazardous waste facilities. All of the alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, place more capacity for housing units in the Downtown area. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would have comparable numbers of housing unit capacity Downtown (31,000–31,400), all higher than the No Action Alternative (28,700). Overall, Alternative 3 adds the most unit capacity in proximity to hazardous waste facilities.

All the Action Alternatives add capacity in areas of proximity to contamination and traffic, with Alternative 3 having the greatest impact. Section 5.4, *Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures*, describes possible mitigation measures to address these impacts.




SOURCE: EPA EJScreen (2021)

FIGURE 5-5 **Exposure to Contaminated Sites and Traffic**

TABLE 5-5 **Traffic and Contamination Proximity and Total Housing Unit Capacity**

| | Alt 0 | Alt 1 | Alt 2 | Alt 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit capacity in areas over 80th percentile for proximity to Superfund sites | 17,968 | 19,264 | 21,349 | 24,336 |
| Unit capacity in areas over 80th percentile areas for proximity to RMPs | 20,460 | 33,449 | 39,652 | 47,785 |
| Unit capacity in areas over 80th percentile areas for proximity to hazardous waste | 42,417 | 45,531 | 49,163 | 53,262 |
| Unit capacity in areas over 80th percentile areas for proximity to traffic | 51,098 | 63,715 | 72,706 | 79,008 |
| Unit capacity within 500 feet of highways | 3,874 | 5,418 | 6,430 | 7,855 |

SOURCE: EPA EJScreen; City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

## 5.3.3 Impacts of Alternative 0 (No Action)

The No Action Alternative assumes that growth would occur within current capacity. This includes capacity for 41,000 housing units (above the target of 35,000), or approximately 94,500 new residents. Most of this capacity is focused in the Downtown, BelRed, and East Main Mixed Use Centers in apartment buildings with studios and one-bedroom units. Population growth could impact Bellevue's overall demographics by moving to a smaller average household size and having fewer new units suitable for families and roommate living arrangements. The number of affordable housing units would likely grow under the No Action Alternative, leading to more options for residents with incomes below 80 percent AMI, although less so than under the Action Alternatives (see Chapter 7, *Housing*). The Wilburton study area could grow by up to 300 additional housing units (or 580 residents), which makes up less than 1 percent of the citywide housing capacity.

The No Action Alternative includes capacity for up to 124,000 new jobs. The capacity exceeds the growth target of 70,000 jobs. This includes capacity for up to 119,500 new jobs in Mixed Use Centers (96 percent of citywide capacity) and 2,900 new jobs in Neighborhood Centers. Capacity for 85,300 jobs is located within ¼ mile of the city's high frequency transit network (69 percent of new jobs). Office jobs make up the biggest share of job capacity (66 percent). Food sector jobs have an 8 percent share of job capacity, which is almost double the current number of food jobs. Medical (6 percent share) and Retail (11 percent share) have capacity for job numbers to grow to some extent, while Government (1 percent share), Industrial (1 percent share), and Services (4 percent share) job numbers could decrease. Again, this job capacity is based on current capacity under the current Comprehensive Plan.

With a potential increase in the share of Office jobs citywide, which tend to have a higher average annual wage than other job types, average incomes could rise for those who work in Bellevue.

The Wilburton study area could grow within its current capacity for up to 3,900 jobs, or 3 percent of the overall job growth citywide. Currently, the Wilburton study area share of existing citywide jobs is 7 percent, and the share of job capacity is 5 percent. The area has capacity for growth in the number of Food, Medical, Office, and Retail jobs, while jobs in Education, Government, and Industrial sectors could decrease. The No Action Alternative may not see much change in the number of Services jobs, since the existing jobs number is nearing the capacity for such jobs. Again, with capacity for growth in Office and Medical jobs, average incomes of Bellevue workers could increase.

