# Sustainable District Opportunity Assessment

Wilburton Vision Implementation April 2025





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## **Executive Summary**

The City of Bellevue launched the Wilburton Sustainable District Opportunity Assessment (SDOA) in November 2023, to evaluate whether opportunities exist in the Wilburton Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area to create a dedicated sustainability-focused district (often called an eco-district1). Conducting the SDOA was part of implementing the city's Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan, adopted by Bellevue City Council in 2020, which includes an action to explore the creation of a sustainable district. With the assessment complete, the city has learned that creating such a district is both feasible and valuable to help implement the Wilburton Vision and advance the city's goals around sustainability, livability, and transit-oriented development for the neighborhood.

The City of Bellevue envisions Wilburton as a model of sustainable urban design, integrating energy-efficient buildings, resilient infrastructure, and community-centered design principles. This assessment identifies and prioritizes achievable actions, aimed at guiding the district toward a resilient, zero-carbon future. Those actions are categorized into five core focus areas, listed below. There are multiple synergies between these focus areas, offering opportunities for economies of scale through overlapping and interconnected systems. The five core focus areas are: **Energy**; **Livability & Wellbeing**; **Mobility**; **Resources**; and **Water & Ecosystems**.

This assessment is grounded in the Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA), which was adopted by City Council in July 2024 and provides new policies in support of the Wilburton TOD area vision as "Bellevue's next urban, trail- and transit-oriented mixed-use community". The CPA includes Environment policy *S-WI-42. Support the development of an environmentally resilient neighborhood through a sustainable district framework, code updates, and public-private partnerships.* The Wilburton CPA also includes several policies supporting net-zero or net-positive development, creation of district energy systems, sustainable mobility, and green stormwater infrastructure, among others. This assessment also helps to advance the earlier 2018 Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) vision by building on prior and parallel city initiatives, including the Eastrail Wilburton Framework Plan and the Grand Connection active transportation crossing over 1-405.

The project team conducted an extensive study of precedents in sustainable urban design in North America and global urban centers, assessing actions that could be tailored to Wilburton's specific needs and context. These precedents highlighted a range of approaches, revealing trends in district-level sustainability planning that informed the recommendations.

The project team also hosted structured workshops with a diverse group of stakeholders—residents, business and property owners, city officials, interagency partners, and sustainability experts—who provided insights into sustainability priorities and potential challenges. This inclusive process ensured that the vision for a Wilburton sustainable district reflects shared goals and is both ambitious and actionable. Input from these workshops, combined with external consultations, further shaped our recommendations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The term eco-district is generic; however, this report makes reference to a now-retired rating system called EcoDistricts, which was evaluated as part of this assessment. To avoid confusion, we have elected not to use the term eco-district but instead refer to a 'sustainable district.'

The team synthesized findings into three core recommendations to maximize Wilburton's sustainability potential:

- 1. Actions by Focus Area: Each focus area includes targeted actions to achieve defined sustainability outcomes. These, along with an overview of existing local policies, and precedent studies, is discussed within each focus area under the "Sustainable District Goals and Strategy" section.
- 2. **LEED for Cities and Communities Certification:** By aligning with LEED for Cities and Communities, Wilburton can systematically track, validate, and enhance sustainability performance across development phases, using a standardized framework that supports consistent progress towards environmental and social goals. An established and trusted third-party certification will also help with consistency over time, as people, leadership and market players change. This evaluation and recommendation are detailed below in the "Sustainable District Framework" section.
- 3. Incentive Tiers for New Development: As part of the proposed rezone, significant development is expected in the Wilburton TOD area in the coming decades. To promote high-performance building practices within the proposed district, the city has drafted a tiered, incentive-based system that allows additional density for new developments that achieve advanced green building certifications and other performance criteria. The city's Development Services Department (DSD) will define this tiered system through a Director's Rule, which is included by reference in the current draft of the Wilburton Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).

The conclusions and recommendations outlined in this assessment constitute an inspiring approach but also present a complex coordination challenge. While the city can guide and lead in several ways—such as through land use code, zoning incentives, and development of city-owned parcels—it is still reliant on market behavior, public and private partnership, and balancing of competing policy priorities to see a robust sustainable district materialize.

### **Next Steps**

There are several discrete actions necessary to complete the work undertaken with this assessment, and to launch the next phase of work:

- Land Use Code: The City of Bellevue is currently leading the Wilburton Vision Implementation Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA). The draft LUCA includes green building incentives, access requirements, and building and site development standards.
- *District Vision & Identity*: Internal and external stakeholder support will be critical to realizing the opportunities described in this report. A key next step is engaging these stakeholders in clarifying and communicating the vision for a sustainable district, including a clearly defined identity and name.
- *District Framework*: The city, in consultation with stakeholders and rating system experts, will make a determination about whether to pursue LEED for Communities certification for the district.
- Early Actions + Public Private Partnerships. The city will identify which actions within each key focus area can be started in 2025-2026, including
  key early project concepts like a district energy system. As part of early project identification and support, the city will continue to engage subject
  matter experts and district stakeholders to gather input into planning and implementation, LEED certification, and other next steps.

## Introduction

The Wilburton TOD area is expected to experience significant growth in the coming decades, providing capacity for up to approximately 15,000 additional housing units and 35,000 additional jobs as studied in the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation Final Environmental Impact Statement. In addition, major regional and local investments in transportation and other infrastructure—such as the Grand Connection, Eastrail, and the Sound Transit 2 Line–will provide enhanced walkability and new public transit options. Sturtevant Creek, Lake Bellevue and an existing wetland offer opportunities for meaningfully integrating nature into a dense urban environment.

Taken together, these existing attributes, investments, and projects constitute a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the city. A Wilburton sustainable district can serve as a model of sustainable urban development, contributing to a more resilient, equitable, and vibrant neighborhood and city. The district concept aims to embody the overarching vision of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan: Bellevue is a healthy, livable, sustainable, and prosperous "City in a Park" for decades to come. The Wilburton sustainable district will help realize this vision by integrating exceptional environmental performance with great urban placemaking and innovative sustainability practices. Making Wilburton a showcase for urban sustainability builds on and enhances the community's vision for the city's next great urban neighborhood, leveraging the extraordinary investments and planning work that will give Wilburton a unique identity and tell a powerful story of place.

