CHAPTER 6 Aesthetics

6.1 Introduction

The aesthetics analysis reviews possible impacts on the physical character of Bellevue, including citywide changes and an in-depth look at the Wilburton study area. This chapter includes a range of topics, such as urban form; viewsheds; and shadows, light, and glare.

Other chapters examine related thresholds, such as Chapter 3, *Land Use Patterns and Urban Form*, regarding compatibility and access to community assets.

6.2 Methods

Analysis of aesthetic impacts is subjective and can vary based on individual preferences. The No Action Alternative is provided as a basis for the analysis, which includes existing conditions and development that could occur under current regulations.

Analysis of urban form in this chapter is primarily based on the amount of potential population, employment, and commercial square footage growth in various geographic areas within the alternatives. Each alternative, as described in Chapter 2, *Alternatives*, also includes some policy assumptions that could impact aesthetics, such as height limits and housing types.

Viewshed analysis at the city level is also based on the assumption that higher densities in some areas will lead to larger and taller buildings, which could obstruct views of certain landmarks. In the

Wilburton study area specifically, a 3D model of the potential building envelopes is used to examine view impacts at eye level.

Shadow, light, and glare analysis citywide is also based on growth assumptions, as more density typically leads to larger buildings that cast shadows and contribute to light and glare. Higher densities may also contribute to more vehicle traffic, which is also associated with light impacts. Several specific public spaces are analyzed for possible shadow impacts based on where growth is added under each alternative. For the Wilburton study area, the 3D model is used to review shadow impacts at key locations.

Key terms in this chapter include:

- **Aesthetics**: The visual characteristics of a place.
- **Bulk:** The physical size of buildings, including height, width, and depth.
- **Scale:** How buildings or other features relate to one another, and how large they feel to pedestrians within a space.

6.3 Affected Environment

This section describes current policies and built environment conditions for urban form in Bellevue. See Chapter 3, *Land Use Patterns and Urban Form*, for a description of the overall land use and built environment context in Bellevue.

6.3.1 Aesthetics-Related Policies, Design Guidelines, and other Considerations

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan includes an Urban Design and the Arts Element, with 85 policies in total. Several policies are especially relevant to this chapter's analysis of citywide aesthetics:

- **UD-6.** Encourage the green and wooded character of existing neighborhoods. [under Residential Neighborhoods]
- **UD-7.** Support neighborhood efforts to maintain and enhance their character and appearance. [under Residential Neighborhoods]
- **UD-11.** Develop Downtown and other mixed use areas to be functional, attractive, and harmonious with adjacent neighborhoods by considering through-traffic, view, building scale, and land use impacts.

- **UD-43.** Permit high-intensity development subject to design criteria that assures a livable urban environment. [under Design Quality – Downtown, Commercial, and Mixed Use Developments]
- **UD-48.** Link increased intensity of development with increased pedestrian amenities, pedestrian-oriented building design, through-block connections, public spaces, activities, openness, sunlight, and view preservation.
- **UD-59.** Ensure public places give access to sunlight, a sense of security, seating, landscaping, accessibility, and connections to surrounding uses and activities.
- **UD-62.** Identify and preserve views of water, mountains, skylines, or other unique landmarks from public places as valuable civic assets.

The Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan also includes a policy related to retaining and enhancing views of Downtown, significant panoramas, and natural features (S-WI-40). The Wilburton study area is a subsection of the Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea.

Bellevue has also established design guidelines within the Land Use Code (Title 20) for some special and overlay districts:

- Downtown Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25A.140).
- Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25). The Pedestrian Corridor extends from the Bellevue Square regional shopping center to 110th Avenue NE, along the alignment of NE 6th Street.
- Transition Area Design District (LUC 20.25B). This provides a buffer between residential uses in a residential land use district and a land use district that permits higher intensity development. This includes where multi-family development is planned adjacent to single-family residential, and where commercial development is planned adjacent to any residential uses.
- Office and Limited Business (OLB) 2 Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25C).
- BelRed Subarea Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25D.150).
- Factoria TownSquare Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25).
- Community Retail Design District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25I). These guidelines apply to all properties within Community Business Districts, all Neighborhood Mixed Use Districts, and all properties within Neighborhood Business Districts.

- Medical Institution District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25J).
- Light Rail Overlay District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25M).
- Camp and Conference Center District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25N).
- Eastgate Transit-Oriented Development Land Use District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25P).
- East Main Transit-Oriented Development Land Use District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25Q).

The Phase 1 Community Engagement report for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update revealed that community members continue to value aesthetics. In response to the "*What is something you love about Bellevue that you want future generations to enjoy?*" questionnaire question, 18 percent of questionnaire respondents mentioned "community and city character," and 65 percent of respondents mentioned "parks and green space."

6.3.2 Urban Form

The physical character of the city varies considerably, from low-density residential areas to mixed use neighborhoods, office parks, commercial centers, and high-rise Downtown towers. Known as a "City in a Park," Bellevue also has more than 2,700 acres of parks and open space and over 90 miles of multi-use trails. Street trees are present along many major roads throughout Bellevue, with a concentration of street trees in the Downtown area.

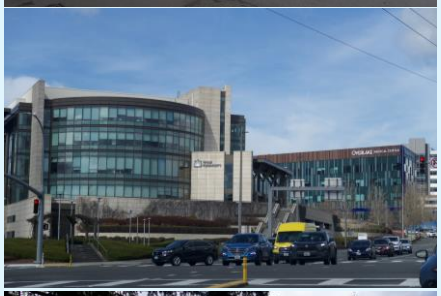
The Wilburton study area, located within the larger Wilburton/NE 8th Street and BelRed subareas, is located immediately east of I--405 and across from Downtown Bellevue. It includes a mix of retail and commercial uses, the Medical Institution District, and Auto Row along 116th Avenue NE. Overall, the Wilburton study area is characterized by low-density buildings in a pattern of auto-oriented development. Several small clusters of multi-family buildings are present: they are located along NE 8th Street (east and west of 124th Avenue NE), in the northwest corner of Lake Bellevue, and along 118th Avenue SE. Natural features in the Wilburton study area include Sturtevant Creek, which connects to Lake Bellevue and follows portions of Eastrail corridor and I-405, and a wetland west of 116th Avenue NE. Street trees are present throughout the study area, primarily on 116th Avenue NE, 120th Avenue NE, NE 12th Street, and NE 4th Street. In the future, the Wilburton study area will be a key destination for walking and biking along Eastrail and the Grand

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023 (upper left), Wikimedia Commons 2012 (lower left), ESA 2023

Bellevue's built form varies: The city includes areas of tall towers, mixed use areas, office parks, low-density residential, shopping centers, and multifamily housing, among other building types.

Connection. The future Wilburton Light Rail Station on NE 8th Street will also connect Wilburton to other parts of the city and region.

Other countywide Mixed Use Centers in Bellevue, including BelRed, Crossroads, Eastgate, Factoria, and Downtown, also have their own distinct character. BelRed is in the process of transitioning from a light industrial form to a transit-oriented mixed use neighborhood. Crossroads currently has a mix of large apartments, restaurants, and retail, including the large Crossroads Shopping Center. There is also a small pocket of two dozen single-family homes. Downtown has a mix of high-rise towers (between 45 and 60 stories), mid-rise buildings, and low-rise retail centers with large surface parking lots. Bellevue Downtown Park, Ashwood Park, and Meydenbauer Bay Park provide green space in this dense part of the city. Eastgate and Factoria have a mix of commercial office, retail, and multi-family housing.


SOURCE: Photos by ESA 2023
Wilburton currently includes a mix of uses and building types, including low-density commercial, medical institutions, and a small amount of multi-family housing.

6.3.3 Viewsheds

Bellevue has views of several regional landmarks, including Mount Rainier, the Cascade mountains, Lake Washington, and Lake Sammamish. Views of the Bellevue skyline are also present in some areas of the city.

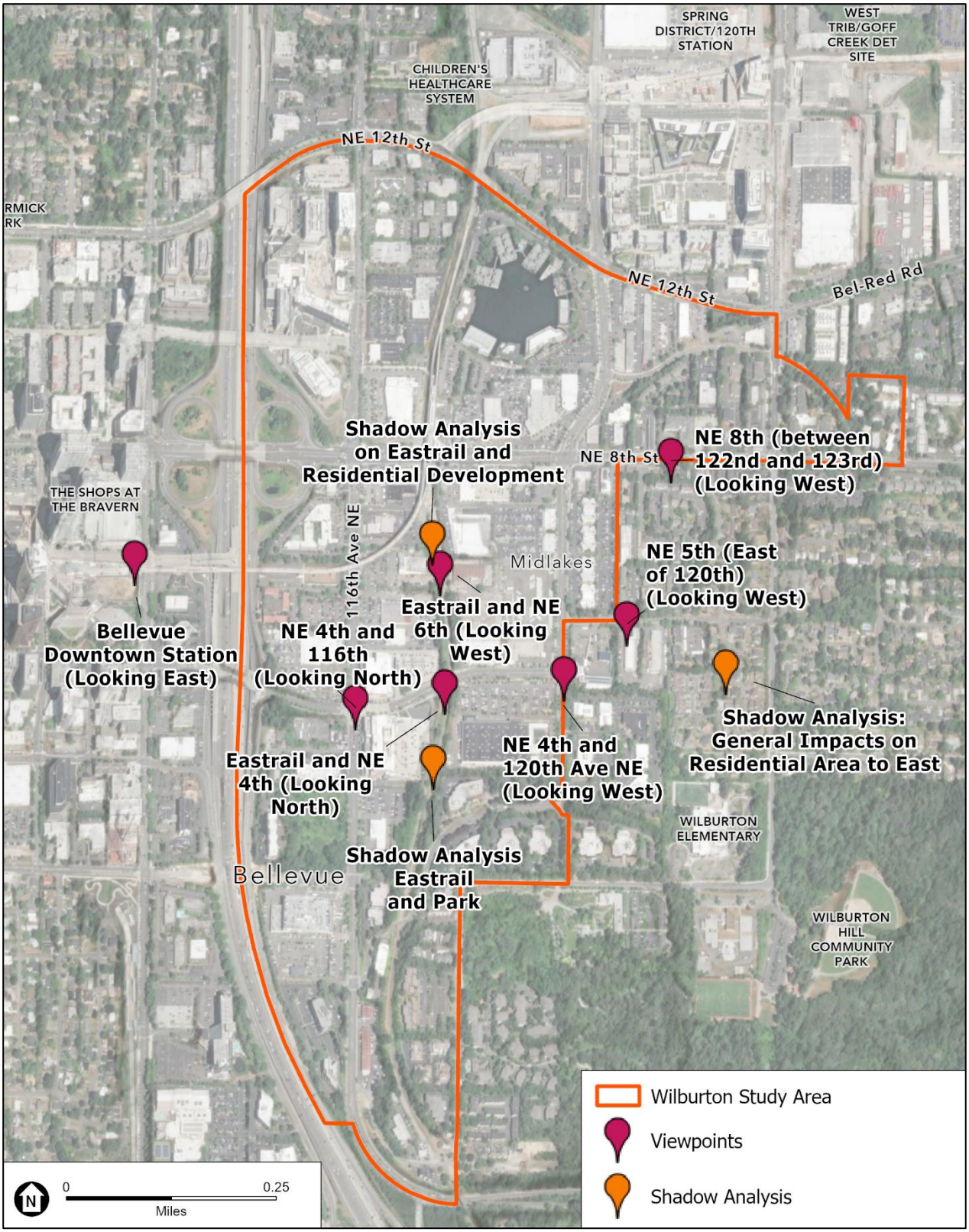
Comprehensive Plan Policy UD-62 suggests broadly that the city identify and preserve views of water, mountains, skylines, or other unique landmarks from public places as valuable civic assets. Citywide, potential impacts on views of these landmarks are considered in this chapter. Seven specific locations in the Wilburton study area are examined for view impacts in-depth using a digital 3D model (**Figure 6-1**).

6.3.4 Shadows

Areas of the city with higher densities, taller buildings, and smaller setbacks cast more shadows into the pedestrian realm and public spaces than low-density neighborhoods. As the predominant form of the Wilburton study area is low- and mid-rise buildings, with large areas of surface parking, prominent shaded areas are not numerous. The light rail bridge through the Wilburton study area, the Wilburton Trestle, and the bridge over NE 8th Street do currently cast shadows to the streets below. Three Wilburton study area locations are considered for shadow impacts in this chapter, with a focus on Eastrail and residential areas to the east (Figure 6-1).

6.3.5 Light and Glare

Light and glare impacts tend to be concentrated near high-traffic roadways, such as freeways and arterials, in commercial centers, and in higher density neighborhoods. Sources of light typical of urban areas includes streetlights, building lights, vehicle headlights, signage, and security lighting. Low-density residential areas typically have fewer light and glare impacts, due to the less-intense development pattern and, typically, higher concentration of trees and other vegetation. In the Wilburton study area, the primary sources of light and glare are vehicles, streetlights, interior building lighting, and parking lot lighting.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023

FIGURE 6-1 **Wilburton Study Area Viewshed and Shadow Analysis Locations**

6.4 Potential Impacts

This section reviews potential aesthetic impacts for each alternative. **Table 6-2** in Section 6.4.7, *Summary of Impacts*, provides a high-level summary of the findings.

The potential impacts identified for the No Action Alternative and Action Alternatives include analysis of the "build-out" housing unit capacity and job capacity associated with each alternative. For the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternatives, these capacities for growth are higher than overall citywide growth targets of 35,000 new housing units and 70,000 new jobs by 2044. It is not expected that the "build-out" housing and job capacities would all occur by 2044, but the EIS nonetheless assumes this growth when evaluating potential environmental impacts associated with the alternatives.

Under the No Action Alternative, citywide capacity is 41,000 new housing units and 124,000 new jobs (including capacity for 300 housing units and 3,900 jobs in the Wilburton study area).

Alternative 1 includes citywide capacity for 59,000 new housing units and 179,000 new jobs (including capacity for 9,200 housing units and 44,800 jobs in the Wilburton study area).

Alternative 2 includes citywide capacity for 77,000 new housing units and 177,000 new jobs (including capacity for 14,200 housing units and 38,100 jobs in the Wilburton study area).

Alternative 3 includes citywide capacity for 95,000 housing units and 200,000 jobs (including capacity for14,300 housing units and 44,500 jobs in the Wilburton study area).

The alternatives are described in detail in Chapter 2, *Alternatives*.

6.4.1 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds of significance for the aesthetics analysis include:

- **Urban form:** The action would result in impacts that conflict with the desired form.
- **Viewsheds:** The action would result in impacts on important public views citywide and from specific locations in the Wilburton study area.
- **Shadows:** The action would result in shadow impacts on public open space and specific locations for the Wilburton study area.
- **Light and glare:** The action would result in increases to light and glare that could hinder public use and enjoyment of public spaces.

6.4.2 Impacts Common to All Alternatives

URBAN FORM

Figure 6-1 and **Figure 6-2** summarize how different geographies citywide would be impacted in terms of urban form under the four alternatives.

Citywide

All alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, would see increases in the number of jobs and housing units citywide, which would impact the city's form, although each alternative distributes these increases in different areas. All alternatives would also see vacant and redevelopable land develop to various extents. All the Action Alternatives would permit a greater variety of housing types than is currently present or allowed, by allowing duplexes, cottage housing, or other low-density typologies across the city. In addition, the Action Alternatives would allow for higher Floor Area Ratios (FAR) in low-density mixed use and multi-family properties, resulting in an increased number of stories and lot coverage.

Mixed Use Centers would see a substantial amount of housing, job, and commercial square footage growth in all alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, which would be reflected in new development. Transit-proximate areas would also see more intense development, particularly under the Action Alternatives. Neighborhood Centers would experience impacts on urban form, especially under Alternatives 2 and 3, with large increases in the number of housing units, and increases in jobs and commercial square footage.

The Comprehensive Plan includes several policies relating to desired scale and form:

- **UD-6.** Encourage the green and wooded character of existing neighborhoods. [under Residential Neighborhoods]
- **UD-7.** Support neighborhood efforts to maintain and enhance their character and appearance. [under Residential Neighborhoods]
- **UD-11.** Develop Downtown and other mixed use areas to be functional, attractive and harmonious with adjacent neighborhoods by considering through-traffic, view, building scale, and land use impacts.
- **UD-48.** Link increased intensity of development with increased pedestrian amenities, pedestrian-oriented building design, through-block connections, public spaces, activities, openness, sunlight, and view preservation.

With respect to Policies UD-6 and UD-7, while the current form of residential neighborhoods would not change beyond what is allowed under current code in the No Action Alternative, all the Action Alternatives would result in gentle increases in density allowances throughout the city. This could be in the form of duplexes, cottage housing, or other low-density types. Design guidelines and development regulations could influence these housing types to appear similar to single-family housing and have minimal impacts on the visual characteristics of existing low-density neighborhoods. Gentle density increases could also result in fewer trees, depending on tree regulations.

Concerning Policy UD-11, all the alternatives would increase development in Downtown and in other Mixed Use Centers, resulting in impacts on building scales and views. Alternative 3 would likely have the greatest impact.

To address Policy UD-48, Alternative 1 would add modest expansions to multimodal transportation to accommodate new growth, while Alternatives 2 and 3 would have more-substantial investments accompanying high-density development. The No Action Alternative would not include multimodal investments beyond what is already planned.

Wilburton Study Area

For the Wilburton study area, all the alternatives add housing capacity, which means a greater opportunity to live and work in the same area and reduce vehicular travel. This is reflected in the types of new structures, as housing and mixed use buildings are added. The Action Alternatives would see the most dramatic change as capacity for more residential and mixed use buildings is added. Commercial space would also increase substantially in the Wilburton study area under the Action Alternatives, with capacity for more than nine times the commercial square footage as today.

Building heights in the Wilburton study area would also increase across the Action Alternatives, including areas with buildings up to approximately 45 stories tall, with lower building heights on the edges (ranging by alternative between 10 and 25 stories). Building heights would not change under the No Action Alternative.

The Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan includes several relevant policies.[1] However, the scope of the current Wilburton Vision Implementation effort includes amending a number of policies that

[1] The Wilburton study area is a subsection of the Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea.

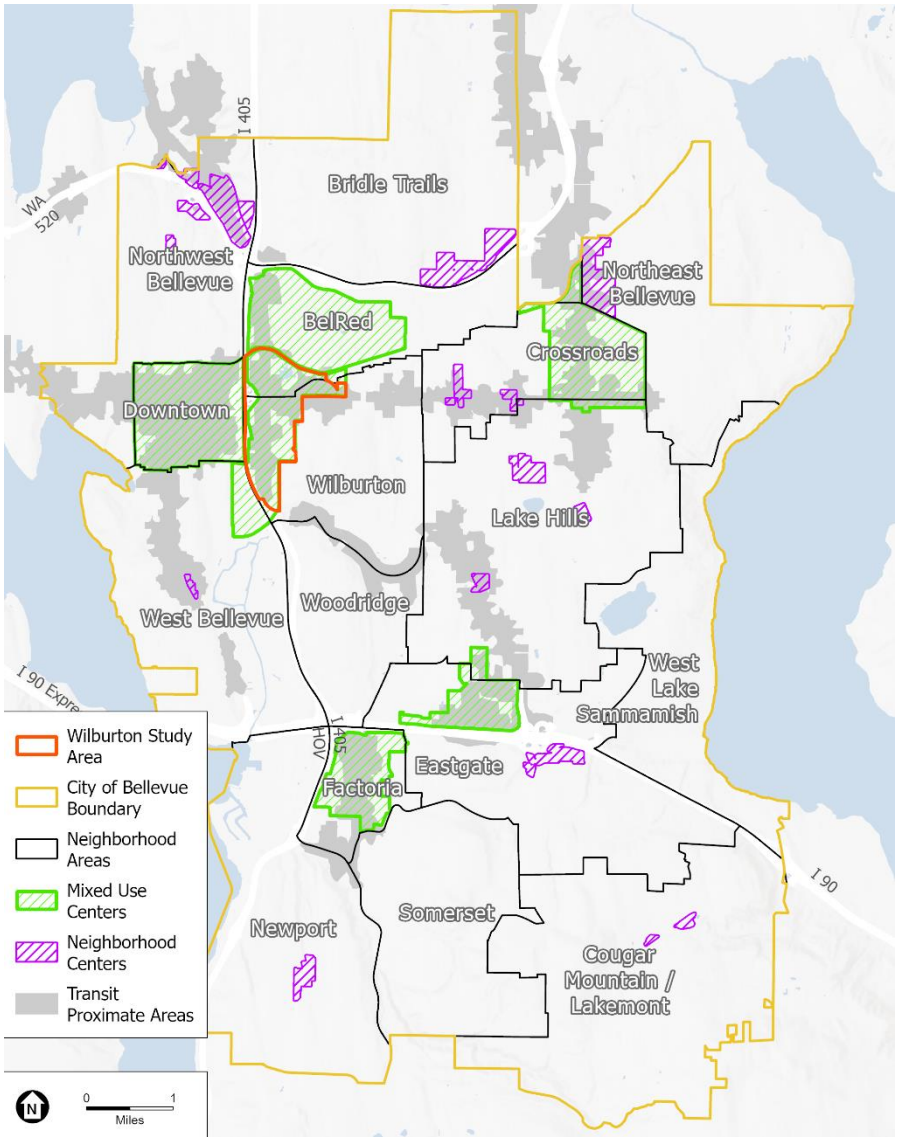
do not reflect the future vision for the area, including Policies S-WI-2, S-WI-3, and S-WI-4:

- **Policy S-WI-2.** Support the provision of commercial services in Wilburton that complement Downtown such as large retail and auto sales; mixed use opportunities; and services that provide convenient shopping for the adjacent neighborhoods. Implement this through zoning and development regulations.
- **Policy S-WI-3.** Support the long-term development of a "retail village" in the commercial area on the west side of 120th Avenue to provide a transition from more-intense commercial areas to the west and the residential area to the east.
- **Policy S-WI-4.** Recognize the area between I-405 and the BNSF corridor, and between NE 8th Street and SE 1st Street, as appropriate for a 75-foot height limit. Increased heights limits for the portion of this area east of 116th Avenue should be limited to those areas rezoned for more intense uses consistent with Policy S-WI-3 or future subarea plan amendments.

