



Code and Policy Fall 2025 Update

Projects In Progress

BelRed Look Forward

In anticipation of East Link Light Rail, the Bellevue City Council in 2009 adopted a new subarea plan and land use code for the BelRed area. The plan outlined a transformation of the former industrial area into a series of vibrant, urban villages with abundant new green space, businesses and homes. Now, more than a decade later, with East Link largely done and Spring District construction well underway, the city is reviewing the land use code to determine if it is achieving the vision for the BelRed area.

Code amendments will align development regulations with updated policies, including increased housing and job growth, transit-oriented development and expanded medically related uses. The updates will also refine strategies for affordable housing, street network improvements, daylighting streams and the BelRed Arts District.

Status: Draft Development.

Co-Living Housing

The Land Use Code will be updated to meet new state requirements for co-living housing. In 2024, Washington passed House Bill 1998, which directs cities to allow this type of housing—individually rented, lockable rooms with shared kitchens—on any lot that permits at least six multifamily units, including mixed-use zones. This project will make these updates so co-living is a permitted use in the required areas.

Status: In city council Review, to be complete by the end of 2025.



Critical Areas Ordinance Update

The Critical Areas Ordinance is being updated to strengthen environmental protections while supporting responsible growth. Required by state law, this update ensures regulations reflect the latest science and balance conservation with development needs.

Status: In city council Review, to be complete by the end of 2025.



Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas (HOMA)

The Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas (HOMA) land use code amendment is designed to encourage housing development. It proposes higher density, taller buildings and removing obstacles to building more homes. The proposal will create an affordable housing program—either mandatory or voluntary—in various mixed-use areas of the city. The proposal also updates land use districts and the city’s land use map.

Status: In Planning Commission Review.



Sign Code Update

In August 2024, city council launched the Sign Code Update, which is anticipated to be a complete rewrite of the existing sign code (BCC 22B.10). This update will bring the code into compliance with applicable case law, simplify and streamline regulations, and balance the needs and desires of the business community and residents.

Status: Draft Development. Council engagement planned for Q1 2026.

Launching Soon

Parking Reform LUCA (SB 5184)

In May, Washington passed ESSB 5184, which directs cities to amend minimum parking requirements. In certain circumstances, the city may not impose any minimum parking requirements, while in others a new cap has been imposed on the requirement. There are some exceptions, including maintaining requirements for ADA-compliant spaces and short-term parking. In any circumstance, developers may choose to build more parking as they see fit.

Anticipated Launch: Q1 2026



Omnibus LUCA/BCCA

Code and Policy completes periodic clean-up updates to address areas of confusion, errors, and conflicting sections of the code. The scope of the Omnibus LUCA/BCCA is anticipated to be more expansive than past clean-up amendments, incorporating additional opportunities for improvement which are more substantial than a typical clean-up, but which advance established policy and are unlikely to be controversial.

Anticipated Launch: Q1 2026

Institutional Land Use District LUCA and Rezone

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan introduced a new Institutional designation, which applies to limited areas, including Bellevue College. This project will develop code standards for a new Institutional Land Use District associated with the new designation. These updated standards will support Bellevue College’s future growth in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding community.

Anticipated Launch: Q2 2026

High Density Residential

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan introduced a new high density residential designation, which applies to limited areas. This designation is intended to provide housing and complementary uses at a scale higher than other multifamily-only districts in the city, but lower than the more urban mixed-use districts. This project will develop code for a new Land Use District implementing this designation and making it available for zoning. This project will also assess the city's Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to explore opportunities to better support housing development.



Anticipated Launch: Q2 2026

Downtown Livability 2.0

In 2017, Bellevue adopted Downtown Livability: a comprehensive revamp of its Downtown Land Use Code to support the vision for downtown as a vibrant, mixed-use center. This LUCA will revisit the Downtown code to assess how it has been performing toward the Downtown Livability vision and make necessary improvements.

Anticipated Launch: Following HOMA action in 2026.

Stay Informed

Check out the Code Amendments webpage for project updates, meeting links, and opportunities for comment by scanning the QR code or visiting BellevueWA.gov/code-amendments.



The Code and Policy Planner assigned to each project is the best contact for questions and information on specific projects. For other comments and questions, contact Kristina Gallant, Code and Policy Planning Manager, at kgallant@bellevuewa.gov.



Glossary

We promise to use real words when possible – but if we slip into “planner-speak”, this list will help.

- **LUCA:** Land Use Code Amendment
- **BCCA:** Bellevue City Code Amendment
- **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):** A subordinate dwelling unit attached or detached to a single family structure, duplex, triplex, townhome or other housing unit. (Detached ADUs are sometimes called DADUs.)
- **Affordable Housing:** Housing that is reserved for a household that earns up to 80 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size; to be considered “affordable,” the monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, must not exceed thirty percent of the household’s income.
- **Area Median Income (AMI):** The median household income for the Seattle-Bellevue Metropolitan Area as published on an annual basis by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** The city’s long range plan prepared following the requirements of the Washington Growth Management Act, containing policies to guide local actions regarding land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities and economic development in ways that will accommodate at least the adopted 20-year targets for housing and employment growth.
- **Critical Areas:** Areas required to be protected under the Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A, including the following areas and ecosystems: (a) wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas.
- **Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** The gross floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the lot area, expressed most often as a decimal. For example, an FAR of 0.50 indicates that the floor area of a building equals 50 percent of the total lot area. FAR is used to regulate the scale of development in certain Land Use Districts.
- **Growth Management Act (GMA):** State legislation (RCW 36.70A) enacted in 1990, and later amended, requiring counties and cities to create cooperative regional strategies to manage growth and to adopt local comprehensive plans and regulations to implement these strategies.
- **HB / SB:** House Bill / Senate Bill.
- **Planned Unit Development (PUD):** A discretionary land use application that allows flexibility for development proposals in the type, design and arrangement of structures; a mix of land uses; conservation of natural features; and efficient use of open space.
- **Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** Transit Oriented Development. Development that is within one-half mile walking distance from and oriented toward a transit station that provides frequent, reliable service. TOD supports transit use through a compact mix of housing, retail and office uses and a walkable, pedestrian-oriented character.



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