In conducting this assessment, the city worked to confirm alignment between its sustainability goals and the updated vision for the Wilburton TOD area, and to integrate the two as much as possible. The project team conducted multiple internal and external stakeholder workshops where city staff, business and property owners, subject matter experts, interagency partners, and residents consistently emphasized the need to create a stronger sense of place in Wilburton. Approaches such as high-density mixed-use development, improved public infrastructure, emphasis on walkability and pedestrian experience, progress toward carbon neutrality, and a dedication to health and livability were identified as ways to foster a dynamic, sustainability-focused sense of place. Stakeholders recognized that establishing a sustainable district could help to support a more livable, equitable, and economically viable community. The city also worked to integrate sustainability directly into the Wilburton land use code amendment (LUCA) process, working with stakeholders to craft an appropriate mix of requirements and incentives for open space, high performance buildings, pedestrian experience, and green infrastructure. The land use code and urban design guidelines are built on the policies in the Wilburton Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) adopted







by Bellevue City Council in 2024. Policy S-WI-42 explicitly supports "the development of an environmentally resilient neighborhood through a sustainable district framework, code updates, and public-private partnerships."

The sustainable district concept is fundamentally about setting the stage for a better place to live and do business, stitching together the opportunities and existing assets of the built and natural environments. The district can be thought of as a flexible space for private actors to be creative while ensuring outcomes are aligned with the city's broader sustainability policies and targets, and the city's goals for Wilburton. A neighborhood is a commons, a shared space that must be managed, while encouraging innovation to meet ever-changing market conditions. Leadership and facilitation by the city will be essential for managing public expectations in a way that both encourages and measures progress toward community goals.

### **Key District Focus Areas**

Through researching best practices from successful existing sustainable districts, gathering stakeholder input, and considering how best to leverage current assets and investments, the SDOA identified five key focus areas for a sustainable district in Wilburton:

- Energy ٠
- Livability & Wellbeing
- Mobility
- Resources
- Water & Ecosystems

Within each focus area, several approaches are identified that combine policies, regulations, and incentives. Specific actions are listed later in this report.

### Energy

Low Carbon and District Energy Systems: Support the integration of low-carbon and renewable energy sources within the district, aligning with the city's aim of 80% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% by 2045. This is supported by the WA Clean Energy Transition Act, which requires Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to provide carbon neutral electricity by 2045. Encourage new development to include renewable energy sources on-site, such as solar or geothermal, to provide or supplement their energy needs. Explore mechanisms to encourage connections to viable low-carbon district energy systems, such as sewer heat recovery. Support all-electric buildings and transportation, and retrofit older buildings and vehicles, to eliminate fossil fuel use.

Green Building Incentives: Encourage the adoption of green building standards and certifications to ensure all new developments meet strong sustainability criteria. As part of the SDOA, the city has drafted a bonus-tier framework to incentivize high performance buildings. The Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) mandates that new commercial and residential buildings use 70 percent less energy by 2031 as compared to a 2006 baseline.



### Livability & Wellbeing

Community Spaces and Placemaking: Create vibrant community gathering spaces and enhance neighborhood identity through strategic placemaking

and urban design, fostering a sense of belonging and community cohesion. Ensure the district promotes physical and mental health through access to parks, clean air, and active transportation options. Encourage new development to create new pocket parks and garden spaces open to the public. Coordinate with King County and adjacent landowners to activate the Eastrail right of way with landscaping and publicly accessible recreational features. This aligns with Bellevue's goals of increasing park access and improving air quality.

**Compact Development:** Prioritize high-density, mixed-use development to foster walkability, reduce vehicle dependency, and create a vibrant urban atmosphere where residents have easy access to daily needs within a compact area. This approach to development enhances livability by shortening travel distances and encouraging active transportation, such as walking and cycling. Concentrating housing, retail, and services in a dense, accessible arrangement, compact development also strengthens social interaction and community cohesion, fostering a sense of place.



**Climate-Resilient Communities:** Support the creation of Resilience Hubs and other community assets that contribute to resilient neighborhoods. Design and implement infrastructure solutions that are built to accommodate projected future climatic conditions. Address known vulnerabilities within existing infrastructure and communities, and expected vulnerabilities within future infrastructure and communities.



### Mobility

**Multimodal Transportation & Walkability:** Develop an integrated transportation network that promotes active transportation and public transit, reducing dependency on singleoccupancy vehicles and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. This aligns with Bellevue's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing electric vehicle adoption. Enhancing lastmile connectivity through micromobility options like bike-sharing, and prioritizing accessible, safe routes to transit stations will further support Bellevue's objectives of reducing carbon emissions and can position Wilburton as a model for sustainable commuting.

**Pedestrian-Oriented Street Design:** Street and sidewalk design, traffic calming, pedestrian access to amenities and natural features, and breaking up large blocks can support an enjoyable walking experience in Wilburton. Enhancing connections between neighborhoods and key amenities through the Grand Connection and Eastrail will facilitate access across the Eastside.

**Compact Mixed-use Trail- and Transit- Oriented Development (TOD):** TOD in Wilburton will promote efficient land use and reduce reliance on singleoccupancy vehicles by focusing the district's highest densities and mixed-use activity proximate to light rail stations, Eastrail, and the Grand Connection. This approach supports Bellevue's goals of decreasing vehicle miles traveled, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and alleviating urban congestion.

### Resources

Waste Reduction and Recycling: Implement comprehensive waste management actions, along with policies encouraging waste diversion in both

residential and commercial sectors, to increase recycling rates and strive towards zero waste, supporting Bellevue's goal of diverting 90% of waste from landfills by 2050. This target will require community education, infrastructure, and policy support, such as convenient recycling stations and waste sorting incentives. Furthermore, new construction projects should strive to achieve high diversion rates for construction and demolition waste, setting the foundation for sustainable building practices.