In the Wilburton study area, the No Action Alternative would remain the most similar to current conditions in terms of land uses. All the Action Alternatives introduce new mixed use areas throughout the study area, with Alternative 3 including the greatest opportunity for mixed use and, therefore, commercial services, as is supported by Policy S-WI-2.

Alternatives 1 and 3 would create a transition from lower- to higher-intensity mixed uses in the retail area west of 120th Avenue NE, as is desired under Policy S-WI-3. Alternative 2 would transition from lower- to higher-intensity residential development east of Eastrail and to high-intensity mixed uses between Eastrail and 116th Avenue NE. Land use under the No Action Alternative would not change from current conditions. Alternatives 1 and 3 best meet the conditions described in Policy S-WI-3. However, Policy S-WI-3 will likely be amended in the future to be consistent with the 2018 Citizen Advisory Committee vision.

Finally, the 75-foot height limit described in Policy S-WI-4 would not be impacted by the No Action Alternative, in which heights remain the same. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, however, substantially exceed this height, which would mean an amendment to the policy language to be consistent.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

FIGURE 6-2 **City of Bellevue Geographies**

TABLE 6-1 **Impacts on Citywide Urban Form**

Geography	Alternative 0 (No Action)	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Mixed Use Centers	Development within current regulations.	Apartment buildings with larger and two-bedroom units.	Apartment buildings with studios and one-bedroom units.	Larger apartment buildings with studios and one-bedroom units.
Neighborhood Centers	Development within current regulations.	Development within current regulations.	Increased FAR allows larger building and greater density. Apartment buildings with studios and one-bedrooms.	Increased FAR allows larger buildings and greater density. Townhomes, small apartment buildings, or similar allowed.
Transit-Proximate Areas	Development within current regulations.	Development within current regulations.	Townhomes, small apartment buildings, or similar allowed.	Townhomes, small apartment buildings, or similar allowed.
Low-Density Neighborhoods	Development within current regulations.	Triplexes, cottage housing or similar allowed.	Duplexes or similar allowed. Some multi-family allowed near transit.	Triplexes, cottage housing, or similar allowed. Some multi-family allowed near transit and employment centers.
Wilburton Study Area	Development within current regulations.	Buildings up to around 45 stories adjacent to I-405. Transition to around 10–25 stories in north, south, and east.	More buildings up to around 45 stories adjacent to I-405. Buildings in central node around 16–25 stories. Eastern edge around 10–16 stories.	More buildings up to around 45 stories on both sides of 116th Ave NE. More areas with buildings around 25 and 45 stories compared to other alternatives.

VIEWSHEDS

Citywide

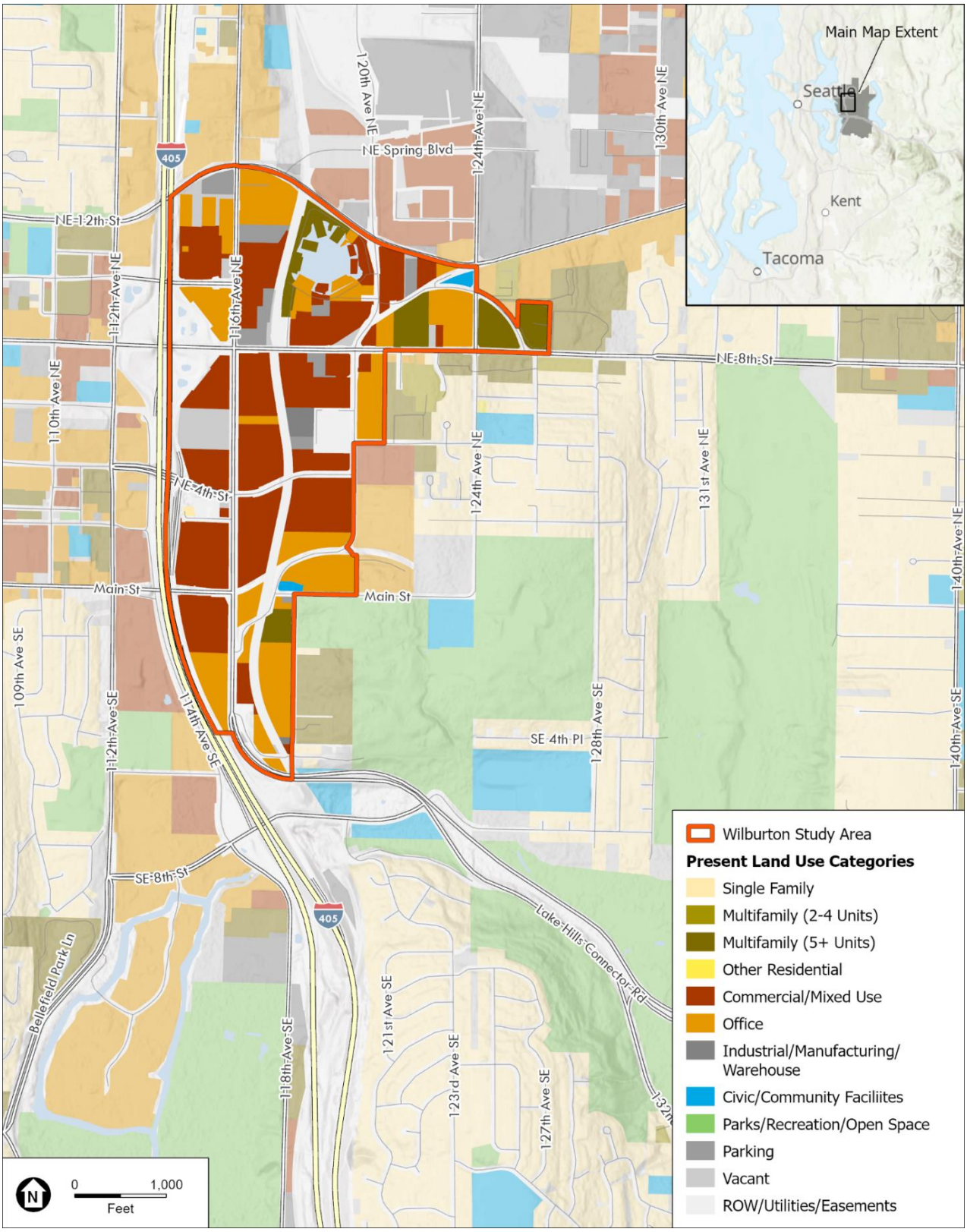
All the alternatives would have some impacts on viewsheds because all alternatives expect some level of housing, commercial square footage, and job growth; this growth would be reflected in more building massing than in current conditions. Although the No Action Alternative would not change city regulations or policies, it does anticipate that some parcels would redevelop to use the allowed building envelope more fully. The Action Alternatives would result in changes in regulations and policies, allowing more density citywide and taller buildings in some areas. These changes may result in some existing viewsheds being obstructed.

Generally, the No Action Alternative would have the least impacts and Alternative 3 would have the greatest potential for impacts, since it has the most capacity for development. All alternatives would see new growth in the Downtown and BelRed areas, which could impact public views from surrounding areas to local landmarks, such as Mount Rainier, Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, the Cascade Mountains, and the Bellevue skyline.

Wilburton Study Area

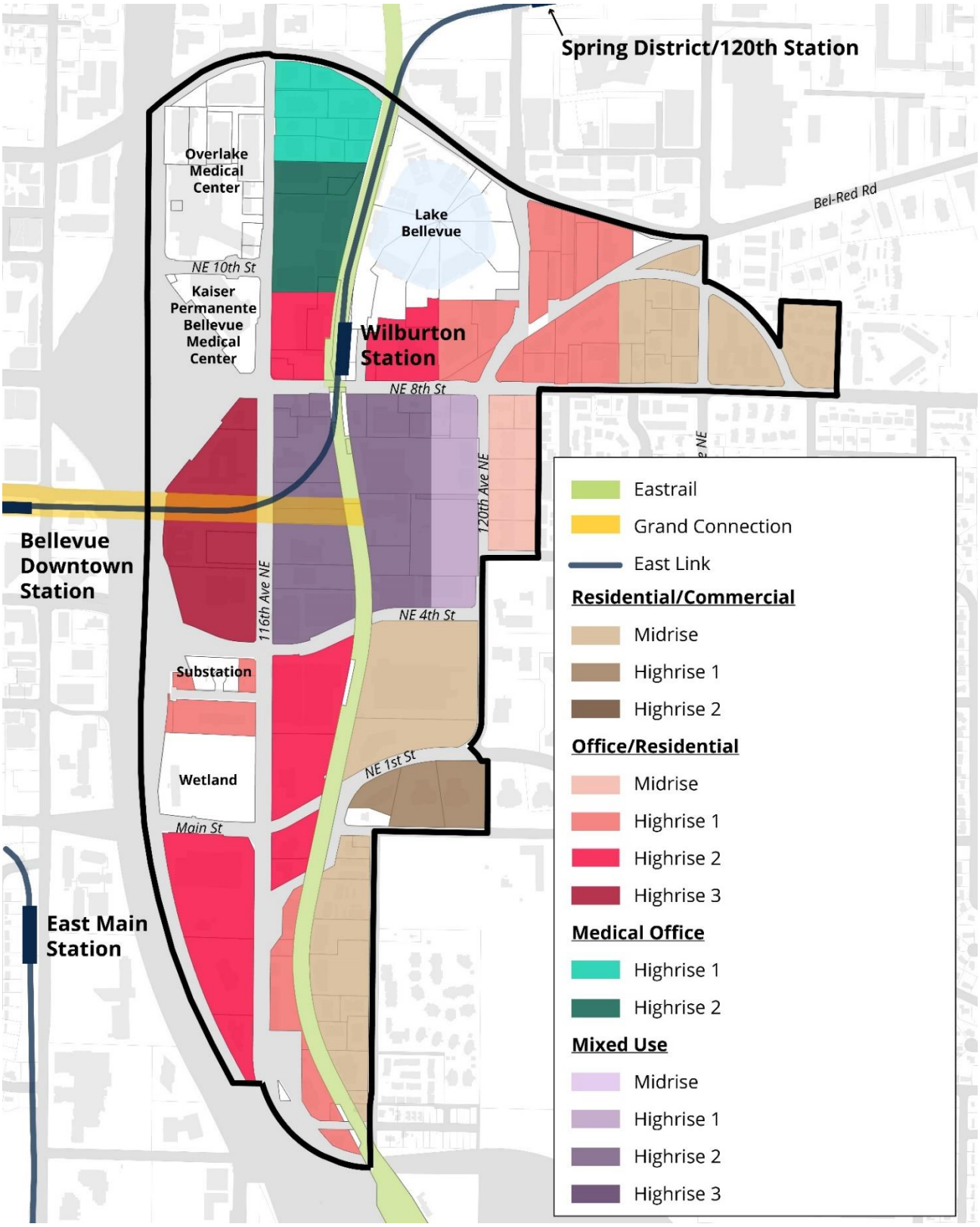
The Wilburton study area, in particular, would see much higher building heights in the Action Alternatives, which is expected to have impacts on views. At the specific viewpoint locations identified in Figure 6-1, all the Action Alternatives would impact existing views of Downtown.

Seven locations are analyzed for view impacts in the Wilburton study area using ArcGIS Urban modeling. The colored 3D models represent a theoretical buildable envelope for each alternative, based on heights and job and housing densities. The models do not reflect any specific building design or site-level development project proposal. The colors represent applicable land uses, as shown in **Figure 6-3**, **Figure 6-4**, **Figure 6-5**, and **Figure 6-6**. The grey buildings represent existing buildings, based on open source building footprint and height data published by ESRI and OpenStreetMap. Modeling of the alternatives does not reflect potential future development outside of the Wilburton study area.



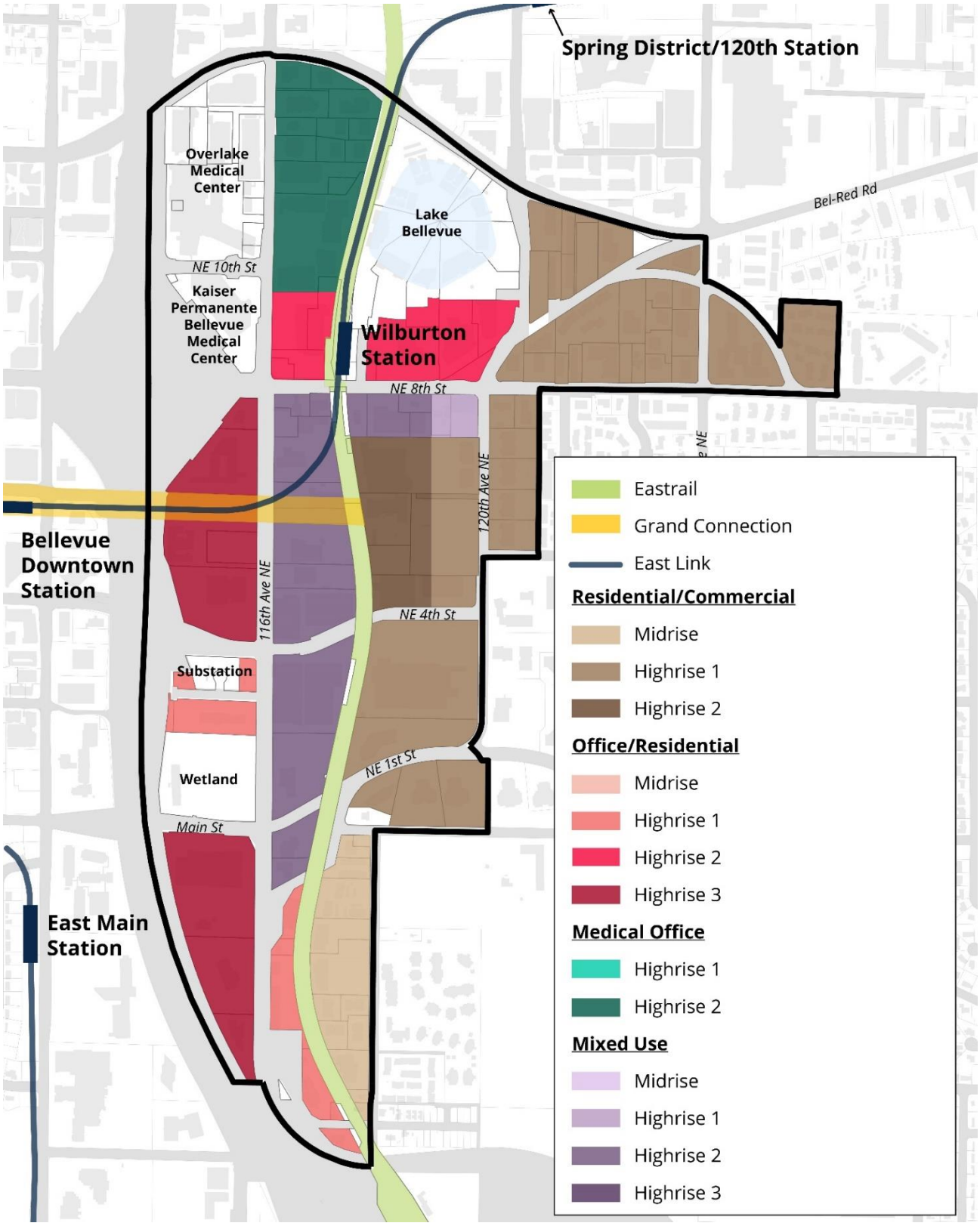
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; King County Assessor 2023; Google Maps 2023; BERK 2023

FIGURE 6-3 **Alternative 0 (No Action) Wilburton Study Area**



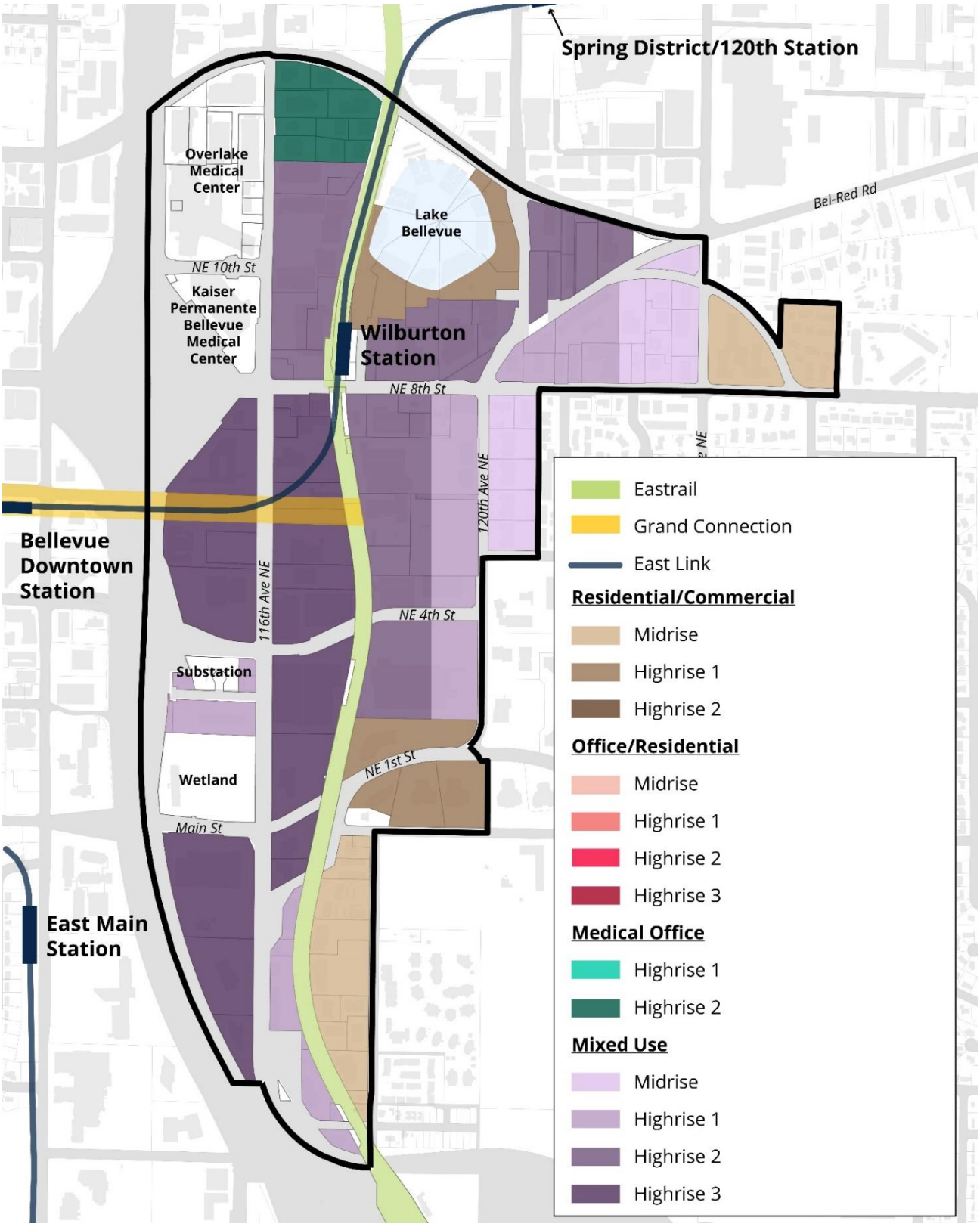
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023