The No Action Alternative generally aligns with city's Economic Development Plan by emphasizing Office job capacity, which could support digital industries. Along with the other alternatives, the No Action Alternative includes capacity for more Retail jobs than currently exist, which could support a diverse retail mix and spaces for small businesses. However, the mix of job types could skew toward Office jobs, since 66 percent of capacity is for this job type, which may result in less job diversity overall. An emphasis on Office jobs could also have business displacement impacts on creative industries. The No Action Alternative also lacks new policies and strategies to encourage a wider variety of housing options, as the Action Alternatives do. Overall, the No Action Alternative does not conflict with the Economic Development Plan in ways that could not be mitigated.

The No Action Alternative includes housing capacity in areas close to traffic and possible contamination, as described in Table 5-5. However, this capacity is substantially lower than the housing unit capacity in these areas in the Action Alternatives. This is particularly true for areas proximate to RMPs and within 500 feet of highways: Alternative 3 has more than double the unit capacity than the No Action Alternative for these areas.

### 5.3.4 Impacts of Alternative 1

While the city's growth target is the same under all alternatives at 35,000 new housing units, Alternative 1 includes capacity for 59,000 new housing units citywide, which could house up to 136,000 new residents. Additional capacity above the growth target does not signify that the city will grow by that amount over the 20-year period, as growth is dependent on additional factors outside of capacity.

Capacity under Alternative 1 would primarily occur across the city's Mixed Use Centers (Downtown, BelRed, Wilburton-East Main, Crossroads, Factoria, and Eastgate). In Mixed Use Centers, incentives for larger units with two or more bedrooms could lead to more families and roommate households living in Bellevue and could impact the average household size. Like the other alternatives, affordable housing policies could lead to more affordable units, leading to more options for residents making less than 80 percent AMI. The city would also see capacity for gentle density increases in lower density residential neighborhoods, through the allowance of duplexes, triplexes, cottage housing, or other low-density housing types. This could attract larger households that cannot afford single-family houses in Bellevue.

The Wilburton study area includes capacity for an additional 9,200 housing units (or up to 17,700 residents) and would increase its share of citywide housing unit capacity from 0.7 to 8 percent. Growth in the Wilburton study area would be focused around the Wilburton Light Rail Station, Eastrail, and the Grand Connection.

Alternative 1 includes job capacity in Bellevue by up to 179,000 (to a total of 317,000 jobs). Capacity for 171,200 new jobs (96 percent of new citywide capacity) would be located in Mixed Use Centers, with added capacity for 2,800 jobs in Neighborhood Centers. Transit-proximate areas would include capacity for 123,100 jobs new (69 percent of the added job capacity).

The job mix under Alternative 1 includes a lower share of capacity for Retail jobs (9 percent) than the capacity under the No Action Alternative (11 percent), and a lower share of capacity for Services jobs (3 percent, compared to 4 percent in the No Action Alternative). Alternative 1 has higher shares of Office capacity (67 percent) and Medical capacity (9 percent) than under the No Action Alternative. Citywide, this mix of jobs would be likely to have a higher average wage than under the No Action Alternative, and slightly higher than under Alternatives 2 and 3.

In the Wilburton study area, capacity for 44,800 jobs would be added (25 percent of the new citywide job capacity). The Wilburton study area would then include capacity for 17 percent of the total jobs in Bellevue (up from 5 percent under the No Action Alternative). Compared to the No Action Alternative, Alternative 1 would have a lower share of capacity for Medical jobs (27 percent, compared to 43 percent) and a much higher share of capacity for Office jobs (62 percent, compared to 27 percent). Retail would also take a lower share of the job capacity (6 percent, compared to 17 percent under the No Action Alternative). An increase in the share of Office job capacity could increase the average wage of Wilburton study area jobs, higher than under the No Action Alternative.

Like the other alternatives, Alternative 1 aligns with the city's Economic Development Plan by adding job capacity overall, emphasizing Office job capacity, and adding capacity for more Retail jobs. Alternative 1 also encourages a wider variety of housing than the No Action Alternative. While an emphasis on Office jobs could result in some impacts on job diversity and spaces for creative industries, impacts are not expected to be unavoidable and significant.

Alternative 1 adds housing capacity above the No Action Alternative in areas close to traffic and possible contamination, as shown in Table 5-5. However, capacity under Alternatives 2 and 3 is higher for these areas.