**Sustainable Materials:** By promoting the use of sustainable, low-impact materials, Wilburton will reduce its ecological footprint throughout the building lifecycle. Emphasis will be placed on materials with low embodied carbon, renewable sources, and healthy, non-toxic ingredients that contribute to occupant health. Developers will be encouraged to select materials certified by industry standards, such as the Forest Stewardship Council-for best-in-class wood sourcing, and to provide transparency about their material sourcing.



**Circular Economy:** Encourage practices that extend the life cycle of materials, minimize waste, and promote reuse. This includes incentivizing building projects that support adaptability and deconstruction, enabling materials to be repurposed rather than discarded. By promoting a district-wide approach to circularity, Wilburton can drive a shift from the traditional linear consumption model to a sustainable, closed-loop system that conserves resources.

### Water & Ecosystems

Sustainable Water Management and Infrastructure: Implement advanced green stormwater infrastructure to manage runoff, reduce flooding risks,

and improve water quality, supporting Bellevue's goals of enhancing stream health and expanding green stormwater infrastructure. The district can explore Salmon Safe Certification at a district or larger-than parcel level to enhance this further. Look for opportunities to daylight streams and use integrated stormwater features to enhance pedestrian experience.

**Ecosystem Restoration:** Protect and restore natural habitats and ecosystems, increasing green spaces and biodiversity within the district. Significantly increase district tree canopy and bio-habitat by adding street trees on new corridors and where currently lacking on existing streets. Encourage understory planting for new trees. This aligns with Bellevue's vision of being a "City in a Park" and contributes to the goal of increasing tree canopy by 200+ acres. Preserve and enhance wetlands and creeks within the district to ensure healthy water ecosystems and support biodiversity. Daylight existing streams like Sturtevant Creek where feasible.



### **Next Steps**

There are several discrete actions necessary to complete the work undertaken with this assessment, and to launch the next phase of work:

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- *District Vision & Identity*: Internal and external stakeholder support will be critical to realizing the opportunities described in this report. A key next step is engaging these stakeholders in clarifying and communicating the vision for a sustainable district, including a clearly defined identity and name.
- **District Framework**: The city, in consultation with stakeholders and rating system experts, will make a determination about whether to pursue LEED for Communities certification for the district.
- *Early Actions + Public Private Partnerships*. The city will identify which actions within each key focus area can be started in 2025-2026, including key early project concepts like a district energy system. As part of early project identification and support, the city will continue to engage subject matter experts and district stakeholders to gather input into planning and implementation, LEED certification, and other next steps.

The graphic below provides an overview of existing and proposed infrastructure, and key district-level actions that form the foundation of Wilburton's sustainability goals.



## **Sustainable District Goals and Actions**

In order to achieve the specific district targets identified through this assessment process, community stakeholders and subject matter experts identified a number of specific actions the city can implement, incentivize, or support. These actions were further refined by the SDOA team and are listed below by focus area. Each focus area section lists the key actions, their alignment with city and state codes or plans, and describes existing precedents for implementation.

The table below provides a snapshot of the assessed district potential, individual actions, and their alignment with broader city goals and targets. The 'Assessed District Potential' values are suggested district-specific targets based on some combination of stakeholder and SME input plus additional analysis, existing conditions or proposed Land Use Code amendments, and alignment with LEED for Communities certification requirements.

	Sustainable Bellevue ESI Plan Targets	Assessed District Potential	Alignment with Citywide Sustainability Goals	Actions	Aligned Targets
Climate / GHG Emissions	<b>50%</b> Reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	50% by 2030 75% by 2040 95% by 2050	Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	GHG reduction and climate resiliency goals and targets will be achieved by implementing the actions within the five focus areas (see below)	King County GHG emissions reduction targets
		<b>9.5 tons</b> Maximum projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per capita			
Energy	<b>100%</b> Renewable energy sources by 2050	<b>100%</b> Renewable energy sources by 2050 Consistent with CETA Target	Reducing greenhouse gas emissions Incentivizing connections to district energy systems such as wastewater heat recovery Code flexibility for new	Incentivize high performance buildings in the Land Use Code EV charging infrastructure	WA State Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) targets: 100 percent renewable energy by 2045. WA State building code mandates new commercial and residential buildings use 70 percent less energy by 2031.
	<b>30%</b> Energy reduction by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline	<b>30%</b> Energy reduction by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline	development	Support low-carbon district energy systems	

	Sustainable Bellevue ESI Plan Targets	Assessed District Potential	Alignment with Citywide Sustainability Goals	Actions	Aligned Targets
Livability and Wellbeing	<b>100%</b> Households within 1/3 mile of a park, open space, and/or trail	<ul> <li>100%</li> <li>Households within 1/3 mile of a park, open space, and/or trail</li> <li>minimum</li> <li>121 sf / person of green space within the district</li> <li>2.5 sf / person of accessible urban agriculture space</li> </ul>	Creating and incentivizing affordable housing Providing a sense of timelessness and durability Creating a coherent sense of place Connecting new development to Wilburton's heritage	Green + affordable housing Use healthy building materials Create accessible open spaces, including permanent parklets and pocket parks Enhance tree canopy coverage	<ul> <li>Bellevue's Comprehensive</li> <li>Plan sets out the following goals:</li> <li>Minimizing the susceptibility of environmentally sensitive areas to damage.</li> <li>Maximizing open space, habitat and opportunities for recreation; and</li> <li>Improving infrastructure systems to support healthy living for people and wildlife</li> </ul>
Mobility	<b>45%</b> Drive Alone Rate	<b>45%</b> Drive Alone Rate	Enhancing walkability Reducing GHG emissions Improving pedestrian experience Increasing transit use Expanding electric mobility options	Eastrail corridor integrated development Grand connection integrated development Link light rail infrastructure (Wilburton Station TOD) Embed walkability in the Land Use Code (e.g. specifying block circumference and local access requirements) No minimum parking or maximum parking cap Design and implement Complete Streets High intersection density	<ul> <li>Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan set out the following targets for 2035 Commute Trip Non-Drive Alone Mode Share:</li> <li>45% of citywide residents</li> <li>40% of citywide workers</li> <li>65% of downtown workers</li> <li>Bellevue Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan:</li> <li>Increase awareness and usage of non-drive-alone travel options</li> <li>Increase transportation system efficiency</li> </ul>
	<b>50%</b> Reduction in Per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)	<b>50%</b> Reduction in Per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)			
	<b>85%</b> Jobs located within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop	<b>90%</b> Jobs located within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop			