FIGURE 6-4 **Alternative 1 Wilburton Study Area**



SOURCE City of Bellevue 2023

FIGURE 6-5 **Alternative 2 Wilburton Study Area**

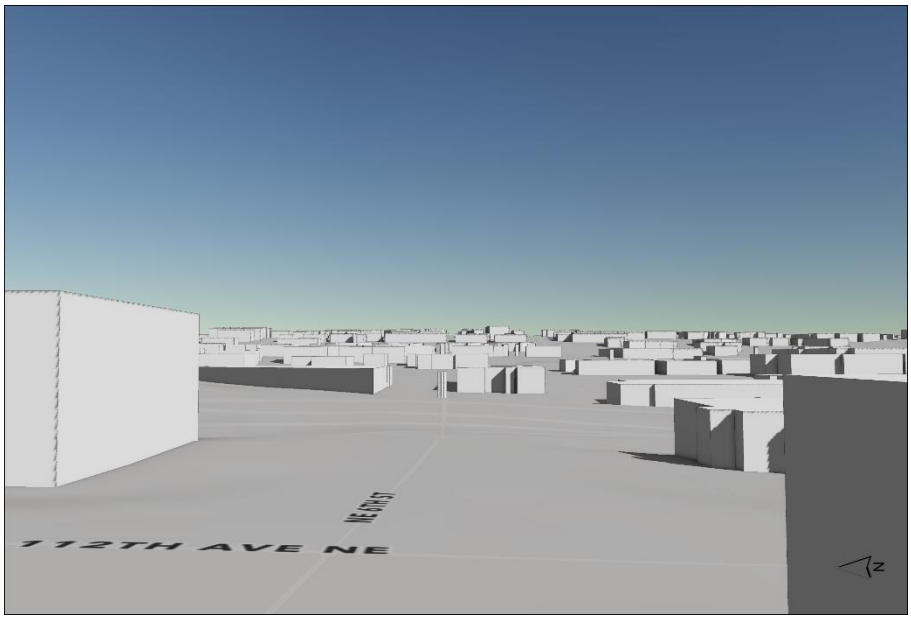


SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023

FIGURE 6-6 **Alternative 3 Wilburton Study Area**

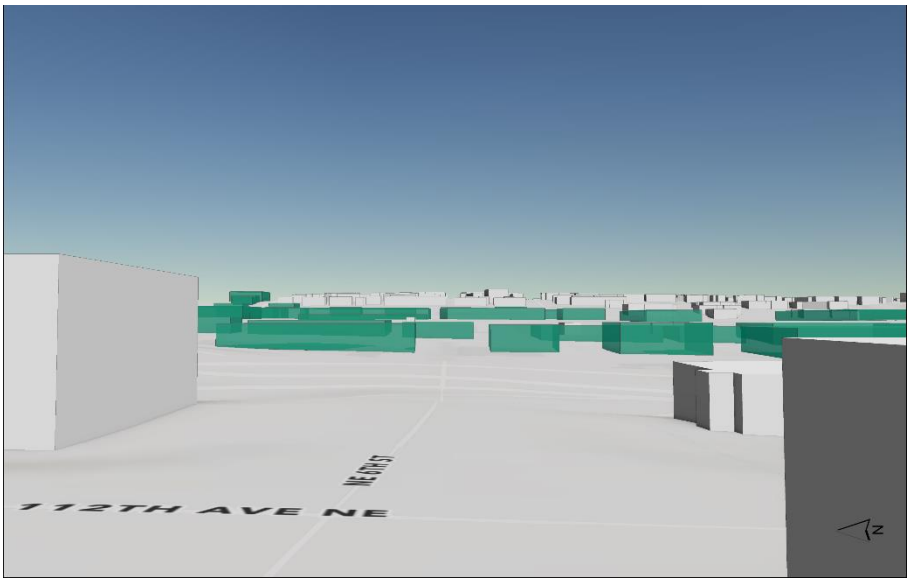
Bellevue Downtown Station (Looking East)

All three Action Alternatives would dramatically change views from the Bellevue Downtown Station location, while the views under the No Action Alternative would not be impacted. Existing buildings seen from this location are low-rise, while the Action Alternatives would all allow new towers in the area. The light rail bridge is already present and does obstruct some views from street level. Views are similar across the three Action Alternatives and would mostly prevent pedestrians from seeing trees and hilly topography in the distance.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

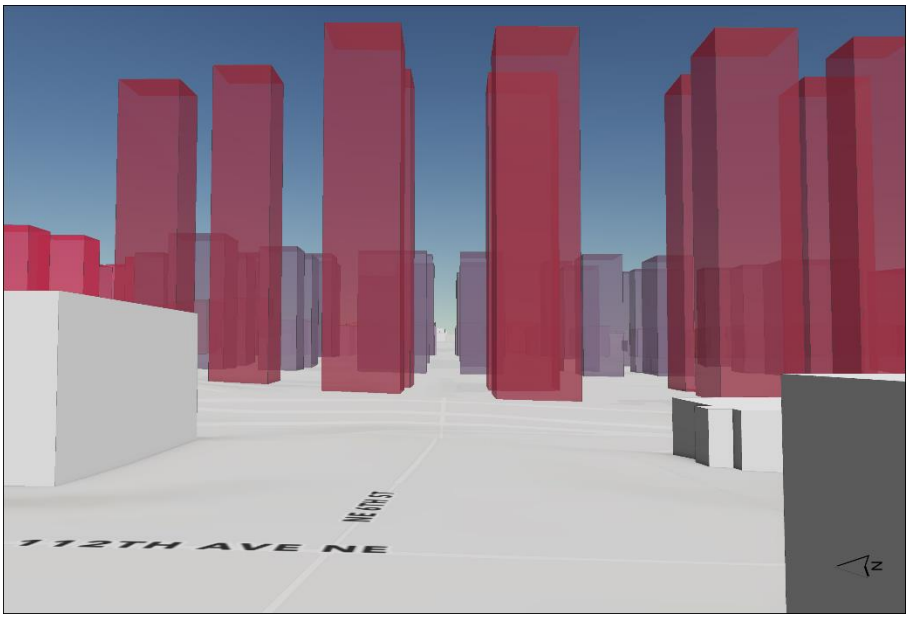
FIGURE 6-7 **Existing: Bellevue Downtown Station (Looking East)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-8 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Bellevue Downtown Station (Looking East)**



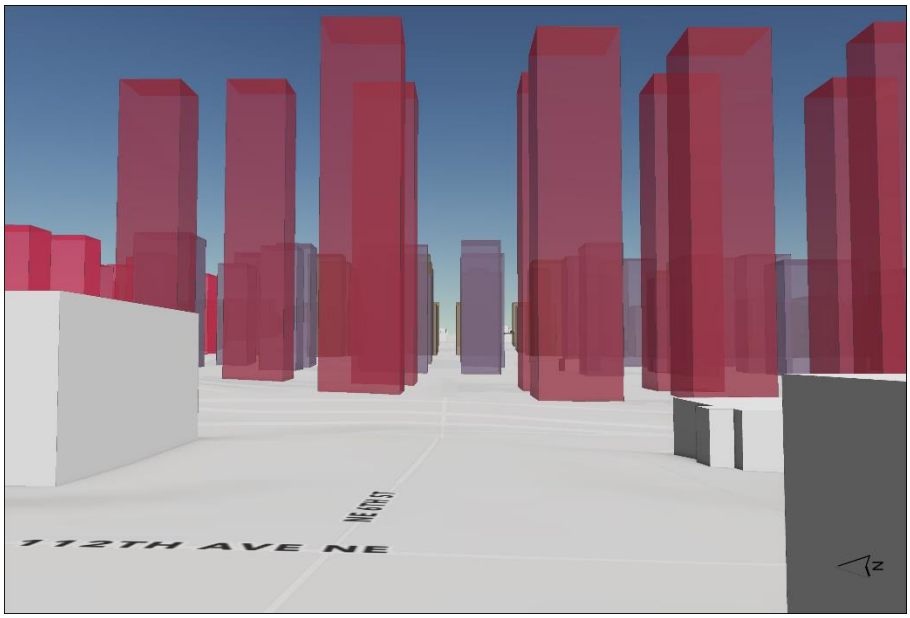
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-9 **Alternative 1: Bellevue Downtown Station (Looking East)**

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023

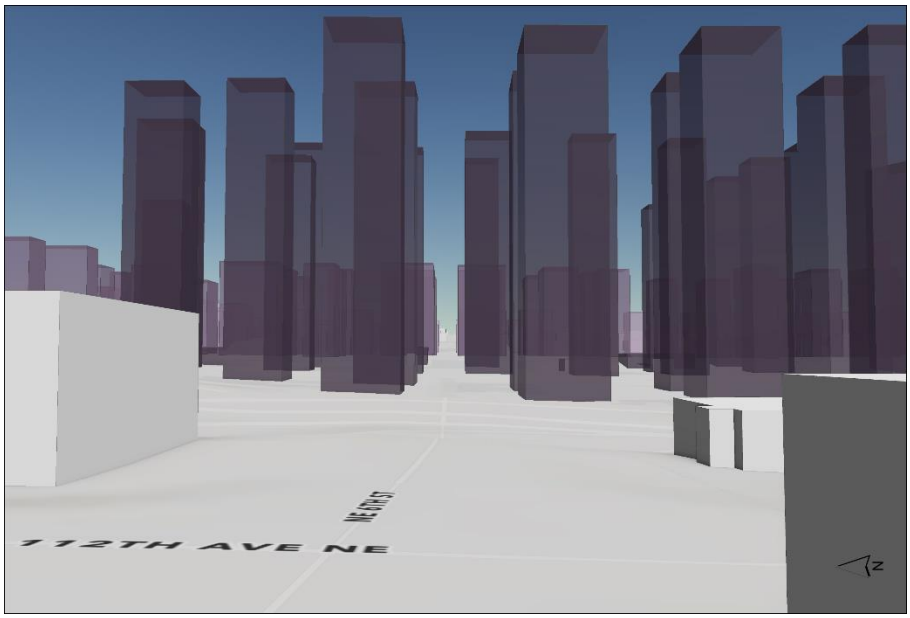
Where the alternatives models show capacity for towers, future building design could have visual characteristics similar to the examples above. This could include façade modulation, street trees, variation in textures, plazas, weather protection, transparency, upper level step backs, and other features that enhance the pedestrian experience and reduce the bulk of buildings.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-10 **Alternative 2: Bellevue Downtown Station (Looking East)**



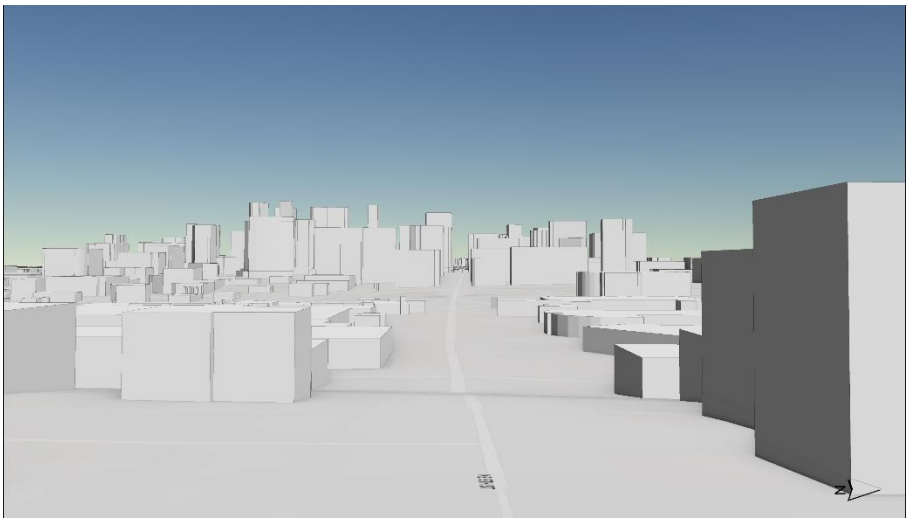
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-11 **Alternative 3: Bellevue Downtown Station (Looking East)**

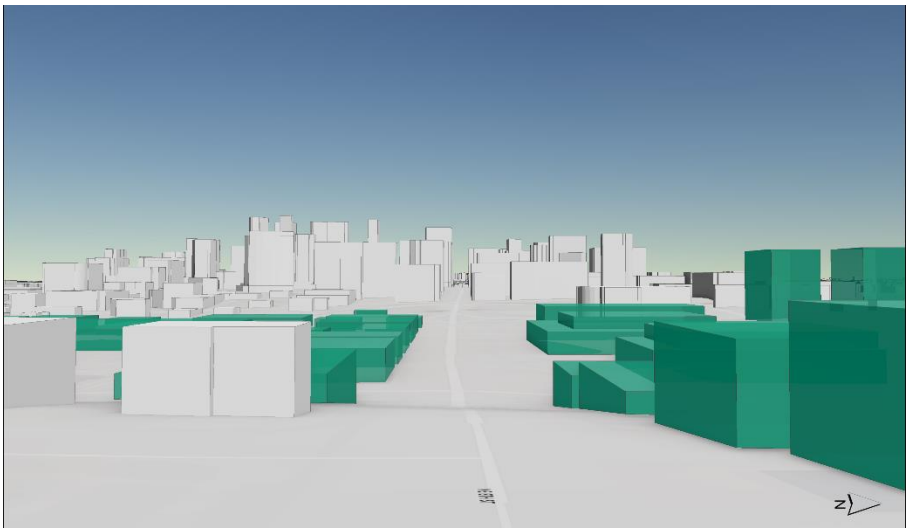
NE 8th Street (Looking West)

Currently, this location has views of Bellevue's Downtown skyline. All three Action Alternatives would mostly obstruct this view from street level. The No Action Alternative would have minimal view impacts from this location.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

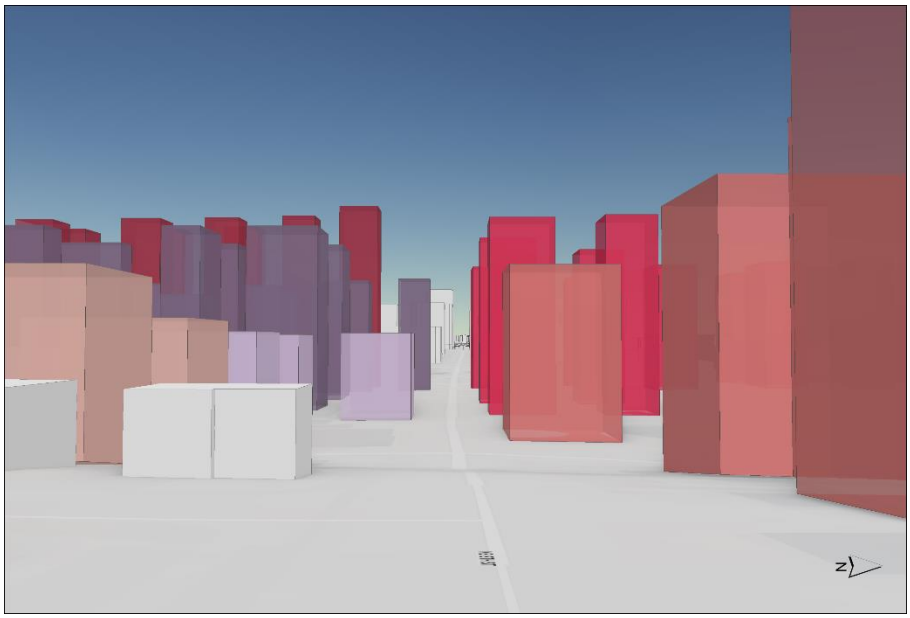
FIGURE 6-12 **Existing: NE 8th Street between 122nd and 123rd Avenues NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

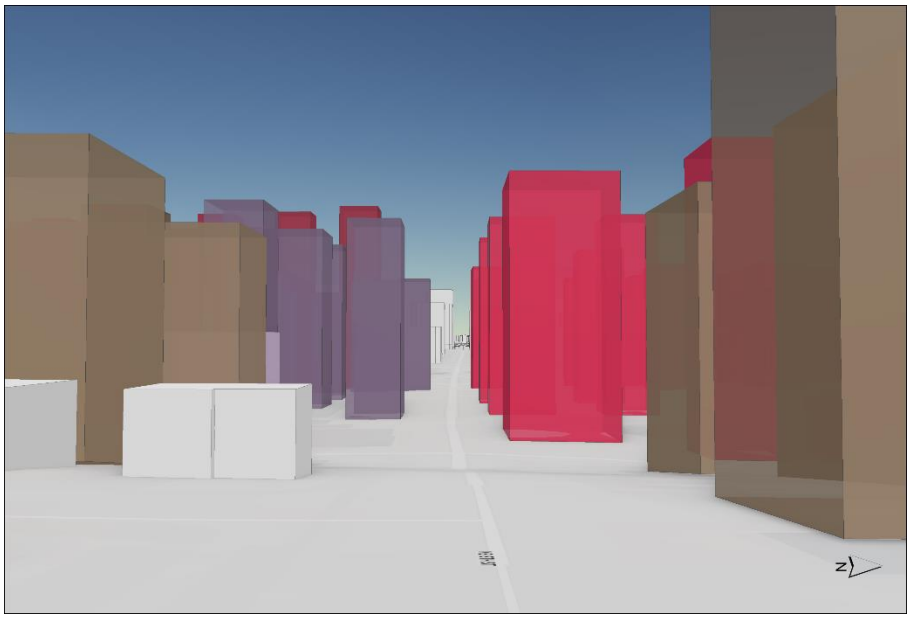
FIGURE 6-13 **Alternative 0 (No Action): NE 8th Street between 122nd and 123rd Avenues NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

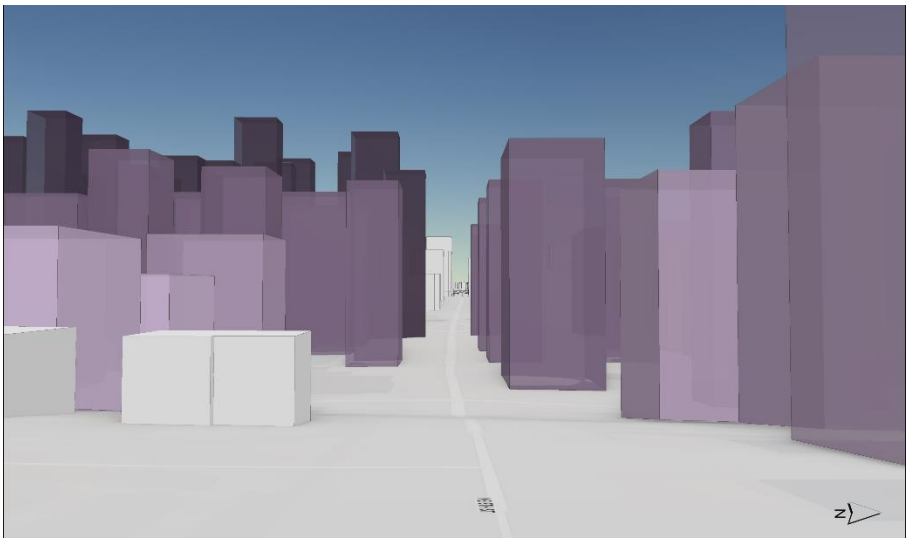
FIGURE 6-14 **Alternative 1: NE 8th Street between 122nd and 123rd Avenues NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-15 **Alternative 2: NE 8th Street between 122nd and 123rd Avenues NE (Looking West)**