### 5.3.5 Impacts of Alternative 2

Alternative 2 includes capacity for 77,000 new housing units citywide, which could house up to 177,600 residents. Like the other alternatives, this exceeds the target of 35,000 housing units. Additional capacity does not mean that the total number of possible units would be built in the 20-year period, since housing development depends on multiple factors.

Under this alternative, capacity is focused in Mixed Use Centers and areas with good access to transit and jobs. Apartments would mostly include studios and one-bedrooms, which could attract single-person and couple households to Bellevue. Opportunities for affordable units would also grow, leading to more housing options for households making less than 80 percent AMI. Duplexes and other low-density housing types would be allowed across the city. This alternative would also create more lot subdivision and ownership opportunities for these low-density housing types, which could provide options for first-time homebuyers, including young families, and for older adults to remain in place.

In the Wilburton study area, the alternative includes capacity for 14,200 housing units, or up to 27,300 new residents. The Wilburton study area share of the citywide housing capacity would be 15 percent, compared to less than 1 percent of the existing capacity.

Alternative 2 includes capacity for 177,000 new jobs (for a total of 315,000); 168,500 (or 95 percent) of this capacity for new jobs would be in Mixed Use Centers and 3,800 would be in Neighborhood Centers; 70 percent of the capacity for new jobs (124,000) would be located within ¼ mile of the high-frequency transit network. The job mix in this alternative would include a slightly lower share of capacity for Office jobs (64 percent) than under the No Action Alternative (66 percent). Medical jobs would take a larger share of the capacity (11 percent) than any of the other alternatives (5–9 percent). Retail job capacity would be the same share as under Alternative 1 (9 percent) and lower than the No Action Alternative (11 percent). This mix of jobs could result in a similar citywide average wage to Alternative 1, and higher wage than the No Action Alternative.

Under Alternative 2, the Wilburton study area would see capacity for 38,100 new jobs (22 percent of the city's new job capacity). The Wilburton study area's share of the total citywide job capacity would be 15 percent. Office jobs would take a much greater share (58 percent) of total Wilburton study area job capacity than the No Action Alternative (27 percent), but a lower share than under Alternative 1. Medical jobs would be a lower share of capacity (31 percent) than the No Action Alternative (43 percent), but slightly higher than Alternative 1 (27 percent). Services and Retail jobs share of capacity would be consistent with Alternative 1 (lower than the No Action Alternative). Average wages for jobs in the Wilburton study area could be higher than under the No Action Alternative and comparable to Alternative 1.

Similar to Alternatives 0, 1, and 3, Alternative 2 generally aligns with the city's Economic Development Plan. This alternative adds job capacity citywide, with an emphasis on Office job capacity. It also adds more capacity for Retail jobs. Alternative 2, like the other Action Alternatives, also provides policies that support a wider variety of housing options than the No Action Alternative. Similar impacts on job diversity and spaces for creative industries as the other alternatives would be expected, although these are unlikely to be unavoidable and significant.

Alternative 2 adds housing capacity above the No Action Alternative in areas close to traffic and possible contamination (see Table 5-5). It includes more housing capacity in these areas than the No Action

Alternative, but less capacity than Alternative 3. This is true for areas proximate to Superfund sites, RMPs, hazardous waste, and traffic, and for areas within 500 feet of highways.

### 5.3.6 Impacts of Alternative 3

Alternative 3 includes capacity for 95,000 new housing units citywide, which could house up to219,100 new residents. This exceeds the target for 35,000 new units. Capacity above the 35,000-unit target does not indicate that more units would be built, as housing development depends on a variety of factors in addition to capacity.

Alternative 3 would place much of this new housing capacity in Neighborhood and Mixed Use Centers, and areas close to transit. Similar to Alternative 2, apartments in Alternative 3 would mostly consist of studio and one-bedroom units, which best suit single-person and couple households. As under the other alternatives, more affordable units would result in more options for households making less than 80 percent AMI. Gentle density increases would also be allowed citywide. Like in Alternative 2, this alternative would create more lot subdivision and ownership opportunities for duplexes, triplexes, and cottage homes. This could influence the city's demographics by attracting first-time homebuyers and older adults.