	Sustainable Bellevue ESI Plan Targets	Assessed District Potential	Alignment with Citywide Sustainability Goals	Actions	Aligned Targets
	<b>65%</b> Housing located within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop	85% Housing located within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop >1 Prioritized Connectivity Ratio		Traffic calming Shaded sidewalks and bike lanes EV charging infrastructure Smart / on-demand public transit systems	
Resources	<b>90%</b> Waste diversion rate	90% Waste diversion rate 20% Reduction in embodied carbon for new development, compared to a baseline year (pre-2020)	Reducing embodied carbon in new construction and infrastructure Expanding waste management through composting and waste reduction	Minimize structured parking through shared-use strategies Encourage above-grade structured parking Incentivize measurement and integration of low- carbon construction technology Design buildings for flexibility and re-use	<ul> <li>Bellevue's Comprehensive</li> <li>Plan sets out the following goals:</li> <li>Minimizing the rate at which resources are consumed</li> <li>Minimizing the amount of noise, waste and emissions generated</li> <li>Increased percentage of waste recycled or composted, especially in the commercial sector</li> </ul>
	<b>40%</b> Citywide tree canopy cover <sup>2</sup>	<b>25%</b> District-wide tree canopy cover (including ROW)	Protecting and enhancing ecosystems	Acquire new, and expand existing, park and open space	Bellevue's comprehensive plan sets out the following goals:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 2021 Bellevue Tree Canopy Assessment

	Sustainable Bellevue ESI Plan Targets	Assessed District Potential	Alignment with Citywide Sustainability Goals	Actions	Aligned Targets
Water and Ecosystems	Maintain and improve the health of streams	Maintain and improve the health of Sturtevant Creek and Main St. wetland	Enhancing resiliency of the water distribution and stormwater systems Managing stormwater through GSI	Low-Impact Development (LID) Rainwater collection and utilization	<ul> <li>Minimizing the susceptibility of environmentally sensitive areas to damage</li> </ul>
		>20% District acreage dedicated to maintaining natural resources (identified through an Ecosystem Assessment)		Open space and ecology enhancements Green infrastructure corridors	<ul> <li>Maximizing open space, habitat and opportunities for recreation</li> <li>Improving infrastructure systems to support healthy living for people and wildlife</li> </ul>
		> <b>35%</b> District-wide stormwater catchment in green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) systems			
		>25% District-wide water demand met by treated wastewater			

Energy



### Introduction

Wilburton's energy goals align with the ambitious goals set forth by the state of Washington and the city of Bellevue. These goals are centered on creating energy-efficient, resilient, and green urban environments that significantly reduce carbon emissions and promote long-term sustainability. Washington State has outlined robust targets through its Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), which mandates that all electricity in the state be carbon-neutral by 2030 and entirely carbon-free by 2045. Bellevue aligns with these objectives, striving to enhance its energy infrastructure and promote green buildings through the Sustainable Bellevue Plan, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and support renewable energy adoption.

The Wilburton TOD area is expected to experience significant growth in the coming decades, providing capacity for up to approximately 15,000 additional housing units and 35,000 additional jobs as studied in the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation Final Environmental Impact Statement. This will have a significant impact on energy consumption of the district that aims to incorporate actions for energy reduction and optimization, low-carbon energy sources, and green building incentives to create a resilient urban district.

The value of these actions lies in their potential to significantly reduce energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and demands on the power grid. High-performance green buildings consume less energy, resulting in lower operational costs and a smaller carbon footprint. Smart grid technologies enhance the resilience and reliability of the energy system, enabling better demand management and integration of renewable energy sources. By fostering a sustainable energy framework, the Wilburton district not only contributes to environmental conservation but also enhances the quality of life for its residents through improved air quality and energy security.

#### **Key Actions**

These key actions were developed through a combination of research into precedents and best practices, and stakeholder engagement.

### **KEY ACTIONS**

### Low carbon and district energy systems

- Waste heat energy recovery (e.g., King County sewer mains, heat rejection from hospitals and grocery stores)
- Geothermal energy
- Community solar
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Microgrid systems
- Virtual Power Plants (VPP)

### Green building

- High energy and water performance
- Connections to district systems
- On-site renewable and low-carbon energy systems
- Building electrification

### Climate and Air Quality

- Resilience Hubs
- Mitigate impacts of air pollution from freeways / major roadways
- Physical barriers to buffer air and noise pollution (e.g. noise walls)

### Existing Local Policy & Initiative Review

### Washington State Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA)

On May 7, 2019, Washington State enacted the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA). This legislation propels Washington towards a clean energy future by setting a target to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2045.

Puget Sound Energy (PSE), which serves Wilburton, must comply with CETA through renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. Currently, PSE generates approximately 42 percent of total electricity from renewable energy sources, including hydropower. Large customers in Bellevue and in the region, including the City of Bellevue, are procuring 100% renewable energy through PSE's Green Direct program. PSE offers various rebates and incentives to encourage energy efficiency improvements in new construction, in both individual units and communal areas. These incentives align with Bellevue's goals to eliminate reliance on fossil fuels and improve energy efficiency within Wilburton. The incentive includes grants that reward demonstrated energy consumption reductions over a 12-month period, exceeding energy code requirements.<sup>3</sup>

### **Clean Buildings Performance Standard**

In May 2019, the Clean Buildings Act became law in Washington State, mandating the Washington State Department of Commerce to establish and administer an energy performance standard for commercial buildings exceeding 50,000 square feet, alongside incentives for boosting energy efficiency. In March 2022, an amendment signed by Governor Inslee broadened this standard, applying it to buildings of 20,000 square feet and above, impacting many future projects in the Wilburton area due to its high-density Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). This expanded standard includes incentives for both Tiers designed to motivate property owners to enhance energy efficiency.<sup>4</sup>

### Washington State Energy Code

WA state law mandates that the WSEC increase the energy efficiency of the code on a 3-year cycle, so that new buildings using the 2031 code use 70 percent less energy than the 2006 code. This will be instrumental in mitigating the impacts of the anticipated growth in energy consumption from economic and population growth in Wilburton.