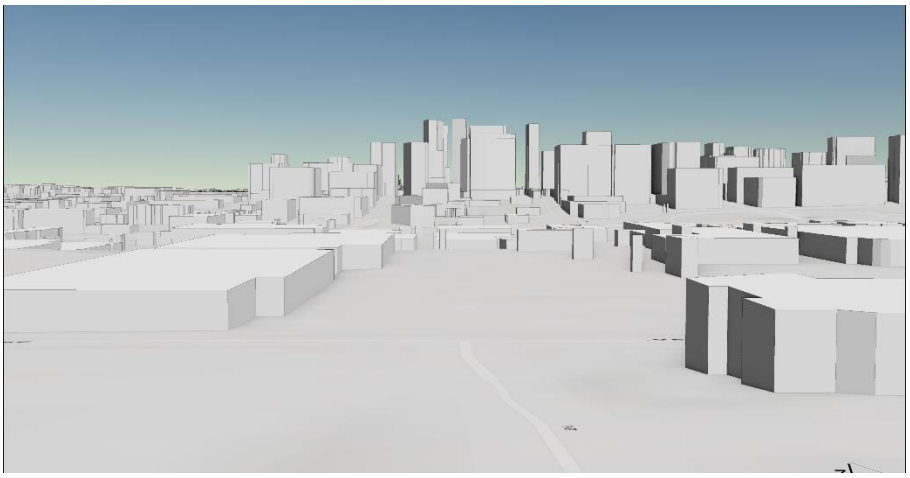
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-16 **Alternative 3: NE 8th Street between 122nd and 123rd Avenues NE (Looking West)**

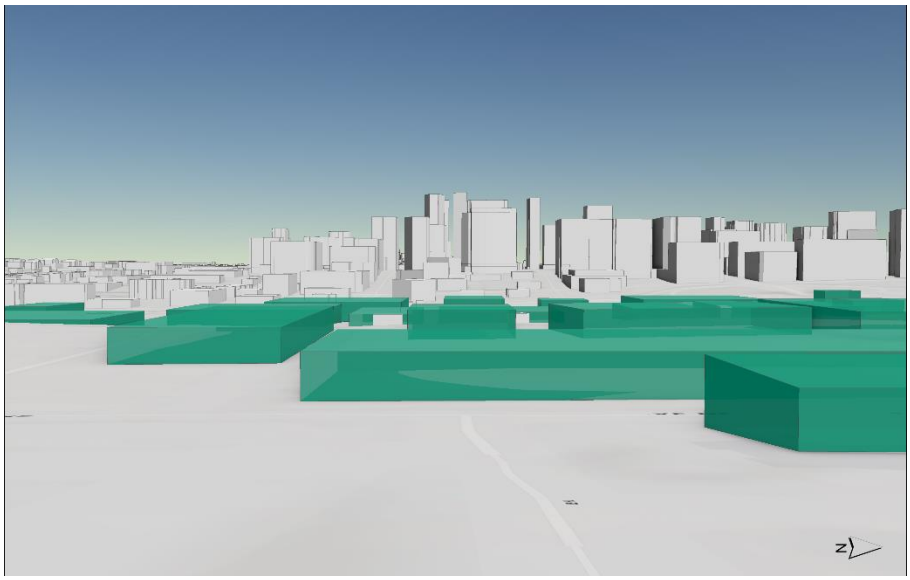
NE 5th Street (Looking West)

Under current conditions, this location has a view of the Downtown skyline that is partially obstructed by mature trees. All three Action Alternatives could completely obstruct this view with new buildings. The No Action Alternative would have minimal view impacts under full build-out.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

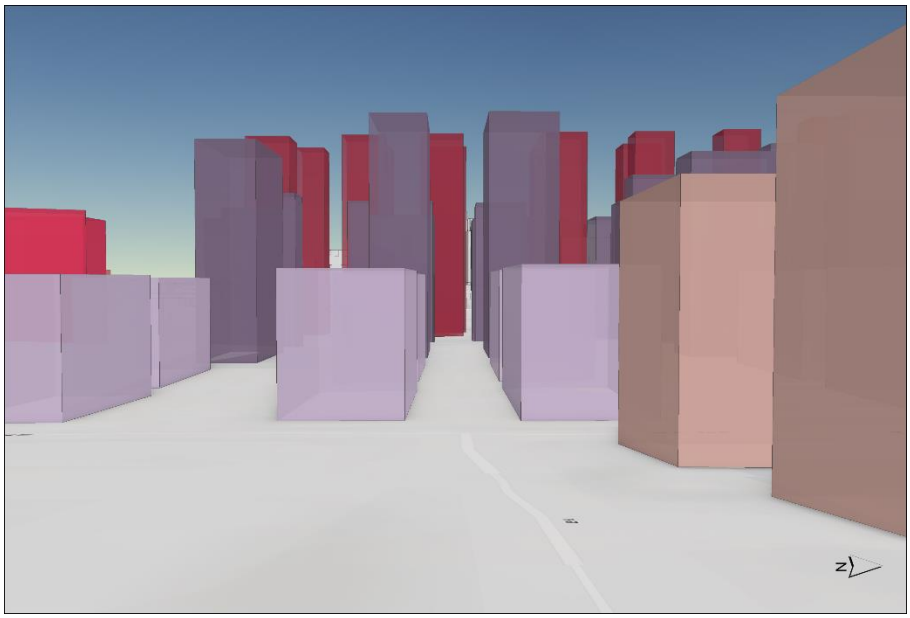
FIGURE 6-17 **Existing: NE 5th Street East of 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

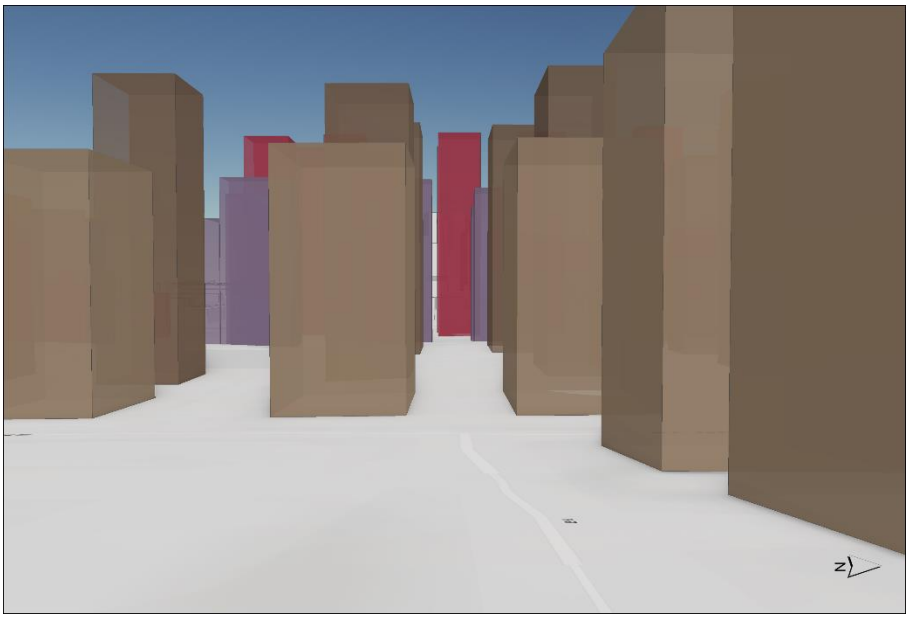
FIGURE 6-18 **Alternative 0 (No Action): NE 5th Street East of 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

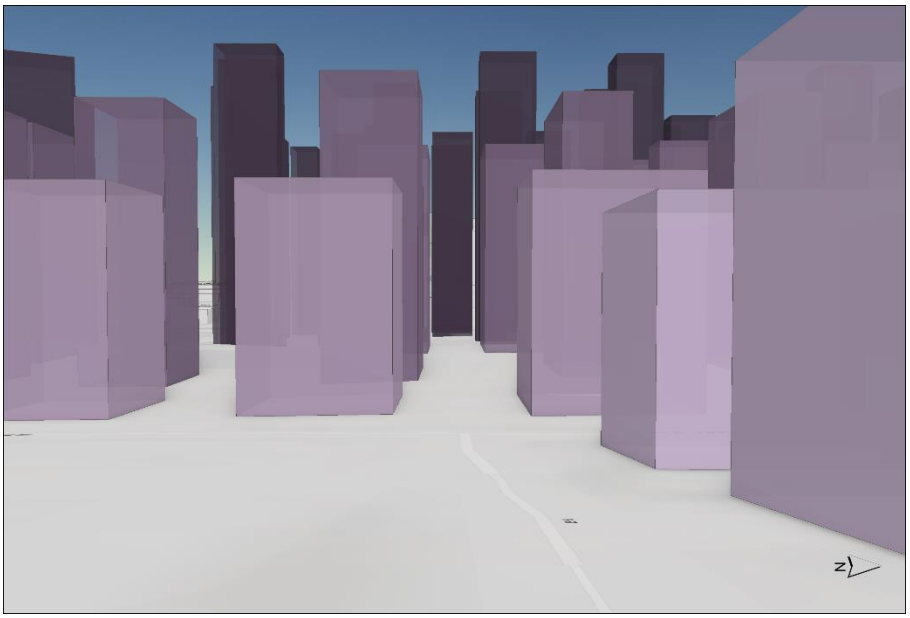
FIGURE 6-19 **Alternative 1: NE 5th Street East of 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-20 **Alternative 2: NE 5th Street East of 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



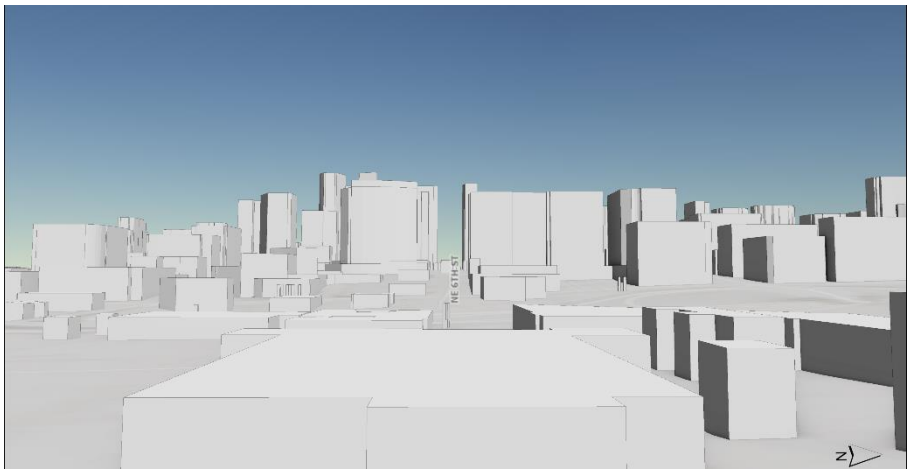
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-21 **Alternative 3: NE 5th Street East of 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**

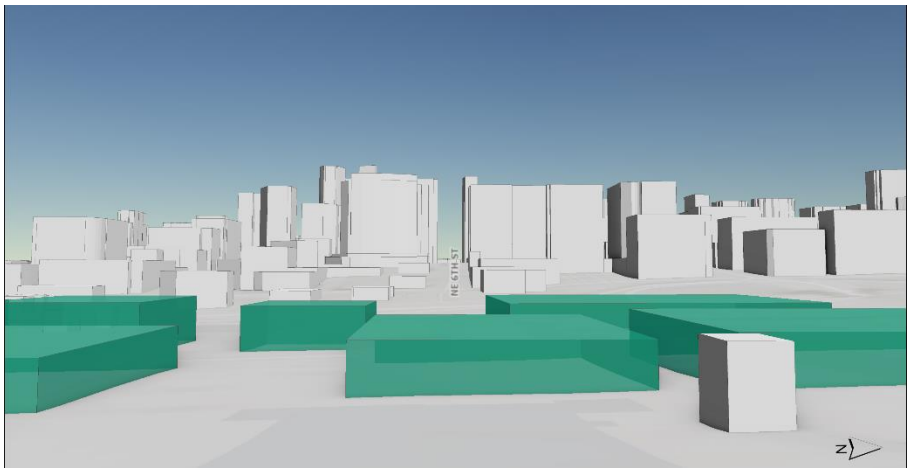
Eastrail and NE 6th Street (Looking West)

Under current conditions, this location has views of Downtown Bellevue. Conditions under all three Action Alternatives could obstruct most of this view, with some opportunities to see parts of Downtown between new Wilburton study area buildings. The No Action Alternative would have minimal impacts on views from this location.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

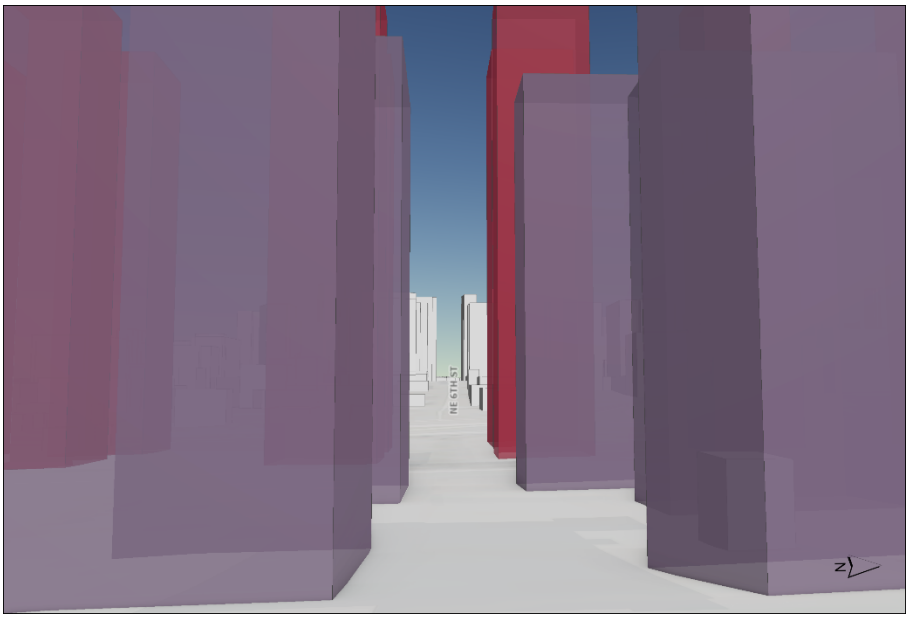
FIGURE 6-22 **Existing: Eastrail and NE 6th Street (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

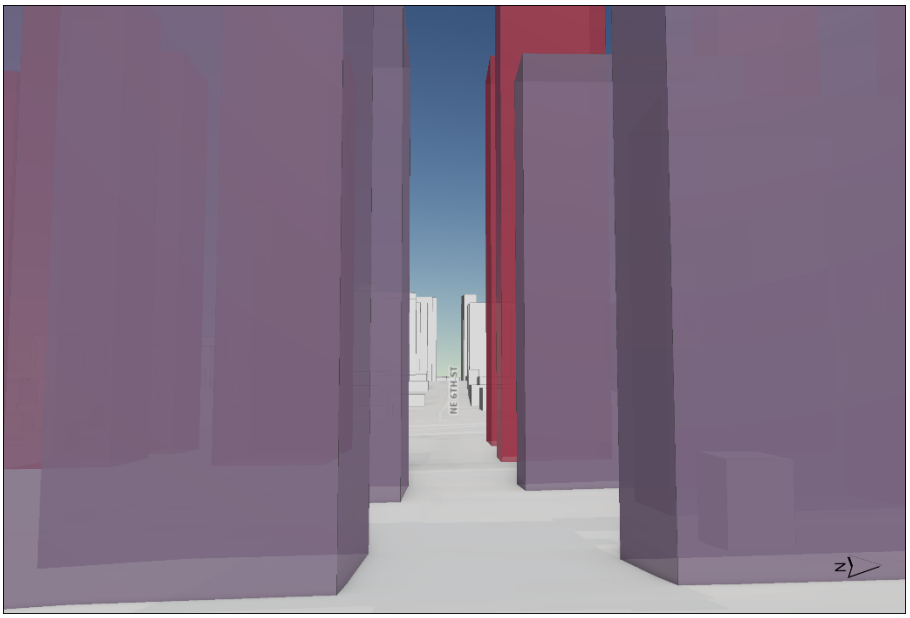
FIGURE 6-23 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Eastrail and NE 6th Street (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

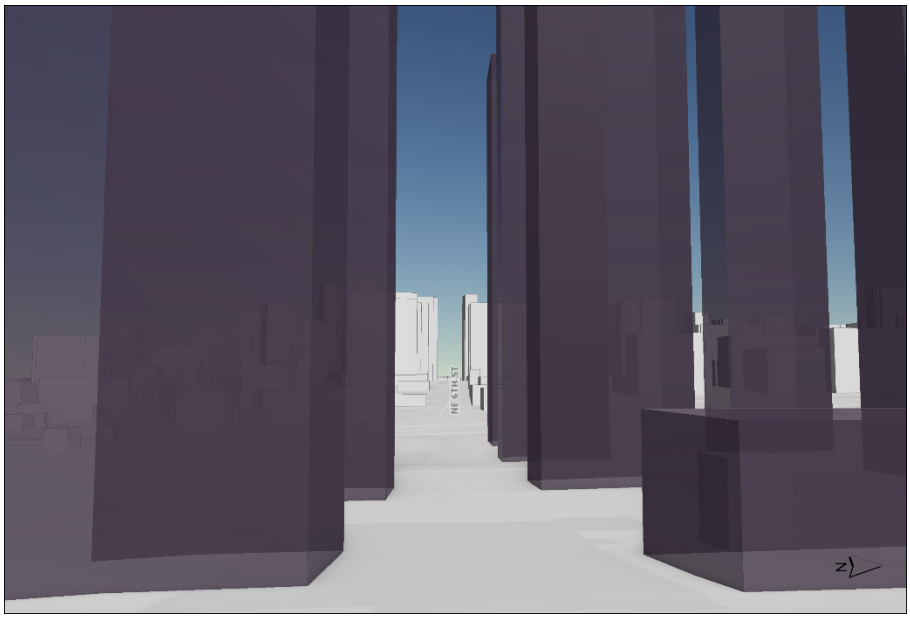
FIGURE 6-24 **Alternative 1: Eastrail and NE 6th Street (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-25 **Alternative 2: Eastrail and NE 6th Street (Looking West)**



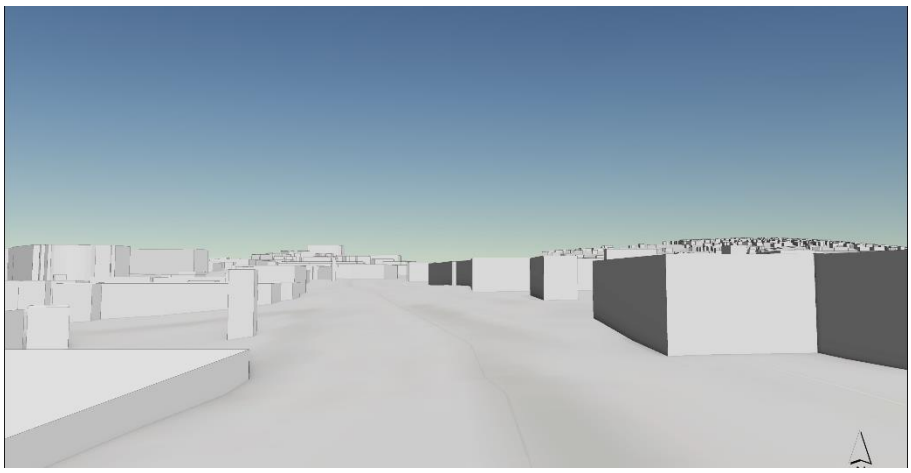
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-26 **Alternative 3: Eastrail and NE 6th Street (Looking West)**