In the Wilburton study area, capacity for 14,300 housing units could be added (100 more units than under Alternative 2), which could result in up to 27,500 new Wilburton study area residents. The Wilburton study area's share of citywide housing capacity would be 9 percent, compared to less than 1 percent of current capacity.

Alternative 3 would result in the greatest new job capacity of all the alternatives. Capacity for 200,000 more jobs would be added citywide, resulting in a total capacity of 338,000 jobs in Bellevue. Mixed Use Centers would account for 92 percent of this added job capacity (184,500 jobs) and Neighborhood Centers would take 2 percent (3,800 jobs). About 67 percent of new job capacity (133,000) would be located in transit-proximate areas. Similar to the other alternatives, the job mix would be predominantly capacity for Office jobs (66 percent) with a larger share of Medical job capacity (9 percent) than under the No Action Alternative (5 percent). Changes in the job mix in Alternative 3 could result in higher average wages than under the No Action Alternative, similarly to Alternatives 1 and 2.

The Wilburton study area would add capacity for 44,500 jobs under Alternative 3 (22 percent of new citywide job capacity). The Wilburton study area would also include 16 percent of the city's total job capacity (up from 5 percent of current capacity). The job mix, like under Alternatives 1 and 2, would be mostly capacity for Office jobs (64 percent), much higher than under the No Action Alternative (27 percent). Medical job capacity would be a lower share (24 percent) than under the No Action Alternative (43 percent), Alternative 1 (27 percent), and Alternative 2 (31 percent). Like Alternatives 1 and 2, Retail would only be 6 percent of total job capacity (compared to 17 percent under the No Action Alternative). Similar to Alternatives 1 and 2, average wages could rise higher than under the No Action Alternative.

Like the other alternatives, Alternative 3 aligns with the city's Economic Development Plan. It adds the most job capacity of all the alternatives. Most of the job capacity share is in the Office sector, which could support digital industries. More capacity for Retail jobs is also included. Like the other Action Alternatives, Alternative 3 also supports a wider variety of housing options than the No Action Alternative. Some impacts on job diversity and spaces for creative industries could be expected due to the emphasis on Office jobs, although these are unlikely to be unavoidable and significant.

Alternative 3 adds the greatest housing capacity above the No Action Alternative in areas close to traffic and possible contamination, as described in Table 5-5. This applies to areas proximate to Superfund sites, RMPs, hazardous waste, and traffic, and for areas within 500 feet of highways. For some areas, such as those proximate to RMPs and within 500 feet of highways, the capacity under Alternative 3 is more than double the capacity under the No Action Alternative.

## 5.3.7 Summary of Impacts

**Table 5-6** summarizes and compares impacts across the alternatives.

TABLE 5-6 **Population and Employment Impacts Summary**

| | No Action Alternative | Alternative 1 | Alternative 2 | Alternative 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CITYWIDE** | | | | |
| Housing Target | 35,000 (same for all alternatives) | | | |
| Job Target | 70,000 (same for all alternatives) | | | |
| New Housing Units Capacity | 41,000 (Lowest) | 59,000 | 77,000 | 95,000 (Highest) |
| Population Capacity | 94,500 (Lowest) | 136,000 | 177,600 | 219,100 (Highest) |
| Job Capacity | 124,000 (Lowest) | 179,000 | 177,000 | 200,000 (Highest) |
| Job Sector Mix | Mostly Office (66%), Lower Share of Medical (5%), Highest Share of Retail (11%) | Mostly Office (67%), Higher Share of Medical (9%), Lower Share of Retail (9%) | Mostly Office (64%), Highest Share of Medical (11%), Lower Share of Retail (9%) | Mostly Office (66%), Higher Share of Medical (9%), Lower Share of Retail (9%) |
| Population Capacity Near Contaminated Sites and Traffic | Lowest Impact | Higher Impact | Higher Impact | Highest Impact |
| Alignment with Economic Dev. Plan | Aligns (job capacity in Office and Retail) | Aligns (job capacity in Office and Retail, housing diversity) | Aligns (job capacity in Office and Retail, housing diversity) | Aligns. (job capacity in Office and Retail, housing diversity) |
| Average Wages | Higher than existing | Higher than Alt 0 | Higher than Alt 0 | Higher than Alt 0 |
| **WILBURTON STUDY AREA** | | | | |
| New Housing Units Capacity | 300 (Lowest) | 9,200 | 14,200 | 14,300 (Highest) |
| Population Capacity | 580 (Lowest) | 17,700 | 27,300 | 27.500 (Highest) |
| Job Capacity | 3,900 (Lowest) | 44,800 (Highest) | 38,100 | 44,500 |
| Job Sector Mix | Medical sector is largest (43%), Office 27%, Retail 17% | Office sector is largest (62%), Medical 27%, Retail 6% | Office sector is largest (58%), Medical 31%, Retail 6% | Office sector is largest (64%), Medical 24%, Retail 6% |
| Population Capacity Near Contaminated Sites and Traffic | Lowest Impact (least capacity) | Higher Impact | Higher Impact | Highest Impact (most capacity) |
| Alignment with Economic Dev. Plan | Least Aligned | Aligns (job capacity in Office and Retail, housing diversity) | Aligns (job capacity in Office and Retail, housing diversity) | Aligns (job capacity in Office and Retail, housing diversity) |
| Average Wages | Higher than existing | Higher than Alt 0 | Higher than Alt 0 | Higher than Alt 0 |