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan sets out the following Climate & Energy goals and policies for the Wilburton sub-area:

- Support actions for net-zero and net-positive development, including renewable energy, net-zero carbon emissions, and net-zero waste.
- Support and pursue partnerships toward the development of one or more district energy systems.
- Incentivize opportunities to pilot low-carbon building design principles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> <u>https://www.pse.com/en/business-incentives/commercial-new-construction-programs/commercial-new-construction-incentives</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> <u>https://www.seattle.gov/environment/climate-change/buildings-and-energy/building-emissions-performance-standard/wa-clean-buildings</u>

The Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan sets the following goals and priorities:

- Transition to renewable energy sources, reaching 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.
- Reduce energy consumption by 15% by 2030 and 30% by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline.

The plan models the impact of building code implementation combined with robust residential and commercial energy efficiency programs and policies will result in a 29 percent reduction in energy consumption compared to baseline levels by 2050.<sup>5</sup>

### Precedents

### Key Takeaways

The Wilburton sustainable district's energy strategy draws on successful urban precedents that exemplify district-wide sustainable systems and highperformance building initiatives. Portland's Lloyd District, targeting a 60% reduction in energy demand by 2035, leverages building energy retrofits, districtscale solar programs, and district heating, with existing building energy retrofits projected to provide \$6.2 million in annual savings. The proposed district energy system in Wilburton, based on sewer heat recovery, could yield similar energy use reductions from new buildings. Vancouver's False Creek Neighbourhood Utility, which uses sewer waste heat recovery to provide renewable heating to 6.4 million square feet, directly informs Wilburton's approach to district energy, particularly in integrating renewable systems that displace conventional heating and contribute to greenhouse gas reductions. This approach helped the False Creek district achieve a 33% GHG reduction below 2007 levels. Boston's Zero Net Carbon Building Initiative sets progressive net-zero standards for large developments, including a LEED certifiability requirement and life cycle analysis requirements for carbon-conscious building practices. The Wilburton Land Use Code will incentivize similarly high-performance standards for new development, drawing from Boston's Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) and Arlington County's Green Building Density Incentive Program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Sustainable Bellevue Plan 2021-2025

#### **CASE STUDIES**

#### Lloyd District, Portland, OR

Commercial buildings account for 93% of annual energy demand (based on land-use) and residential buildings account for 6% in the Lloyd District. Based on the building specific energy demand factors and assumed development projections of the N/NE Quadrant Plan, Commercial Buildings will account for 94% of the energy demand by land-use type.

#### **Citywide Targets:**

- 25% Energy Reduction for Existing Buildings by 2030
- Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions for New Buildings by 2030
- 10% of Total Energy Met through On-Site Renewables and Clean District Energy

#### **District Targets:**

- Achieve net zero energy usage annually.
- No increase in energy demand (60% energy reduction by 2035)

#### Initiatives:

- Existing Building Energy Conservation Retrofit Program Retrofitting existing buildings to reduce energy demand would cost approximately
   \$46,600,000, reducing annual energy costs by \$6.2M (ROI = 8 years). To reduce retrofit costs and drive adoption, the Lloyd EcoDistrict will engage a private energy services provider (ESCO) to create an existing building energy retrofit program.
- Encouraging High Performance New Buildings (LEED Gold)
- Aggregate Renewable Energy Program To reduce solar costs and drive adoption, the Lloyd EcoDistrict will engage with a private solar energy provider to create a district scale solar PV program. The program would be offered to district property owners with financing, delivery, ownership and maintenance provided by the private solar provider.
- District Energy Utility- District energy development is already underway in the Lloyd EcoDistrict (Rose Quarter). Overall cost of district energy in Lloyd is estimated to cost \$45M, generating over \$2.25M in annual energy savings (ROI = 20 years).



### False Creek, Vancouver, BC<sup>6</sup>

The False Creek Neighbourhood Utility, or NEU, is a sewer waste heat recovery district energy system that provides space heating and domestic hot water to buildings in Vancouver's False Creek area. The utility began operations in 2010 and has rapidly expanded to serve over 6.4 million square feet of residential, commercial, and institutional space, as of 2021. By displacing natural gas, the primary fuel source for conventional heating systems, the NEU significantly lowers carbon emissions. This contributes to Vancouver's ambitious target of reducing city-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and supports the city's goal to become the greenest city in the world by 2020.

Vancouver has openly shared the NEU's development process, operational mechanisms, and lessons learned, fostering knowledge exchange and encouraging other municipalities to consider similar sustainable utility solutions.<sup>7</sup>

NEU uses heat recovery process that extracts thermal energy from municipal wastewater. The system employs heat pump technology to elevate the temperature of the recovered energy to a level suitable for space heating and domestic hot water.

To enhance system efficiency and reliability, the NEU incorporates thermal energy storage tanks. These tanks allow the system to store excess heat during periods of low demand and distribute it when demand increases. This not only optimizes the heat recovery process but also provides a buffer to maintain service continuity during maintenance activities or unexpected system downtimes.

The City of Vancouver has introduced various incentive programs to encourage developers and building owners to connect to the NEU. These incentives include:

- Development Cost Levy (DCL) Waivers: For projects that connect to the NEU, the city offers waivers or reductions in DCLs, which are fees levied on new developments to fund growth-related infrastructure.
- Expedited Permit Processing: Projects integrating sustainable features like district energy connectivity may benefit from faster permit processing times, reducing overall project timelines.





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> <u>https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/southeast-false-creek-neighbourhood-energy-utility.aspx</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> <u>https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/how-the-utility-works.aspx</u>

To support the integration of district energy systems like the NEU, Vancouver has implemented specific requirements within its building and zoning codes:

- Green Building Policy: New developments in designated areas must demonstrate readiness to connect to a district energy system or incorporate district energy-ready infrastructure during construction.
- Energy Utility System By-laws: Vancouver has established by-laws governing the operation and expansion of district energy systems, ensuring that these utilities operate efficiently and equitably across the serviced areas.