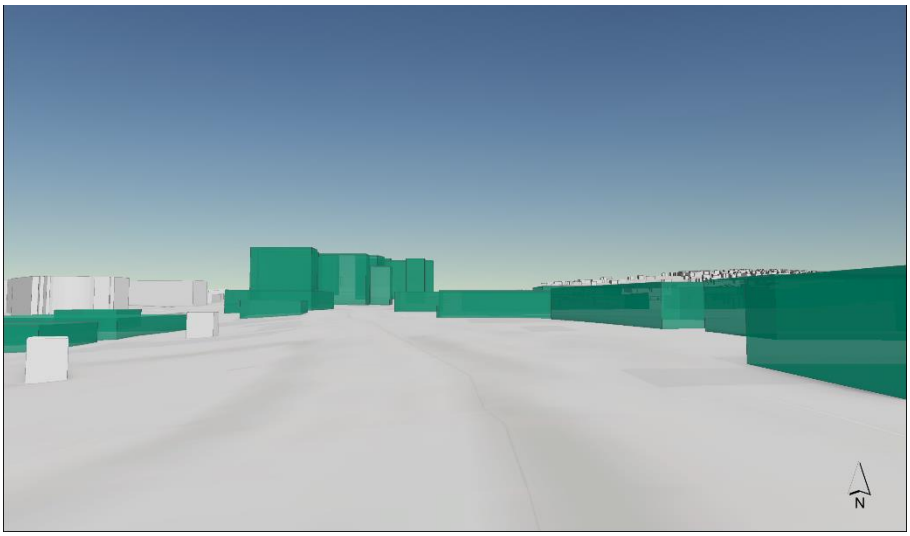
Eastrail and NE 4th Street (Looking North)

Currently, a pedestrian or cyclist in this location can see Downtown Bellevue to the left. Under the No Action Alternative and all the Action Alternatives, this view could be obstructed by new buildings.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

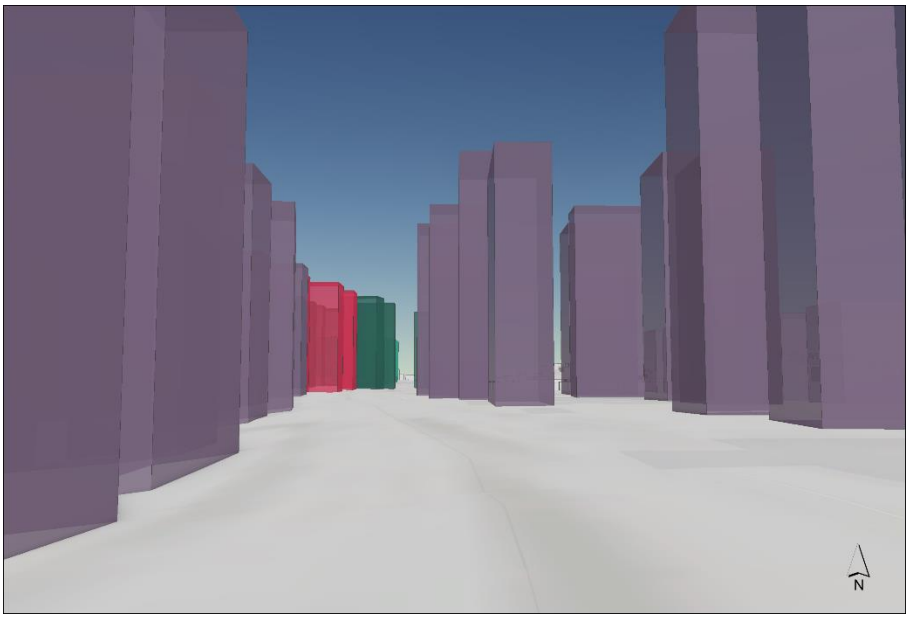
FIGURE 6-27 **Existing: Eastrail and NE 4th Street (Looking North)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

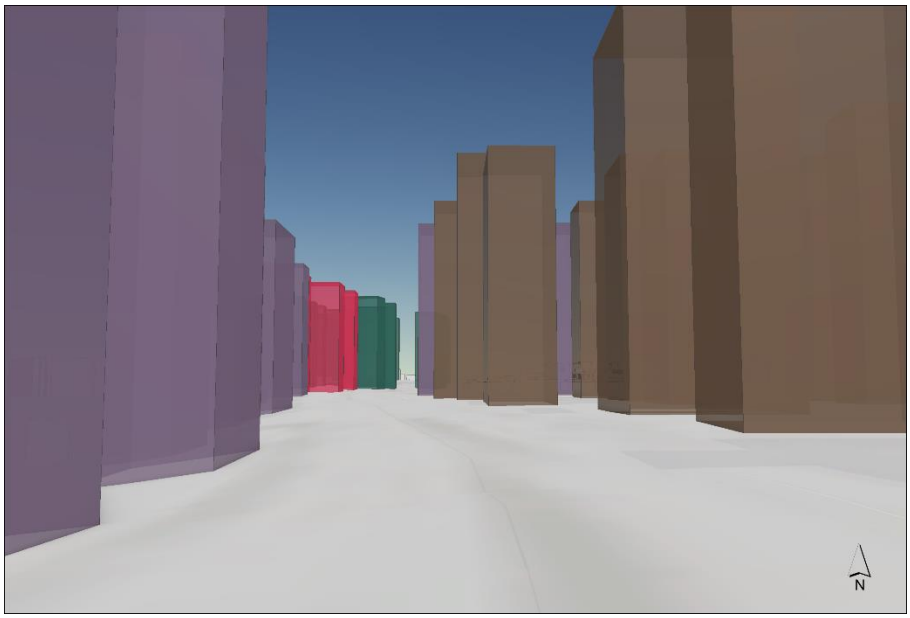
FIGURE 6-28 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Eastrail and NE 4th Street (Looking North)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

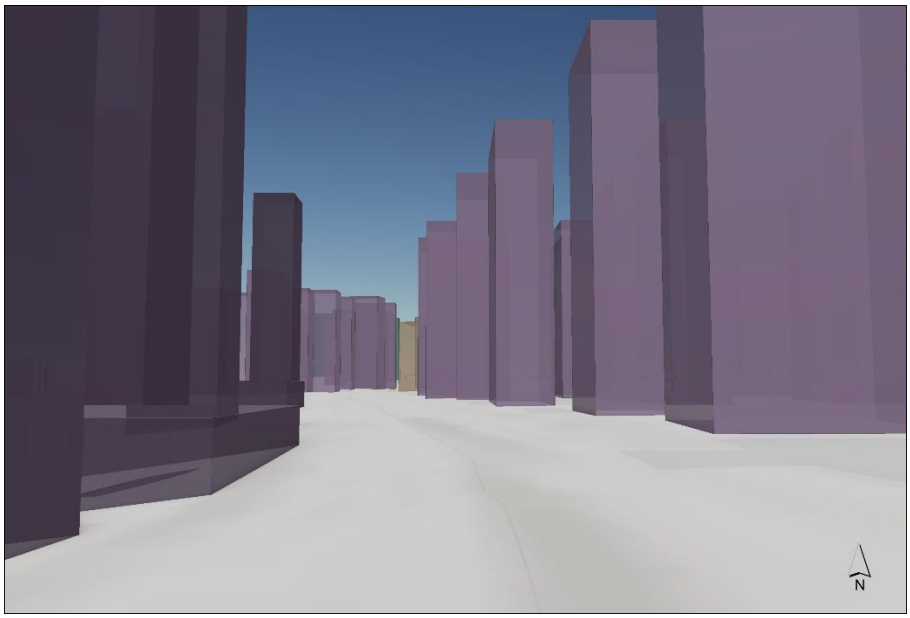
FIGURE 6-29 **Alternative 1: Eastrail and NE 4th Street (Looking North)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-30 **Alternative 2: Eastrail and NE 4th Street (Looking North)**



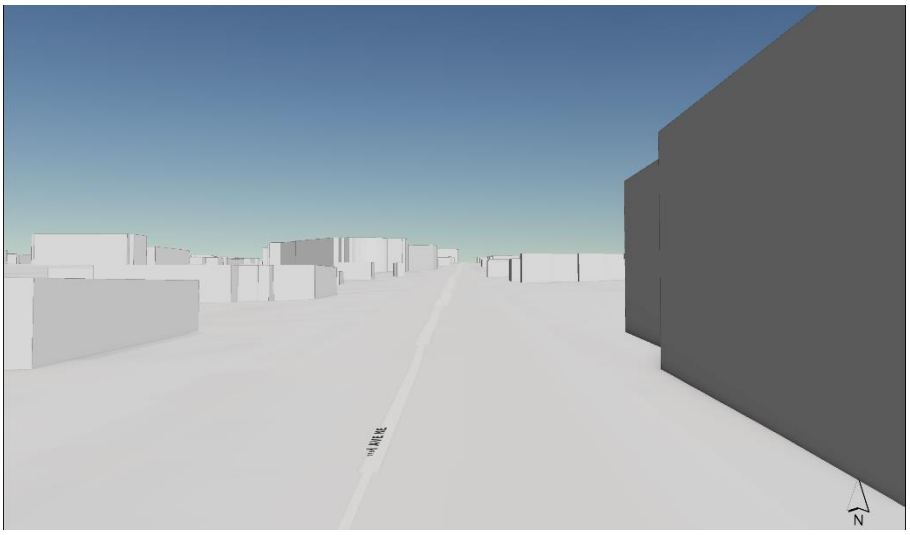
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-31 **Alternative 3: Eastrail and NE 4th Street (Looking North)**

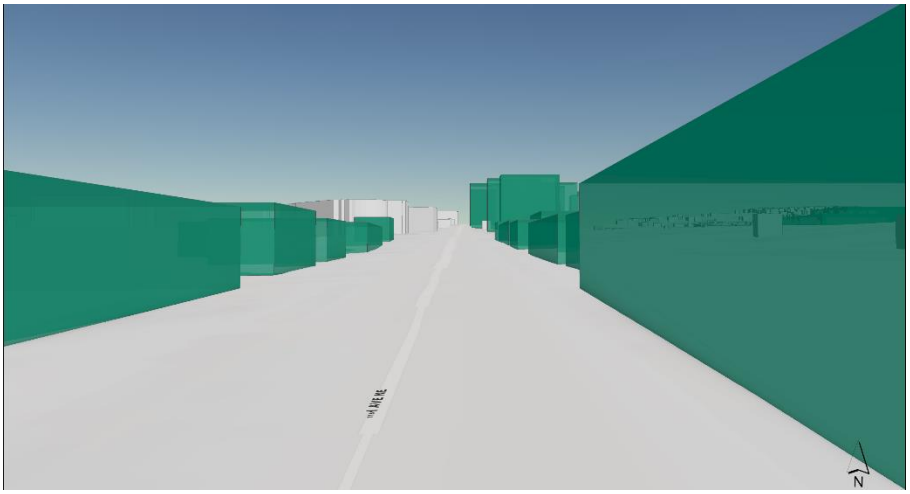
NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE (Looking North)

In this location, pedestrians can currently see Downtown Bellevue to the left. This view would be obstructed under all the Action Alternatives. The No Action Alternative could have impacts on this view as well. Alternative 1 would feel less enclosed than Alternatives 2 and 3, with more views of the sky.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

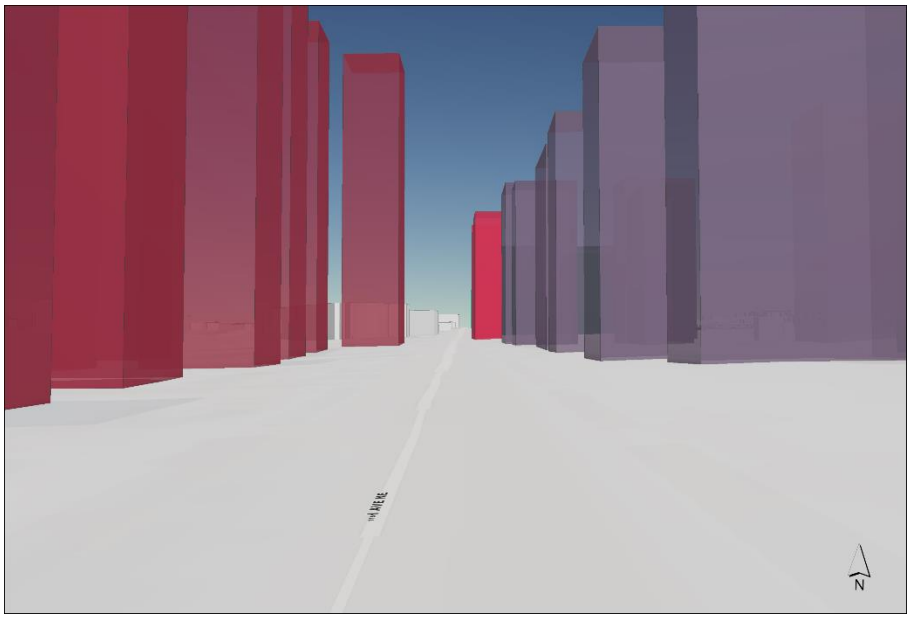
FIGURE 6-32 **Existing: NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE (Looking North)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-33 **Alternative 0 (No Action): NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE (Looking North)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

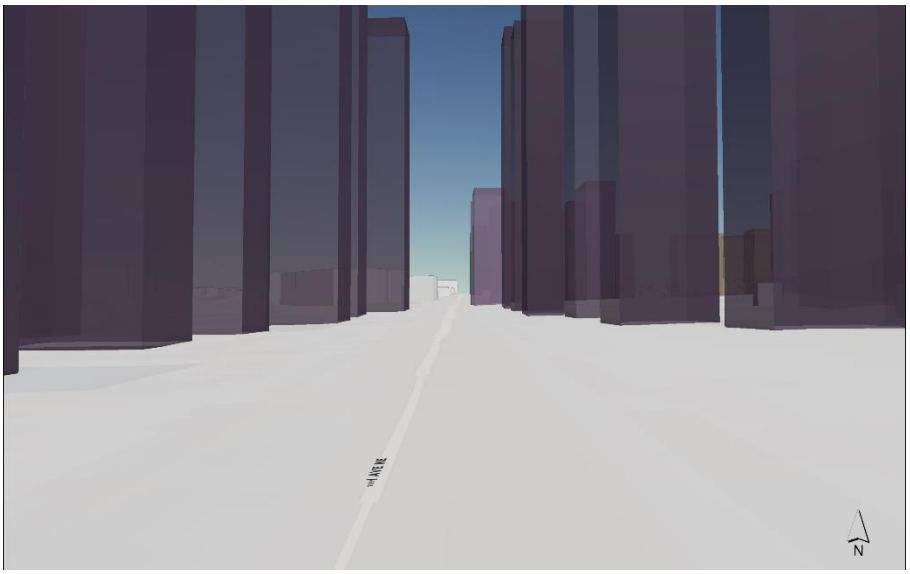
NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-34 **Alternative 1: NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE (Looking North)**

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-35 **Alternative 2: NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE (Looking North)**



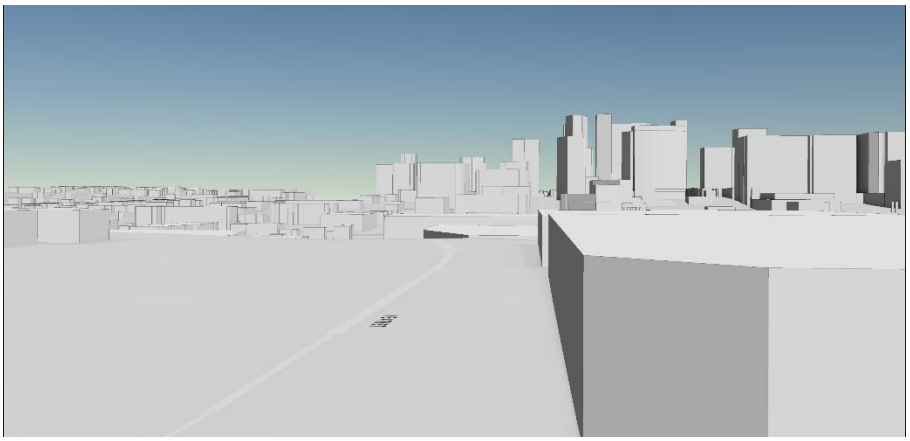
SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-36 **Alternative 3: NE 4th Street and 116th Avenue NE (Looking North)**

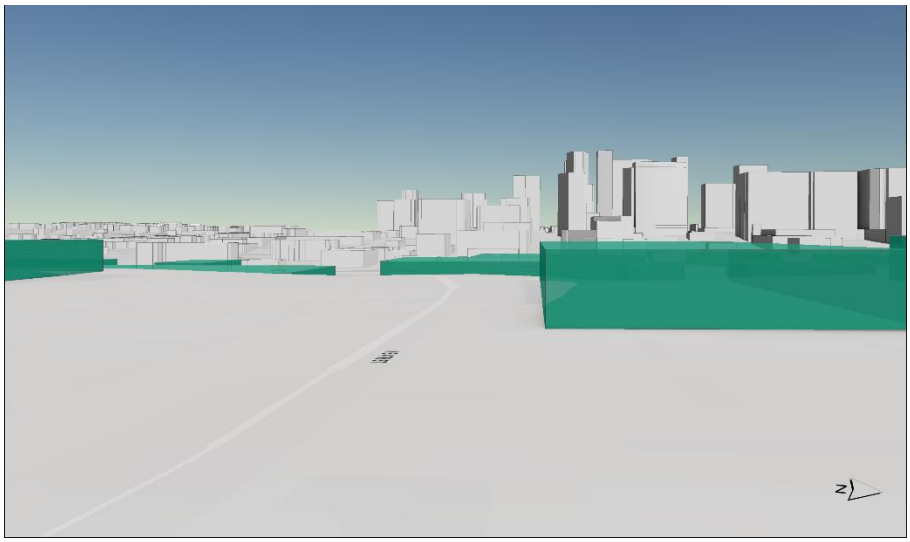
NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)

Currently, some views of the Downtown skyline are visible from street level. All three Action Alternatives could mostly obstruct these views, with only a small portion of Downtown still visible between buildings. The No Action Alternative would have minimal view impacts at this location.



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

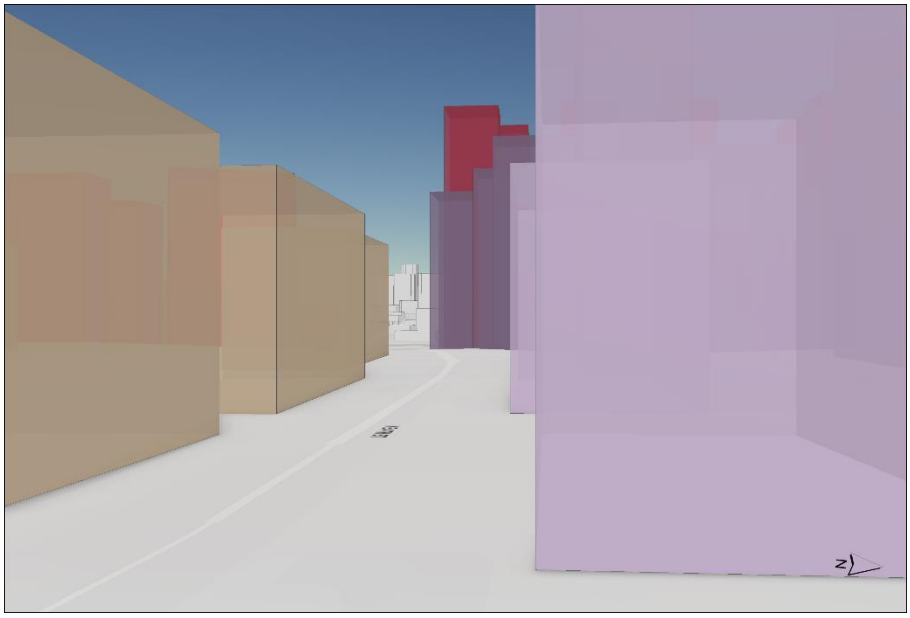
FIGURE 6-37 **Existing: NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-38 **No Action Alternative: NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

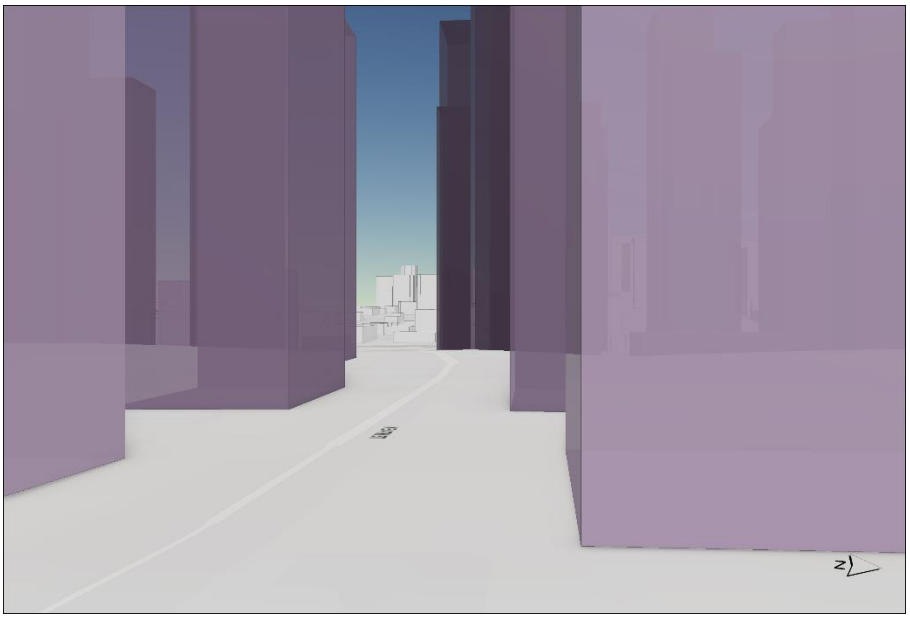
NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-39 **Alternative 1: NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-40 **Alternative 2: NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE (Looking West)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-41 **Alternative 3: NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue (Looking West)**

SHADOWS

Similarly to viewsheds, all the alternatives are expected to have shadow impacts greater than current conditions due to growth. This is particularly true for the Action Alternatives. Shadow impacts across the alternatives are expected to be more intense in Downtown and BelRed.