SOURCE: BERK 2023

NOTE: Population capacity is estimated based on the citywide occupancy rate (93 percent) and average household size (2.48 persons Citywide, 2.07 for the Wilburton study area). Housing capacity in the Wilburton study area is all multi-family units, so the average household size used for the Wilburton analysis is the average household size for multi-family units.

# 5.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

## 5.4.1 Incorporated Plan Features

All the Action Alternatives increase capacity for jobs and support the strategies of the city's Economic Development Plan.

## 5.4.2 Regulations and Commitments

The Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element and the city's Economic Development Plan include policies and strategies to build capacity, support entrepreneurs, expand the workforce, promote a diverse and healthy retail mix, and support a thriving creative and tourism economy.

Land Use Code (Title 20) establishes zoning and development regulations, which govern permitted uses and site planning.

## 5.4.3 Other Proposed Mitigation Measures

In addition to the measures addressed in Chapter 3, *Land Use Patterns and Urban Form*, and Chapter 8, *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the city could consider the following to address potential impacts on business displacement, implementation of the city's Economic Development Plan, and exposure to contaminated sites and traffic:

- **Mitigate displacement of existing small businesses.** In support of the Economic Development Plan's strategy to preserve spaces suitable for small businesses, the city could explore creating a program to ensure that affordable office and retail spaces are available. The programs could consider financial incentives (such as tax abatements similar to an office/retail equivalent of the Multi-family Tax Exemption [MFTE]), technical assistance and outreach, or the integration of office/retail affordability with livability initiatives.
- **Reduce Exposure to Contaminated Sites and Traffic.** All the alternatives add population capacity in areas with exposure to contaminated sites and traffic. The city's Air Quality and Land Use Planning 2023 report includes a range of mitigation strategies, including reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), retrofitting diesel vehicles, electrifying the city's fleet, transit-oriented development,

land use buffers, improved urban design, roadside barriers, decking or lids over highways, and building design strategies. Land use buffers could include designating areas near high-impact areas as industrial or other nonresidential zones, to ensure distance between these areas and residences. Bellevue could also limit residential uses within a certain distance of contaminated sites and freeways.

- **Wilburton Study Area: Zoning and Development Regulations.** The Action Alternatives would require changes in zoning and development regulations in the Wilburton study area. This would be an opportunity for Bellevue to specify allowed uses in the Wilburton study area to best align with the city's Economic Development Plan.

## 5.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Under all alternatives, additional population and job growth would occur citywide and in the Wilburton study area. Effects on population growth from contaminated sites and traffic could be mitigated through the strategies in Section 5.4.3 above. All the alternatives align to some extent with the city's Economic Development Plan, and no unavoidable conflicts are expected. **Significant unavoidable adverse impacts on population and employment are not expected under any alternative.**