South Lake Union's **Alexandria Center for Life Science** will utilize the King County municipal sewer system to heat and cool 70% of its 1.6 million square foot campus. Set to be completed in 2025, this project will be one of the largest commercial projects in the U.S. to implement wastewater heat recapture but follows significant precedent of similar projects in countries like Canada and Japan.

This system leverages the heat of an underground pipe containing wastewater that stays at around 70 degrees Fahrenheit all year. Using a heat exchanger, the system passively transfers this energy to a separate set of water pipes that in turn heat the associated buildings. The system functions in reverse as well, allowing excess heat to be transferred into the sewer system as a means of cooling in the summer.

### Codifying a Sustainable District

**Boston** adopted the Specialized Opt-in Municipal Stretch Energy Code, which took effect in the City of Boston January 1, 2024. The Code requires high levels of energy efficiency and promotes electrification by requiring new buildings that connect to fossil fuels to pre-wire for electrification and, where feasible, install solar. The Code also requires Passive House design certification for all new multifamily housing over 12,000 sq. ft, which focuses on reduced energy demand for space heating and cooling using passive measures.<sup>8</sup>

This initiative emphasizes constructing municipal buildings to zero net carbon standards, strengthening low-carbon building zoning requirements to a zero net carbon standard, investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy, developing a carbon emissions performance standard to decarbonize existing large buildings, and expanding workforce development programs for building decarbonization.

### Northampton, MA

Northampton, MA's establishment of a Sustainable Growth Overlay District seeks to promote smart growth principles by offering a range of housing options and mixed-use developments, emphasizing compact design and diverse transportation options. Like Wilburton, this 30-acre district is directly





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/e7692da5-746b-4037-962a-a0cd43747205

adjacent to the central business district. This district encourages energy-efficient housing and mandates specific green building certifications. Townhouses, multifamily developments, and single-family homes at a density level of 20 or more per acre are required to meet Home Energy Rating System (HERS) rating no greater than 47 for units of 1,200 square feet or less, and no greater than 41 for units larger than 1,200 square feet. Subdistricts should achieve U.S. Green Building Council LEED for New Construction Gold or Neighborhood Development Gold certification. All projects shall include a park/common area. At a minimum, this space shall be 300 square feet or 30 square feet per dwelling unit of buildable land area, whichever is greater.

**Baltimore Country, MD** has multiple tax credit programs, including the High Performance Buildings Property Tax Credit that is available to sustainable commercial buildings (including large residential buildings of 50 units or more). To receive the credit, buildings must be certified at minimum LEED Silver or National Green Building Standard (NGBS) Silver. The percentage of the tax credit and its duration depend on the level of rating achieved and type of construction, up to 80% for five years. Additionally, when ownership of the building changes, the credit continues. Over time, the county property tax credits were expanded to include existing buildings, homes and other credit types. For commercial buildings, building owners must supply documentation from an energy systems professional proving the building is a high-performance building under LEED or NGBS rating systems. For homes, owners must have certification of their property's efficiency from the builder or contractor. For the Energy Conservation Device tax credit, owners must submit receipts and electrical inspection permits.<sup>9</sup>

**Seattle, WA's** Incentive Zoning (IZ) program is a voluntary program in which developers provide specific amenities in exchange for extra floor area or height beyond the base amount allowed for their building by the Land Use Code. To achieve extra floor area, a developer must provide or pay for one or more of the following public amenities as specified by the standards of the zone:

- Affordable housing
- Childcare
- Open spaces
- Transferable Development Potential and Rights (TDP/TDR)
- Regional Development Credits (RDC)
- Priority Green Expedited program (applies to single-family / townhomes only)

This program is designed to result in buildings that achieve energy efficiency standards that are at least 15% better than required by the Seattle Energy Code. In 2009, the city's Planning Department and Development Department created the ordinance based Green Building Standard. In return for meeting certain green standards (e.g., all electric appliances, and green building certification through an approved green building rating organization), this program offers both faster permitting and density bonuses (i.e., higher floor area ratio standards specific to different city zones).

The City of Seattle introduced the Living Building Pilot Program that provides projects with additional height, and floor area ratio (FAR). It also allows projects to request additional departures from the Seattle Land Use Code through Design Review in exchange for meeting the Living Building Challenge (LBC), along with other performance requirements. Projects must be Petal certified, and teams can choose between an Energy, Water or Materials focus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> ULI - Reshaping the City 2023

Developers that are constructing new buildings or building additions that meet pilot program standards can get the following benefits:

- Up to 25 percent more floor area
- Up to 30 percent more floor area if saving an unreinforced masonry structure
- 12.5 feet of additional height for residential construction or 15 feet of additional height for non-residential construction in zones with height limits of 85 feet or less
- 25 feet of additional height for residential construction or 30 feet of additional height for non-residential construction in zones with height limits greater than 85
- Additional design departures for the pilot programs as specified in Seattle Municipal Code 23.41.012D

**Arlington County, VA's** Green Building Density Incentive Program targets building sustainability to achieve a 2050 carbon neutrality goal, recognizing buildings as significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The program offers incentives for incorporating renewable energy, energy efficiency, and low-carbon materials into building designs. The program began exclusively for office buildings and rewarded 0.25 FAR for achieving LEED Silver. The benefit for developers is the potential for increased return on investment (ROI) from being able to build at greater density, and, in the long term, the sustainable upgrades will lower utility costs, increase the lifetimes of building products, and potentially help achieve higher rent premiums.

As of 2022, LEED Gold is now the minimum level of green building certification required to receive bonus density and baseline requirements address specific energy measures, EV charging infrastructure, renewable energy, ventilation performance, refrigerant leakage, biophilia, light pollution reduction, and use of bird friendly material amongst others. Items on the "Extra" list incentivize additional renewable energy, energy storage and resilience, electrification of building systems, additional energy efficiency, low-carbon materials, and affordable housing.