In the Action Alternatives, significantly higher building heights in the Wilburton study area would result in more shadows. At the specific analysis locations defined in Figure 6-1, all the Action Alternatives will have shadow impacts on the Eastrail corridor and multi-family residences to the east.

Shadow impacts are analyzed for several key public spaces citywide, and for several specific locations in the Wilburton study area.

Citywide

Regarding shadow effects, city policies reference light access in public spaces, and thus this analysis focuses on parks where greater intensity is planned. Citywide public spaces for shadow discussion include:

- Bellevue Downtown Park
- Meydenbauer Bay Park
- Surrey Downs Park
- Wilburton Hill Park

Under all alternatives, some shadow impacts on Bellevue Downtown Park would be expected, since all alternatives add housing, jobs, and commercial capacity to the Downtown area, likely resulting in more and larger buildings. Existing buildings immediately south of the park are approximately 100 feet in height, while buildings to the west, north, and east are generally under 50 feet tall. The Action Alternatives add the most capacity to Downtown (for jobs, housing units, and commercial space) so would be the most likely to result in shadow impacts. New, taller buildings to the south and west of the park would have the greatest impact. However, the park's edges are already shaded by trees, and most of the park is bordered by roads. The large open area in the center is unlikely to be dramatically impacted by shadows under any alternative. If it were to occur, some amount of additional shading could be of benefit for park visitors in the summer months.

Meydenbauer Bay Park is unlikely to see major shadow impacts under any alternative, as minimal growth is directed to the area, and, due to the lake there is no potential for new buildings to the southwest.

Surrey Downs Park, similarly, would be unlikely to be significantly impacted by more shadows under any alternative since the immediate area is not a focus for growth. It is currently bordered by 112th Avenue SE and railroad tracks to the east, and low-density residential on all other sides. The edges abutting residences also have mature trees taller than the structures, which cast shadows already.

Wilburton Hill Park would see more capacity for density to the northwest. However, due to the topography decrease from east to west and the existing dense tree canopy, shadows are unlikely to feel more intense than current conditions by park visitors.

Wilburton Study Area

In the Wilburton study area, areas of focus include two points on the Eastrail and general shadow impacts on residential areas to the east of the study area. Note that the colored 3D models represent a theoretical buildable envelope for each alternative, based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or development proposal. The colors represent applicable land use types, as shown in Figure 6-3, Figure 6-4, Figure 6-5, and Figure 6-6. Grey buildings in the 3D model represent existing buildings; modeling of the alternatives does not reflect potential future development outside of the Wilburton study area.

Eastrail – Near Wilburton Hill Park

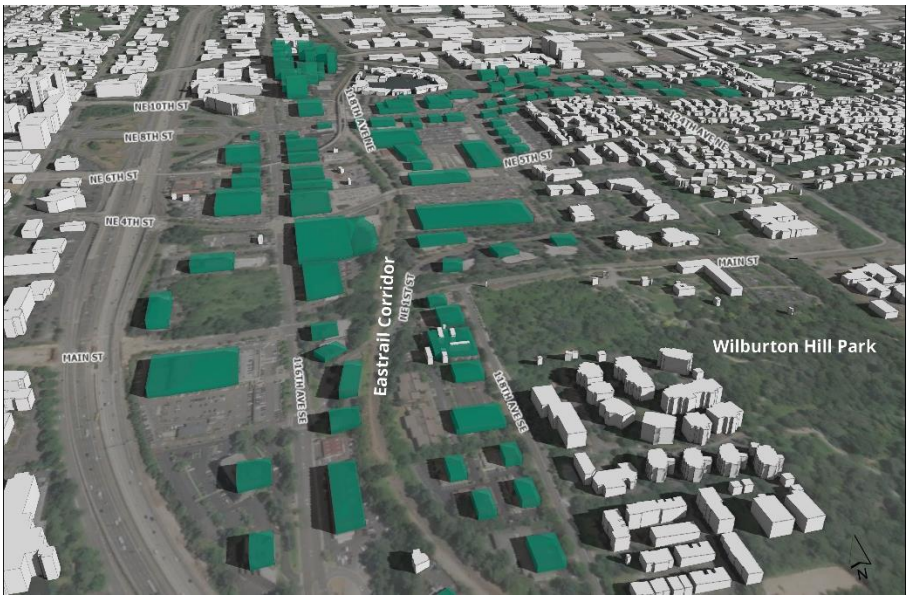
Part of the Eastrail passes near Wilburton Hill Park. In this segment, as shown in the figures below, the trail would be impacted by building shadows in the morning and afternoon under all the Action Alternatives. Alternatives 2 and 3 would have the greatest shadow impacts on this area. The No Action Alternative has minimal shadow impacts at this location.

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

FIGURE 6-42 **Existing: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (10 a.m., September 21)**

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

FIGURE 6-43 **Existing: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

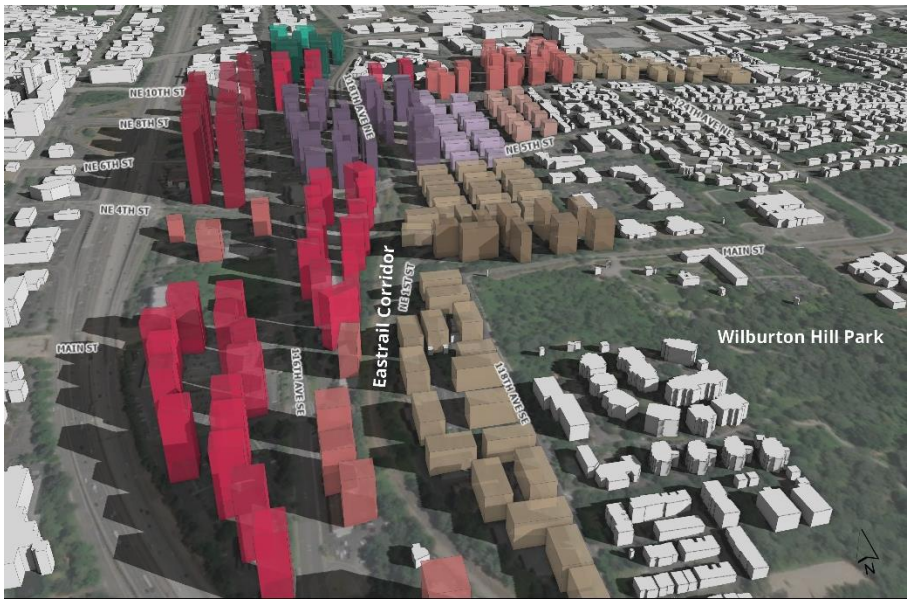
NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-44 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (10 a.m., September 21)**

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

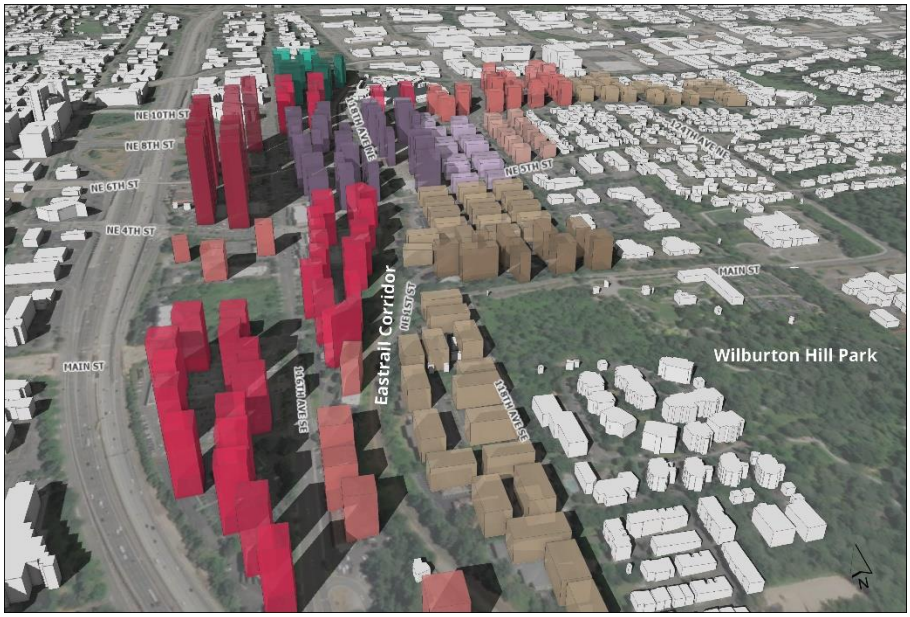
FIGURE 6-45 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

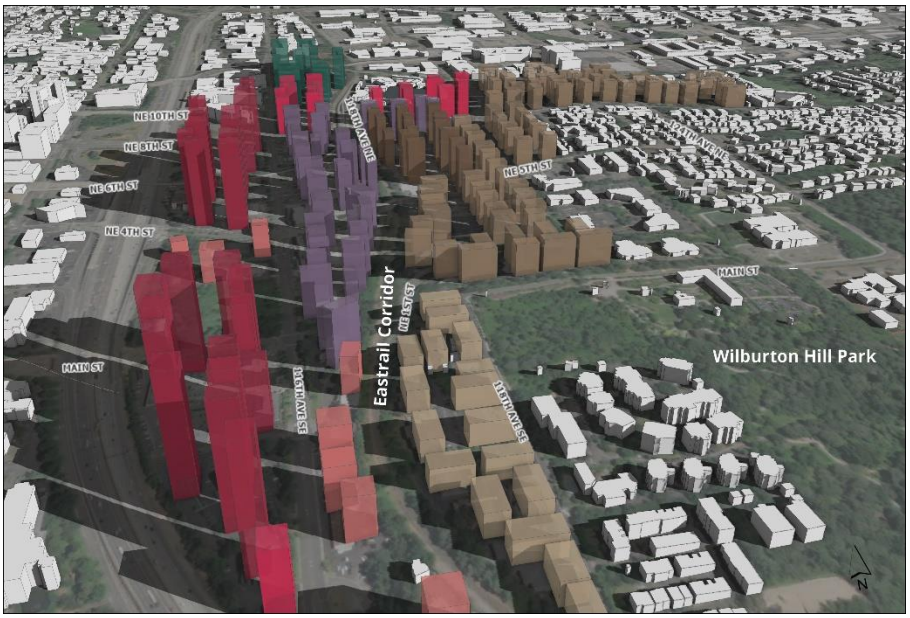
FIGURE 6-46 **Alternative 1: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

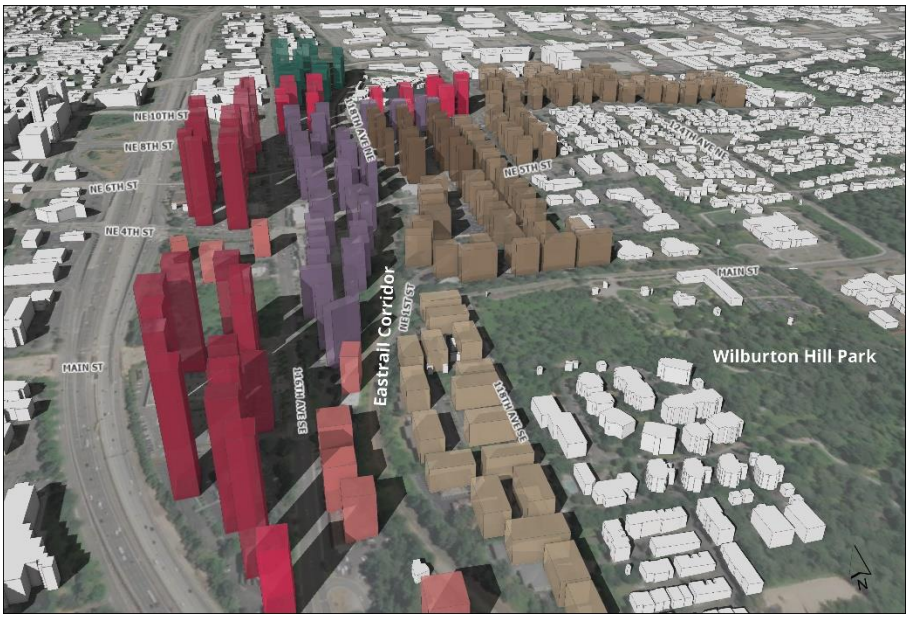
FIGURE 6-47 **Alternative 1: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

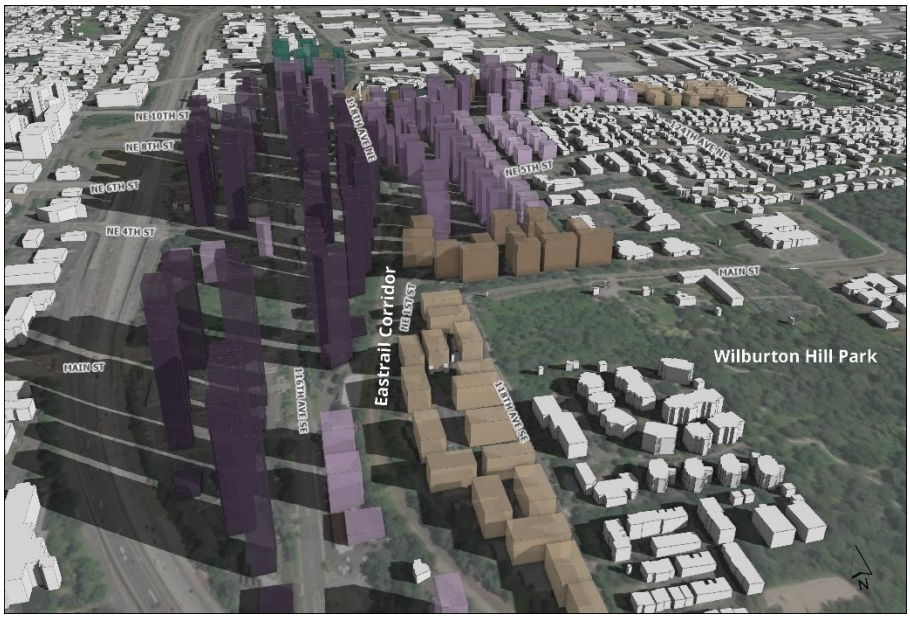
FIGURE 6-48 **Alternative 2: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

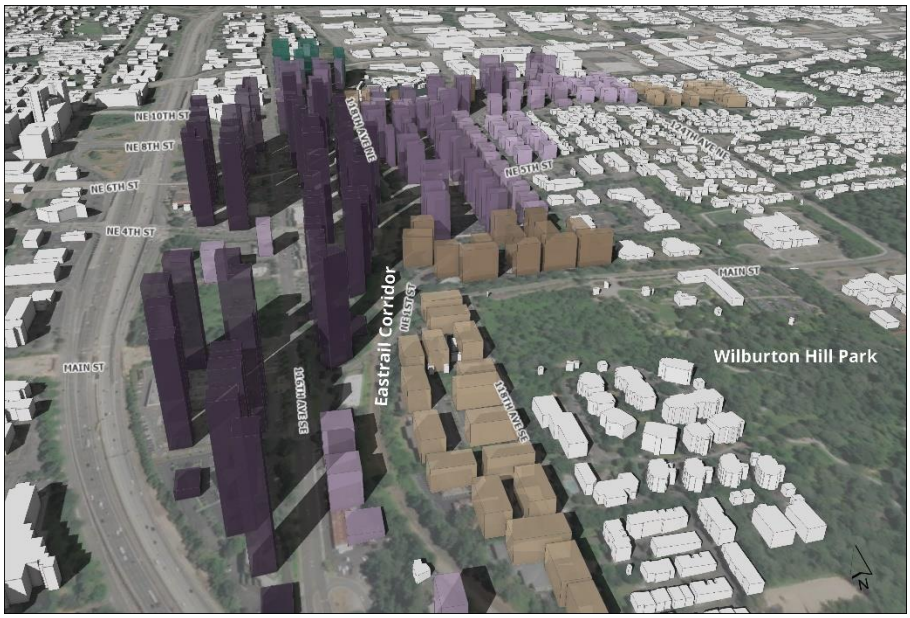
FIGURE 6-49 **Alternative 2: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-50 **Alternative 3: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-51 **Alternative 3: Eastrail Near Wilburton Hill Park (3 p.m., September 21)**

Eastrail – Near Residential Development

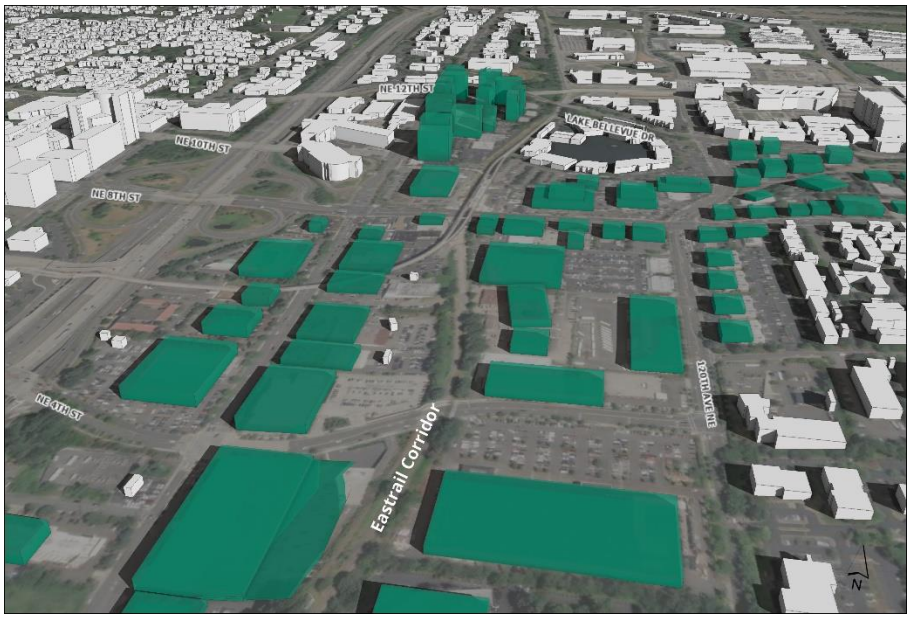
The portion of Eastrail near NE 4th Street would also see shadow impacts across all the Action Alternatives. Alternative 1 would preserve some light areas in the morning hours around NE 4th Street, while Alternatives 2 and 3 would mostly shade this area. In the afternoon, all the Action Alternatives would mostly shade this portion of the trail, although Alternative 1 would see more areas where sunlight passes through. The No Action Alternative has minimal shadow impacts on the Eastrail at this location.

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

FIGURE 6-52 **Existing: Eastrail Near Residential Development (10 a.m., September 21)**

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

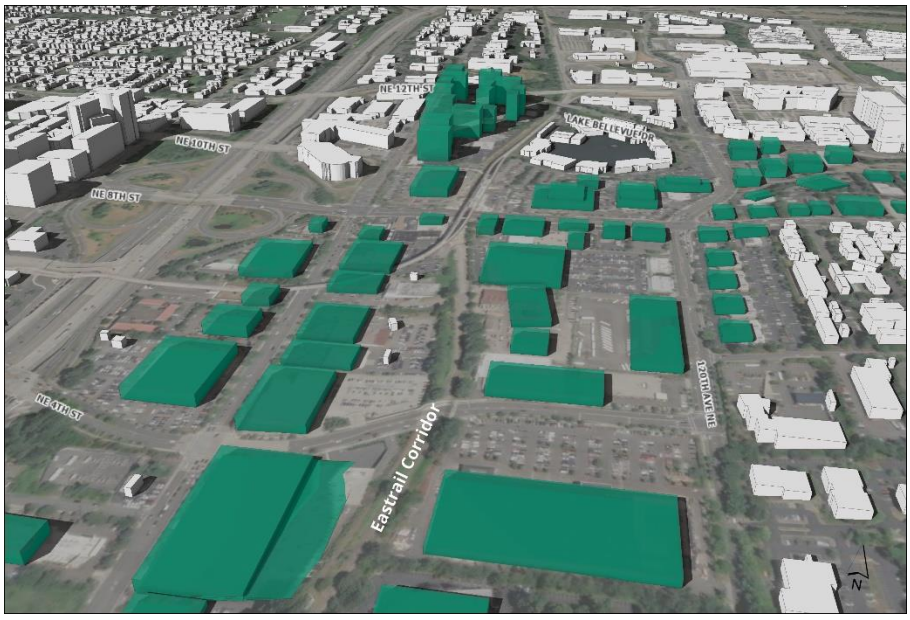
FIGURE 6-53 **Existing: Eastrail Near Residential Development (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

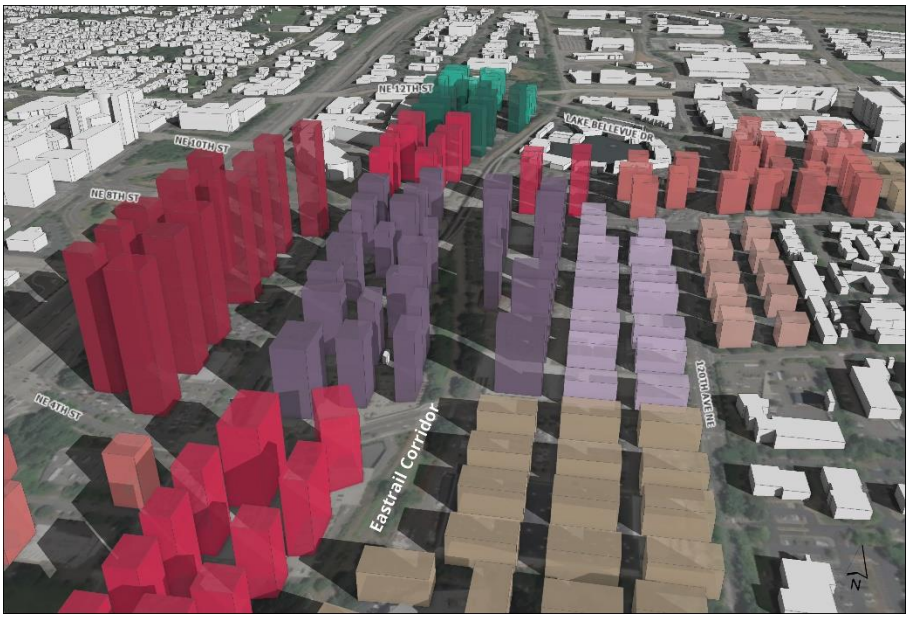
FIGURE 6-54 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Eastrail Near Residential Development (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

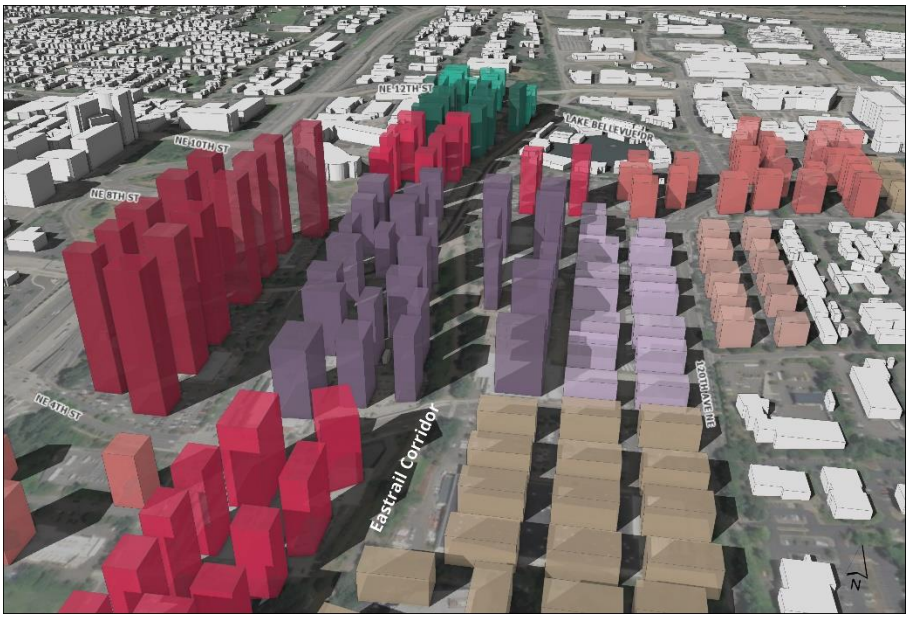
FIGURE 6-55 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Eastrail Near Residential Development (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

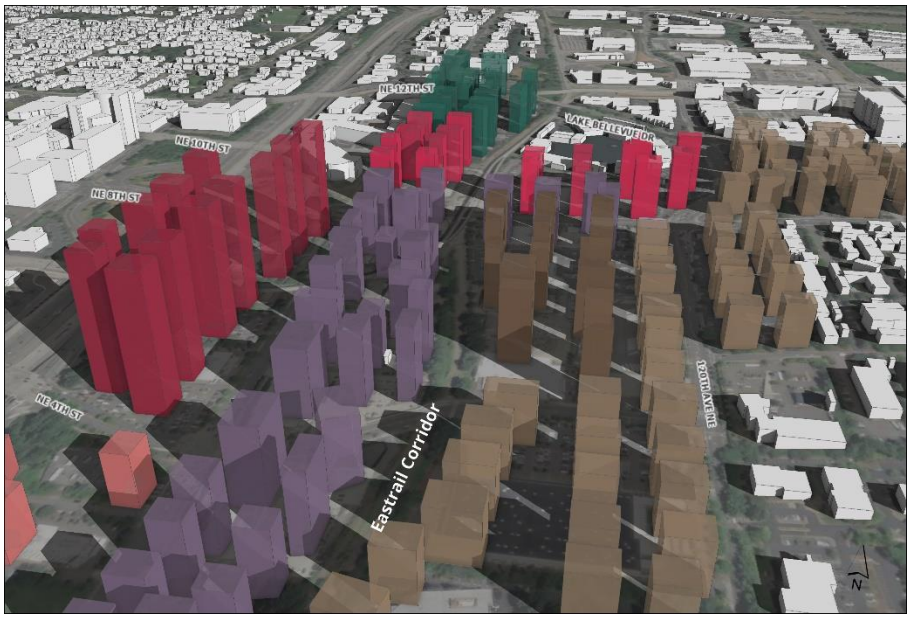
FIGURE 6-56 **Alternative 1: Eastrail Near Residential Development (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

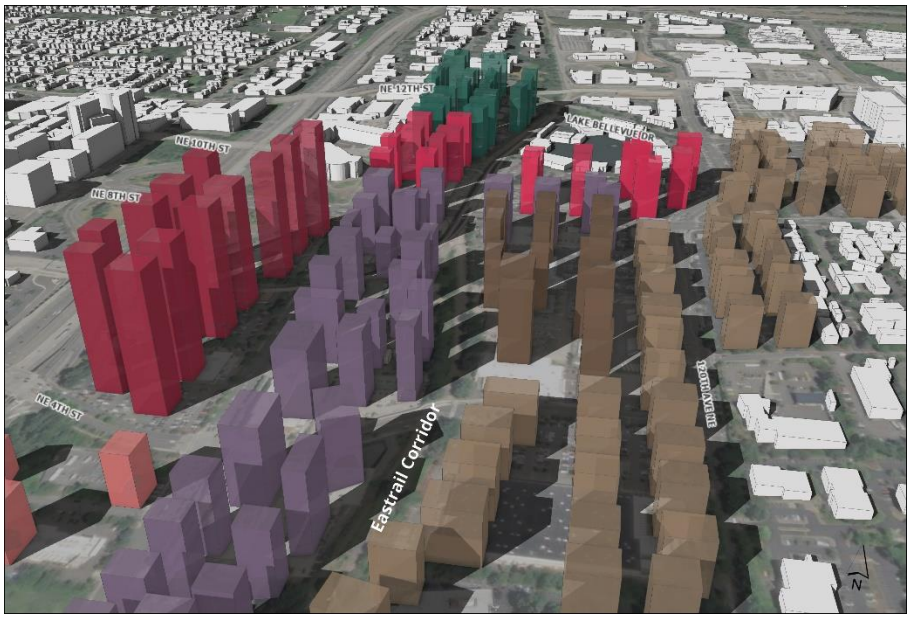
FIGURE 6-57 **Alternative 1: Eastrail Near Residential Development (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

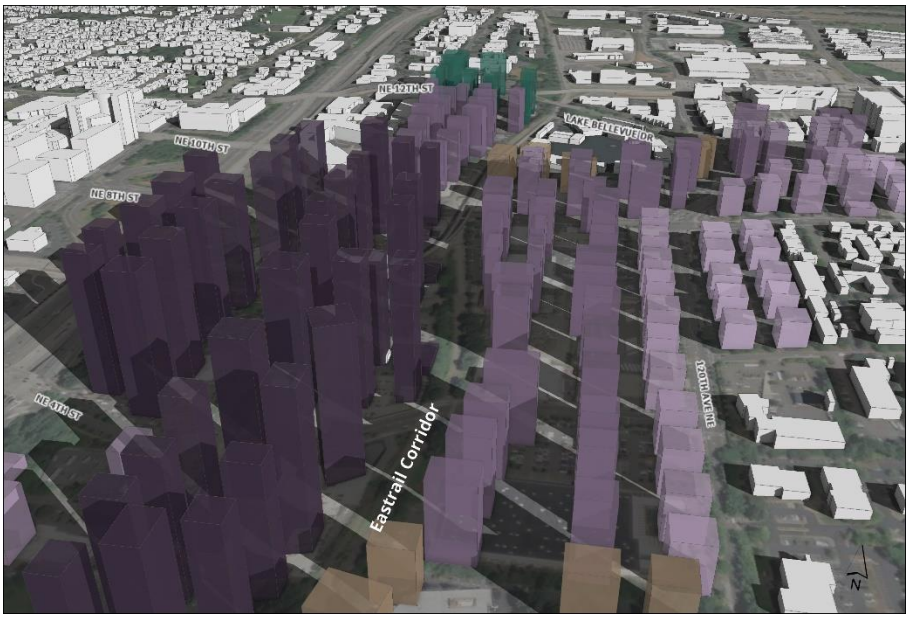
FIGURE 6-58 **Alternative 2: Eastrail Near Residential Development (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

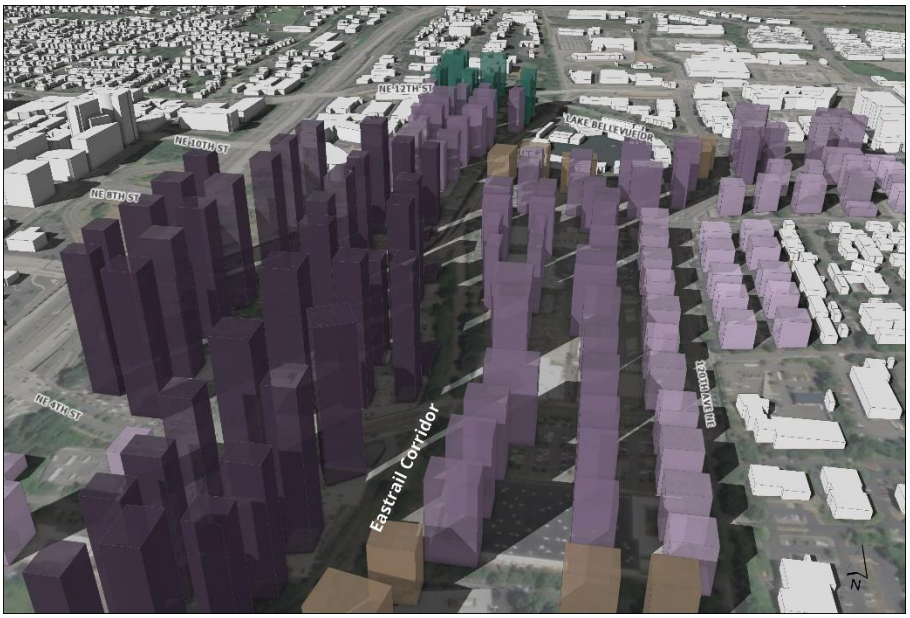
FIGURE 6-59 **Alternative 2: Eastrail and Residential Development (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-60 **Alternative 3: Eastrail and Residential Development (10 a.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

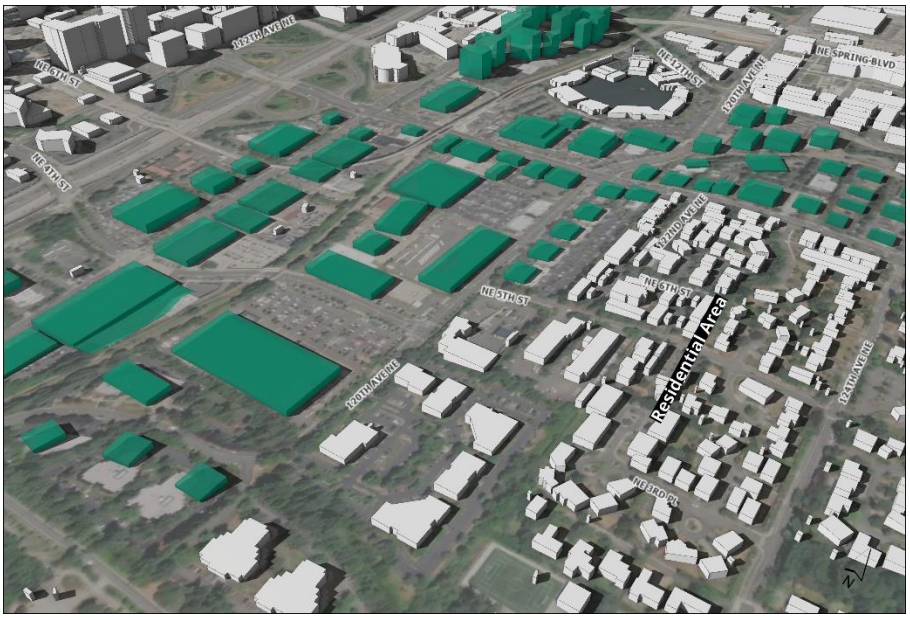
FIGURE 6-61 **Alternative 3: Eastrail and Residential Development (3 p.m., September 21)**

Residential Area to the East

The Action Alternatives all have some afternoon shadow impacts on existing multi-family residential buildings between 120th Avenue NE and 122nd Avenue NE. Alternative 2 would have the largest impact, covering much of these buildings in shadows. Alternatives 1 and 3 would have similar impacts, casting shadows immediately to the west of the buildings. If additional housing were added adjacent to the study area, particularly in the area closer to Main Street, shadows from new buildings in the Wilburton study area could impact these, too. The No Action Alternative has minimal shadow impacts on residential areas to the east of the study area.

SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

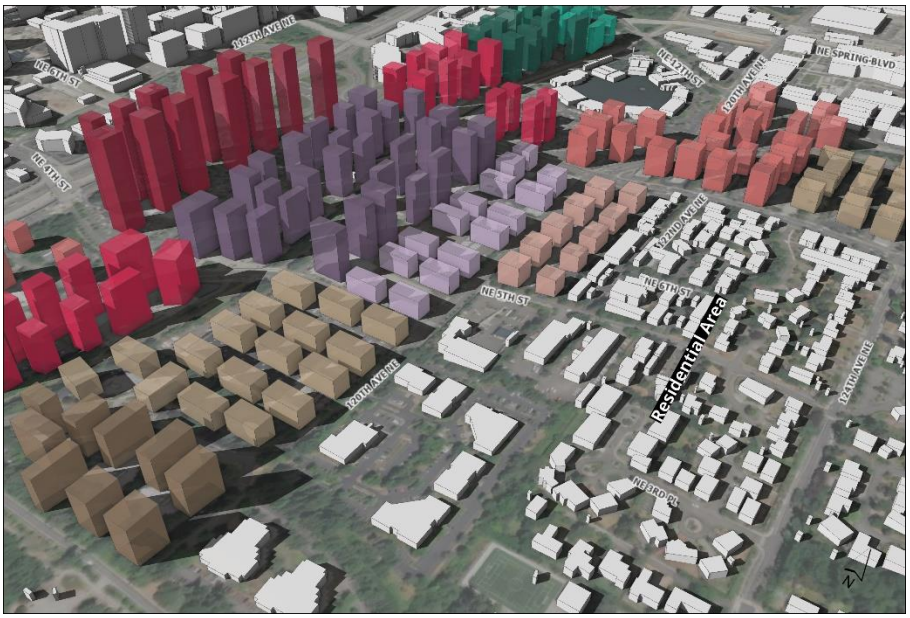
FIGURE 6-62 **Existing: Residential Development to the East (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Buildings in green represent additional capacity for Alternative 0 (No Action). Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

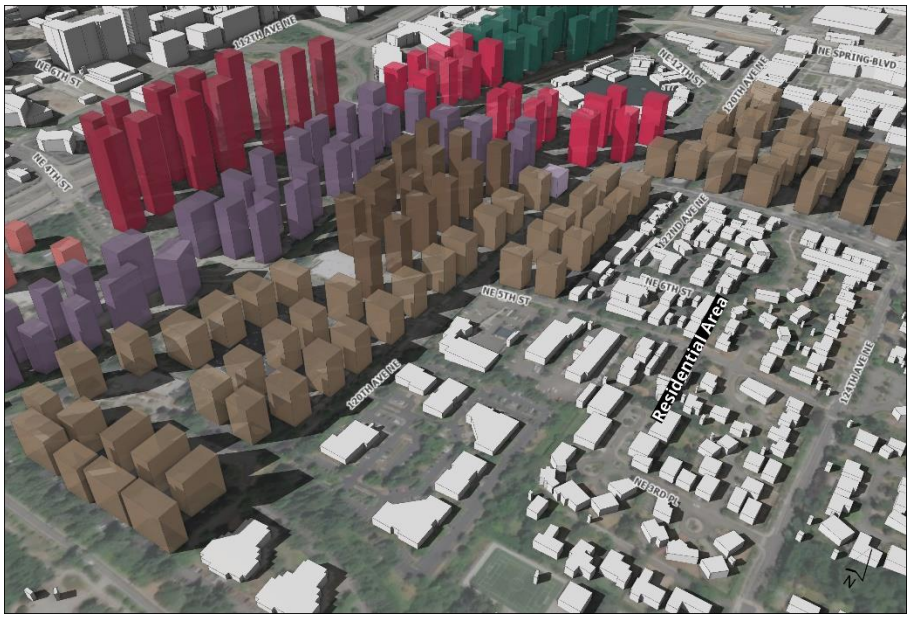
FIGURE 6-63 **Alternative 0 (No Action): Residential Development to the East (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTES: Action Alternatives' building colors are based on land uses in Figure 6-4 to Figure 6-6. Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

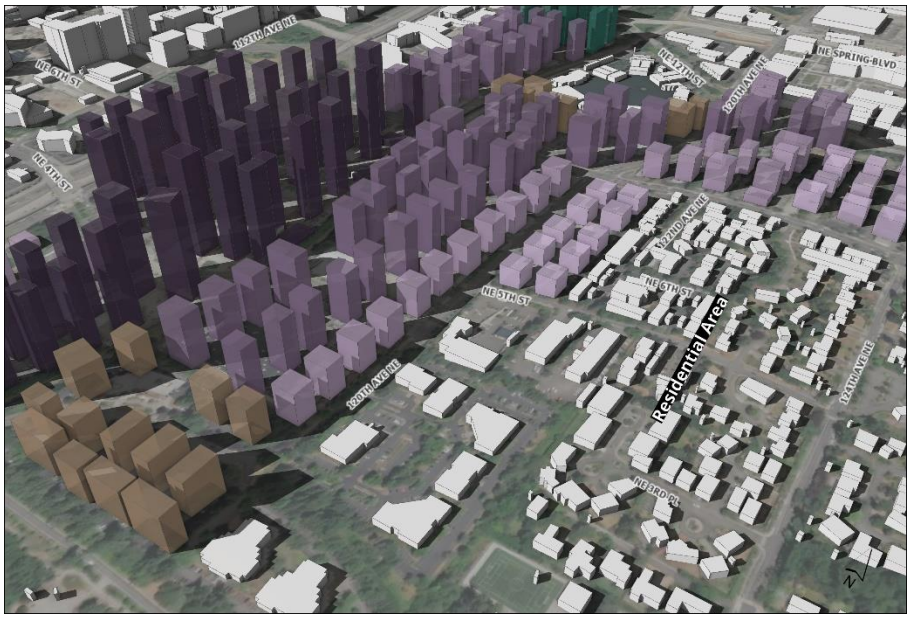
FIGURE 6-64 **Alternative 1: Residential Development to the East (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-65 **Alternative 2: Residential Development to the East (3 p.m., September 21)**



SOURCE: City of Bellevue 2023; BERK 2023

NOTE: Models represent a theoretical buildable envelope based on proposed heights and job and housing densities, not a specific building design or proposal.