To ensure that buildings moving through this program comply with expectations, developers post a financial security before receiving their final Certificate of Occupancy. The financial security is calculated based on the amount of bonus floor space received through the program and the average rental rate in the building's area. Developers receive 50% of the financial security back after receiving their approved level of LEED certification, and the other 50% back after meeting their approved Energy Star certification. Buildings that meet some, but not all, of their agreed-upon sustainability promises forfeit some or all of their security to the County, based on a sliding scale.

## Livability & Wellbeing



### Introduction

The Wilburton sustainable district aims to integrate nature into the urban environment, promoting biodiversity and enhancing residents' quality of life. The district will focus on integrating water management, green infrastructure, and ecosystem preservation to create resilient and vibrant urban districts: Effective stormwater management through green infrastructure reduces the risk of flooding, minimizes water pollution, and recharges groundwater supplies. This not only protects natural water bodies but also ensures a sustainable water supply for urban needs. Future climate data assessed in Bellevue's Climate Vulnerability Assessment projects an increase in storm intensity and extreme precipitation events.

Additionally, creating new urban green spaces and enhancing existing natural habitats supports biodiversity, which in turn provides essential ecosystem services. The city has identified Salmon habitat within the Sturtevant Creek Basin making it a critical ecosystem to rejuvenate.<sup>10</sup>

Enhancing livability for residents is a key goal for the district. Green infrastructure and urban green spaces provide recreational opportunities, reduce urban heat island effects, and improve air quality, which are all critical for public health. Access to nature and green spaces has been shown to reduce stress, enhance mental health, and promote active lifestyles.

#### **Key Actions**

These key actions were developed through a combination of research into precedents and best practices, and stakeholder engagement.

### **KEY STRATEGIES**

#### Affordable and diverse housing

- Land Use incentives
- Mixed-use zoning

### Community spaces and placemaking

- Enhance tree canopy coverage
- Daylight on ground plane
- Define and codify minimum open space requirements
- Improve access to local parks and green spaces
- Active streets with diverse ground-level uses
- Air and noise pollution mitigation strategies

#### Compact development

- High density development
- Diversity of uses and services
- Access to affordable quality transit
- Access to amenities

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Sturtevant Creek Basin Fact Sheet

### Existing Local Policy & Initiative Review

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan sets out the following Livability & Wellbeing goals and policies for the Wilburton sub-area:

- Maximize open space, habitat, and opportunities for recreation and increase community access to open space opportunities
- Improve infrastructure systems to support healthy living for people and wildlife
- Connect people to arts and multicultural opportunities, and create third places for people to gather, connect, and build community
- Achieve an inviting, pedestrian-oriented experience reflected in future streetscapes, buildings, trails, and open spaces
- Enable existing and new businesses to thrive and contribute toward creating vibrant places
- Provide for a variety of public community spaces that will serve a growing community, and that are designed to foster a sense of welcoming to all
- Use placemaking and activation to address historic inequities by elevating the contributions of historically marginalized or underserved communities and recognizing Wilburton's diverse histories and heritages
- Use design guidelines and standards that promote a high-quality, attractive, and safe pedestrian environment with ample access to sunlight, air, and weather protection
- Enhance neighborhood identity by integrating unique and easily understandable art and wayfinding into streetscapes and public spaces

As Bellevue continues to grow and develop, its environmental resources—such as natural open spaces, water quality, and tree cover—are at risk of being negatively impacted. Safeguarding these resources is vital for maintaining both community livability and Bellevue's goal as a "City in a Park."

State law requires cities to implement plans that protect environmentally critical areas, including wetlands and geologically hazardous zones. This element involves establishing policies that ensure future development preserves the environmental benefits of these critical areas and avoids construction in regions prone to environmental hazards.

The state prioritizes a localized approach to wetland protection and regulation. The Growth Management Act (GMA) mandates that cities and counties regulate wetlands within their boundaries. Under the GMA, local governments must designate and protect wetlands by adopting critical areas ordinances (CAO) and are encouraged to enhance regulatory protection with incentives for voluntary conservation.<sup>11</sup>

### The Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan sets the following goals and priorities:

- Achieve a 40% tree canopy cover. To achieve this goal, the study found that the city would need enough trees to provide tree canopy for 670 acres of land.<sup>12</sup> As of 2021, Bellevue had 39% existing canopy cover.<sup>13</sup>
- Locate 100% of households within 1/3 mile of a park, open space, and/or trail. As of 2020, 73 percent of Bellevue residents lived within 1/3 of a mile to a park, open space, or trail access point.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> <u>https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/wetlands/regulations%23</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Sustainable Bellevue Plan 2021-2025

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> 2021 Bellevue Tree Canopy Assessment

### Precedents

### Key Takeaways

Wilburton's livability and wellbeing strategy draws on successful precedents in creating accessible and inclusive urban spaces while aligning with local policies for enhanced community health and ecological integration. For example, Boulder Junction in Colorado combines high-density, transit-oriented development (TOD) with compact, multi-use planning that prioritizes walkability and green spaces. Through innovative urban design, Boulder Junction incorporates extensive tree canopy, urban trails, and multi-modal transit, creating a community-oriented space where nearly 1,500 affordable units serve residents. Similarly, Atlanta's BeltLine Overlay District uses inclusionary zoning, mandating that 10-15% of units in new multifamily developments remain affordable, ensuring accessibility to housing while supporting walkable trails, urban forestry, and park spaces across a 1,300-acre green corridor.

Locally, Bellevue's Environmental Stewardship Plan complements these approaches with a target to achieve a 40% citywide tree canopy cover and ensure 100% of households are within a third of a mile of parks or trails—goals Wilburton's strategy will advance within the district. Vancouver's Universal Design policy, which integrates accessible public spaces and supports diverse community needs, informs Wilburton's aim to create community spaces and improve access to parks and green spaces, enhancing physical and mental well-being. Together, these examples support Wilburton's objective to blend affordable housing, inclusive open spaces, and health-supporting infrastructure in a compact, accessible urban district.