FIGURE 6-66 **Alternative 3: Residential Development to the East (3 p.m., September 21)**

LIGHT AND GLARE

Citywide

All the alternatives are expected to increase light and glare as development is added and more building lighting and vehicle lights are present. This is particularly true for the Action Alternatives, which add the most capacity for growth. Light and glare impacts across the alternatives are expected to be more intense in Downtown and BelRed. Because Bellevue development patterns are already urban, existing sources of light and glare are present. While all alternatives would increase light and glare, it is unlikely that these increases would impact the public's ability to use and enjoy public spaces.

Wilburton Study Area

In the Wilburton study area, the Action Alternatives are expected to have the greatest impacts on light and glare, as these add substantially more capacity than the No Action Alternative. However, the No Action Alternative does include some amount of development, which would correspond with some light and glare increases.

6.4.3 Alternative 0 (No Action)

URBAN FORM

Citywide

In the No Action Alternative, most growth is focused in the Downtown, BelRed, and East Main Mixed Use Centers. This would increase development in these areas, within the current development regulations for density, height, bulk, and scale. New housing units would primarily be in larger apartment buildings.

Wilburton Study Area

Under the No Action Alternative, the Wilburton study area would see no change in allowed uses or scales; however, an increased number of housing units and jobs would result in some increased density within the current regulations.

VIEWSHEDS

Citywide

Additional growth in Downtown and BelRed could result in impacts on public views of Mount Rainier from areas to the north of these neighborhoods, views of Lake Washington and the Olympic Mountains from the east, and views of Lake Sammamish and the Cascades from the west. Some impacts on views of the Bellevue skyline could be expected north and east of BelRed.

Wilburton Study Area

The Wilburton study area could accommodate some growth under the No Action Alternative, but maximum building heights would remain the same. The only specific Wilburton viewpoint with the No Action Alternative view impacts is at Eastrail and NE 4th Street, where views of Downtown could be obstructed. Other views of Downtown and surrounding areas are unlikely to see major impacts.

SHADOWS

Citywide

The No Action Alternative would see fewer impacts from shadows than the Action Alternatives. With growth focused in Downtown, BelRed, and East Main, these areas would have a greater density of buildings and, therefore, more shadows than under current conditions.

Wilburton Study Area

In the Wilburton study area, while some development would occur, the maximum building heights would remain the same, so significant shadow impacts are not expected.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Citywide

The No Action Alternative would see fewer impacts from light and glare than the Action Alternatives. However, with capacity for more intense development than current conditions, more light impacts would likely occur from buildings and vehicles.

Wilburton Study Area

The Wilburton study area would experience some growth within the limits of current regulations and would, therefore, be likely to see some light and glare impacts throughout.

6.4.4 Alternative 1

URBAN FORM

Citywide

Alternative 1 would include more capacity for housing units and jobs than the No Action Alternative, and focus growth across Mixed Use Centers, with gentle density increases across the city. Lower density areas would see more duplexes, triplexes, cottage housing, or other low-density types. Larger apartment units would be allowed in Mixed Use Centers, which would impact the height, bulk, and scale in these locations.

Wilburton Study Area

The Wilburton study area would also see increases in jobs and housing, which in turn would impact the form. Most growth would focus on a core around the Wilburton Light Rail Station, Eastrail, and the Grand Connection. This would include residential, office, and other commercial uses within a mixed use node within the core, primarily office uses around the mixed use node and 116th Avenue NE, and primarily residential uses toward the east edges of the study area. Heights in the Wilburton study area under Alternative 1 could be up to around 45 stories between I-405, NE 8th Street, NE 4th Street, and 116th Avenue NE, and between 16–25 stories in the core, transitioning to lower heights on the edges (between 10–25 stories).

VIEWSHEDS

Citywide

With more density and jobs being focused across Mixed Use Centers and in areas with good access to transit and jobs, some impacts on public views would be expected.

Areas with good access to transit stations could see view impacts where a public view currently exists, as small apartments are added.

Mixed Use and Neighborhood Centers would also see an increase in density, which could also result in view obstructions.

Concentrations of density Downtown, BelRed, and East Main, along with height increases in the Wilburton study area, would impact public views of Mount Rainier from the north, of Lake Washington and the Olympic Mountains from the east, and of Lake Sammamish and the Cascades from the west. Views of the Bellevue skyline from publicly accessible locations in neighborhoods to the north and east could also be impacted.

Wilburton Study Area

In the Wilburton study area, some views of Downtown and hilly, vegetated, topography at specific locations (Figure 6-1) could be obstructed by new buildings in Alternative 1. However, impacts under Alternative 1 are similar or slightly less intense than under Alternatives 2 and 3.

SHADOWS

Citywide

Alternative 1 would likely result in some shadow impacts, due to more intense growth in Mixed Use Centers than under the No Action Alternative, and gentle density increases citywide. Mixed Use Centers would likely see the greatest impacts due to greater density of buildings.

Wilburton Study Area

The Wilburton study area would see much more growth than in the No Action Alternative, with expanded capacity for housing, jobs, and commercial development. Taller buildings would be allowed and would cast shadows. For specific shadow analysis locations, Alternative 1 has a lower impact on Eastrail and homes to the east than the other Action Alternatives, but a larger impact than the No Action Alternative.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Citywide

Alternative 1 would see some impacts from light and glare. Mixed Use Centers would see the greatest light and glare impacts as more building square footage is added. More vehicles would also likely be

present, with more people living and working in these areas, and would contribute some light impacts.

Wilburton Study Area

More density in the Wilburton study would result in more light impacts overall, although some surface parking lot lighting could be reduced if these areas are redeveloped. Impacts on specific locations on the Eastrail and on residential development to the east would be less intense under Alternative 1 than under Alternatives 2 and 3.

6.4.5 Alternative 2

URBAN FORM

Citywide

Alternative 2 would include a greater number of housing unit capacity and a similar number of job capacity to Alternative 1. Alternative 2 would place capacity in many of the same areas as Alternative 1, as well as increase growth in areas with good access to transit and jobs. Apartment buildings would be allowed in Mixed Use Centers, townhouses and small apartments would be allowed in Neighborhood Centers and transit corridors, and duplex and other lower density housing types would be allowed across the city. In the BelRed area, density around the Spring District/120th and 130th Avenue NE Light Rail Stations would increase, with medium density south of Bel-Red Road within walking distance of the transit stations. Existing multi-family areas would allow a wider range of housing typologies at higher densities.

Wilburton Study Area

In the Wilburton study area, growth with Alternative 2 would be focused in the mixed use core, similar to Alternative 1, and along the edges of the study area. Alternative 2 has less emphasis on office uses and more emphasis on residential uses. This alternative also has more housing capacity in areas east of Eastrail compared to Alternative 1, and a greater number of mid-rise and high-rise residential buildings. Building heights could increase modestly along the east edge of the study area (up to around 16 stories) and building heights could increase significantly along I-405 across East Main (up to around 45 stories).

VIEWSHEDS

Citywide

Alternative 2's impacts on citywide viewsheds would be comparable to those in Alternative 1, though the increase in housing units could result in slightly greater impacts.

Density and jobs would similarly be focused in Mixed Use Centers and areas with good access to transit and jobs. Small apartments could be added in areas with good transit access, and larger apartments could be added in mixed use and Neighborhood Centers: this could result in some immediate views from publicly accessible locations in and around these areas being impacted.

Added density Downtown and in BelRed and height increases in the Wilburton study area could impact public views of Mount Rainier from the north, of Lake Washington and the Olympics from the east, and of Lake Sammamish and the Cascades from the west. Views of the Bellevue skyline from publicly accessible locations in neighborhoods to the north and east could also be impacted.

Wilburton Study Area

Building heights in the east edge of the Wilburton study area would be higher than in Alternative 1, which may result to greater impacts on public views out of and through this area. Several specific Wilburton locations (Figure 6-1) would see impacts on views of Downtown and distant hills. Generally, view impacts under Alternative 2 are similar to the other Action Alternatives.

SHADOWS

Citywide

Alternative 2 would have similar shadow impacts as Alternative 1. Growth is most intense in Mixed Use Centers and gentle density is added across the city. Alternative 2 also places growth in areas with good access to transit and jobs and in Neighborhood Centers. Transit-proximate areas would see more development and, therefore, more shadows.

Wilburton Study Area

Growth in the Wilburton study area would be more spread out than under Alternative 1 and would have the highest heights along the

eastern edges. For specific locations on the Eastrail and residences to the east (Figure 6-1), Alternative 2 has the greatest shadow impacts on the multi-family buildings to the east, and slightly lesser shadow impacts on the Eastrail than Alternative 3.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Citywide

Light and glare impacts under Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 1, with most-intense impacts in Mixed Use Centers and lesser impacts in low-density neighborhoods from gentle density increases. Transit-proximate areas would see some impacts from added development. While more vehicles would also likely be present in areas of higher density, placing growth near transit could mitigate this by reducing residents' car dependency and, therefore, reduce amount of vehicle light.

Wilburton Study Area

Alternative 2 would likely result in light and glare impacts greater than under the No Action Alternative, but lesser than Alternative 1.

6.4.6 Alternative 3

URBAN FORM

Citywide

Alternative 3 would have the greatest capacity for new housing units and jobs. Similar to Alternative 2, a broader range of housing types would be allowed in existing multi-family areas, and additional density would be allowed in the lowest density areas. Housing typologies would include townhomes or small apartment buildings in areas with good transit access and around Neighborhood Centers, and duplexes, triplexes, cottage housing, or other low-density types allowed citywide. Alternative 3 emphasizes middle-scale housing in areas of high opportunity across the city. Larger apartment buildings would be found in Mixed Use Centers. This alternative would also encourage the creation of new Neighborhood Centers, creating better access to essential services within a short distance. Unlike the other alternatives, Alternative 3 would have increased flexibility in height and building typologies for large lots that consolidate development to retain natural areas and open space.

Wilburton Study Area

For the Wilburton study area, Alternative 3 would focus growth in the core of the study area, similar to Alternative 1, and several new mixed use nodes. A mix of office and retail uses would be integrated with residential uses in mixed use nodes. Medical uses would occupy a smaller area than in Alternatives 1 and 2. Building heights could increase significantly around the Grand Connection east of 116th Avenue NE and across East Main (up to around 45 stories). Building heights would be increased along both sides of 120th Avenue NE north of NE 8th Street, including around Lake Bellevue. There would also be more buildings between 25 and 45 stories in the study area, with taller high-rise towers around the Grand Connection east of 116th Avenue NE than in Alternatives 1 or 2. These additional areas for development would provide a similar amount of housing capacity in the Wilburton study area as Alternative 2.

VIEWSHEDS

Citywide

Impacts from Alternative 3 on citywide viewsheds would likely be greater than the impacts under Alternatives 1 and 2, due to a greater number of housing units, jobs, and commercial square feet. Alternative 3, in addition to adding growth in Mixed Use Centers and areas with good access to transit or jobs, would expand housing capacity in and near Neighborhood Centers and would create new Neighborhood Centers.

Small apartments could be added in areas with good transit access and around Neighborhood Centers, and larger apartments could be added in mixed use; this could impact some immediate views from publicly accessible locations in and around these areas. Compared with Alternatives 1 and 2, apartments would be smaller in and around Neighborhood Centers, but more numerous. View impacts, therefore, might be more intense from within Neighborhood Centers, but could be less impactful on surrounding areas.

Downtown and BelRed would see more development, and the Wilburton study area would have higher building heights (similar to Alternative 1) and a greater number of high-rise residential buildings (compared to Alternatives 1 and 2), which could impact public views of Mount Rainier from the north, of Lake Washington and the Olympic Mountains from the east, and of Lake Sammamish and the Cascades from the west. Views of the Bellevue skyline from publicly

accessible locations in neighborhoods to the north and east could also be impacted.

Wilburton Study Area

In the selected viewpoints for the Wilburton study area (Figure 6-1), Alternative 3 would obstruct multiple views of the Downtown skyline and of vegetated hills in the distance. All three alternatives have similar impacts, although Alternative 3 tends to have slightly more-intense impacts than the other two alternatives.

SHADOWS

Citywide

Similar to the other alternatives, Alternative 3 has much of its growth in Mixed Use Centers. Gentle density would also be allowed throughout the city. Like Alternative 2, growth would be placed in areas with good transit access; Alternative 3 adds additional capacity in areas in and around Neighborhood Centers. Alternative 3 also creates new Neighborhood Centers in areas that lack access to essential services. Due to these changes, Mixed Use Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and transit-proximate areas would likely see more shadow impacts than under current conditions.

Wilburton Study Area

Growth in the Wilburton study area would be focused in the core of the study area, as in Alternative 1, along with several new mixed use nodes throughout. Alternative 3 has the greatest building heights, job growth, and commercial space capacity of the alternatives, and the same housing capacity as Alternative 2. Therefore, this alternative would have the greatest shadow impacts.

For specific shadow analysis locations (Figure 6-1), Alternative 3 has a slightly larger shadow impact on the Eastrail than Alternative 2, which covers much of the area in shadows. Alternative 3, similarly to Alternative 1, has less of an impact on residences to the east than Alternative 2.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Citywide

Similarly to shadow impacts in Alternative 3, Mixed Use Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and transit-proximate areas would see the

greatest light and glare impacts, in the form of building and traffic light, due to increases in development.

Wilburton Study Area

Alternative 3 would also have the greatest light and glare impacts in the Wilburton study area, due to the greatest amount of capacity.

6.4.7 Summary of Impacts

TABLE 6-2 **Aesthetic Impacts Summary**

Alternative	Alternative 0 (No Action)	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
CITYWIDE				
Urban form	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact
Viewsheds	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact
Shadows	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact
Light and glare	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact
WILBURTON STUDY AREA				
Urban form	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact
Viewsheds	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact
Shadows	Lowest Impact	Lower Impact on Eastrail, Lower Impact on Homes to the East	Higher Impact on Eastrail, Highest Impact on Homes to the East	Highest Impact on Eastrail, Lower Impact on Homes to the East
Light and glare	Lowest Impact	Higher Impact	Higher Impact	Highest Impact

SOURCE: BERK 2023

NOTE: "Higher Impact" indicates that the alternative is likely to have greater impacts than the alternative with the lowest expected impact. For "urban form" higher impacts are expected where buildings may be taller or where more-intense development would potentially occur.

6.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

6.5.1 Incorporated Plan Features

- Under the Action Alternatives, new low-density typologies are permitted across the city, as opposed to allowing higher density types citywide. This will minimize aesthetic impacts within low-density neighborhoods.
- In the Wilburton study area, the Action Alternatives generally transition in intensity, with lower intensities to the eastern edges, and higher intensities in the core, around Wilburton Station, and adjacent to I-405. This minimizes the visual impacts of the higher density buildings on the area.
- In the Wilburton study area, the Action Alternatives include new multimodal connections that create smaller, more walkable blocks and minimize the visual impacts of new buildings.

6.5.2 Regulations and Commitments

The Comprehensive Plan and Wilburton/NE 8th Street Subarea Plan have existing policies that mitigate impacts on urban form, views, shadows, light, and glare.

The Bellevue Land Use Code (Title 20) establishes zoning and development regulations that govern uses, building design, site planning, and land use compatibility. Commercial and mixed use zones include regulations for building form, such as height, bulk, density, scale, setbacks, screening, landscaping, and other design considerations. Design standards for several special and overlay districts also apply.

In the Wilburton study area, although there are no neighborhood design standards, other design standards in the code are applicable, including:

- Transition Area Design District (LUC 20.25B), which addresses height, setbacks, buffers, screening, and signage for commercial and office buildings that abut residential zones.
- Office Limited Business 2 (OLB2) zone (LUC 20.25C) sets minimum building and landscaping design standards for new buildings.
- Community Retail Design District Design Guidelines (LUC 20.25I) sets minimum standards for building design, site design, internal

walkways, and screening for retail districts outside of the Downtown area, which includes Community Business (CB), Neighborhood Business (NB), and Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) zones.

- Medical Institution District (LUC 20.25J) sets appropriate uses, dimensions, landscaping, streetscape design, site design, and building design for master planned development in the Medical Institution area.
- Light Rail Overlay District (LUC 20.25M) sets regulations for light rail facility development.

6.5.3 Other Proposed Mitigation Measures

Other mitigation measures not currently included in the alternatives could include the following:

- **Regulations around Public Spaces.** Bellevue could add requirements for shadow studies, height limits, maximum floorplate size, separation of high-rise building massing, floorplate reductions, and modification of high-rise tower location and orientation for development adjacent to some key parks and public spaces.
- **Ground-Level and Upper-Story Setbacks.** Bellevue could require all areas with higher heights to have ground-level or upper-story setbacks, which would preserve access to light, limit shading, and limit height and bulk.
- **Building Form Requirements.** Bellevue could add requirements for roof articulation, modulation of façades, layering of materials and massing, and tower separation.
- **Streetscape Vegetation.** The city could require vegetation on major streets to screen development and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- **Viewshed Regulations.** Bellevue could consider adding regulations to the development code to protect certain public views.
- **Transparent Façade Requirements.** In areas with bulk and scale concerns that do not have existing requirements for transparent façades, the city could add such requirements to enhance the pedestrian environment.

- **Low-Density Residential Development Regulations.** The Action Alternatives would allow gentle density increases across the city. As new residential uses are added to the zoning code, Bellevue would have an opportunity to regulate scale and form.
- **Wilburton Study Area: Zoning and Development Regulations.** The Action Alternatives in the Wilburton study area would require changes to the zoning and development regulations. These regulations would address permitted uses, dimensional requirements, a FAR amenity incentive system, conversion of non-conforming uses and properties, pedestrian comfort, parking and circulation, landscaping, and the development of streets and sidewalks.
- **Wilburton Study Area: Design Guidelines** The Action Alternatives would include design guidelines specific to the Wilburton study area. These would likely include standards related to building design, pedestrian experience and streetscapes, public spaces, and mixed use building features, in addition to other standards. These could include standards for towers, such as locating them farther from the street, making podiums shorter, or orienting towers to maximize solar access.

6.6 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

In all alternatives, additional growth would result in impacts on the built form citywide, particularly in Mixed Use Centers, and, under the Action Alternatives, in Neighborhood Centers and near transit. The urban form of the Wilburton study area, especially under the Action Alternatives, would change to a much denser area with much taller buildings. This growth will, in turn, have significant adverse impacts from shadows, views, and light and glare. These impacts are to be expected as Bellevue continues to grow, especially in the context of regional transit investments and development interest. **With the application of mitigation measures, no significant unavoidable adverse impacts on views or from shadows, light, and glare are expected.**

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