### **CASE STUDIES**

### Vancouver, BC

Resilience: Vancouver's climate adaptation strategy includes technical assessments of sea-level rise impact, heat island effect mitigation through urban forestry, and the development of resilient infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events. The city has adopted building performance standards such as the Zero Emissions Building Plan, requiring new buildings to have significantly lower GHG emissions and to be more energy-efficient, moving towards carbon neutrality.

### **Boulder Junction, CO**

Boulder Junction sits at the geographic center of Boulder and is anchored by Depot Square Station, the multi-modal RTD transit hub. This district was historically an industrial sector. To make the area more livable and walkable, the redevelopment plans paired multi-modal transportation infrastructure with innovative urban treatments (including urban forestry enhancements). The project involved construction of a new multiway boulevard on the south and north sides of Pearl Parkway with the ultimate goal of incorporating all modes of travel: pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> <u>https://www.deeproot.com/case-studies/silva-cell/pearl-parkway/</u>



Boulder Junction was created by the Transit Village Area Plan (TVAP), which was adopted in 2007 and is codified in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan. Several principles of TOD such as increased density, parking maximums, and unbundled parking for residents are employed to ensure that development falls within the goals of the Transit Village Area Plan<sup>15</sup>.

#### Goals:

- Develop up to 50 percent permanently affordable housing on city housing site.
- Consider expanding subsidy to support locally owned and/or minority-owned businesses in the area.
- Consider expanding Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to non-profit organizations to develop facilities in the area.
- Look for opportunities to partner with developers to provide affordable space for businesses that provide unique community benefit.
- Design pocket park and rail plaza to be welcoming to a diverse population.

### Impact:

- Nearly 1,500 workforce and affordable housing units have been developed in the district

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> <u>https://bouldercolorado.gov/projects/boulder-junction-transportation-demand-management-district</u>

### Codifying a Sustainable District

### Atlanta BeltLine Overlay District, GA

The Atlanta Beltline Planning Area is comprised of 10 subareas. In 2005, the City Council set a goal, as part of the Atlanta Beltline's founding legislation, to create/ preserve 5,600 affordable units within the BeltLine TAD by the end of 2030. In an effort to preserve more land for residential and commercial affordability, Atlanta Beltline, Inc. (ABI) has purchased 85+ acres of land around the corridor.

Inclusionary Zoning, an ordinance instituted by the City of Atlanta in 2018, is another tool designed to create affordable housing opportunities for working individuals and families. New multifamily rental developments and conversions with 10 or more units in the Beltline, Westside Overlay, and Westside



Park Affordable Housing Districts must include affordable units for residents earning 60% and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).<sup>16</sup>

The BeltLine Overlay District was conceived as a 22-mile transportation corridor where pedestrian-friendly light rail transit and urban trails coexist.

1,300 acres are allocated towards maintenance and development of green spaces, parks, and an arboretum loop encircling the city. Additionally the district has 22 miles of multi-use, urban trails in the Beltline corridor, and 11 miles of connector trails that are being preserved and restored.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> <u>https://beltline.org/work/opportunities/housing-development/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> <u>https://beltline.org/learn/progress-planning/goals/</u>

## Mobility



### Introduction

The City of Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan and Environmental Stewardship Plan and the set ambitious mobility and transportation goals aimed at increasing transportation options, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing sustainable transit infrastructure. Bellevue targets a significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled, increased adoption of electric vehicles, and enhanced public transit systems to help achieve a 95% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The Wilburton TOD area is a focal area for sustainable mobility, featuring significant new transit infrastructure such as Eastrail, the Grand Connection, and Link Light Rail. The Eastrail provides a north-south active transportation corridor, enhancing connectivity and promoting walkability. The Grand Connection aims to create an active transportation corridor linking Downtown Bellevue to Wilburton, while the Link Light Rail provides robust public transit options to connect to Redmond and Seattle. The options offered by these transit systems reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and increase available mobility options, promoting shared mobility solutions and aligning with the city's sustainability goals. Expanding walkability and bicycle infrastructure in Wilburton is a key part of the community vision and the city's sustainability goals. A sustainable district could help to align and integrate this focus on pedestrian experience, safety, access to transit and amenities, and increasing use of non-auto transportation modes.

### **Impact of Shared Mobility**

Shared mobility options, including bike-sharing, car-sharing, and enhanced or on-demand public transit, play a critical role in reducing the reliance on drive-alone trips. By offering convenient alternatives, these systems decrease traffic congestion, lower emissions, and support a more sustainable urban environment. This shift not only aligns with the environmental goals but also enhances the quality of life for residents through improved air quality and reduced transportation costs. One existing shared mobility asset is the Bellhop, a free on-demand electric shuttle that currently serves Downtown, Wilburton, and the Spring District. This model could potentially be expanded within areas such as the Spring District or a Wilburton sustainable district.

### **Key Actions**

These key actions were developed through a combination of research into precedents and best practices, and stakeholder engagement.

### **KEY ACTIONS**

Compact, mixed use, and transit-oriented development

- Significant housing development within
   ¼ mile of frequent transit stops
- Small, approachable block sizes
- High intersection frequency
- Variety of uses encouraged by zoning
- Eastrail access (both to and through Eastrail corridor)
- Arterial streetscape enhancements (e.g., 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE)

### Multimodal transportation and walkability

- Active transportation design components
- Traffic calming techniques, including on arterials
- Shared parking
- No minimum parking requirements, or maximum parking limits
- Walkable streets throughout the district
- Bike infrastructure, especially protected bike lanes
- Micromobility / last-mile solutions
- Pilot new low-carbon infrastructure and/or deliverv innovations

### Existing Local Policy & Initiative Review

Bellevue's overall approach to transportation is focused on multimodal options; the City Council has set objectives to expand travel choices and equitable access through improved transit service, new modes such as shuttles and micromobility, and safer, connected active transportation facilities. The vision set out by the City Council aims at being a leader in innovation and connectivity through support of the expansion of next generation wireless technology and the integration of autonomous, connected, electric and shared vehicles into the transportation system of Bellevue. Additionally, the city aims to diversify the use of our roadways and curb environment to balance the needs of all daily users and to create opportunities for placemaking, gathering and community building.<sup>18</sup>

The **Bellevue Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan** has set out the following objectives that are reflected in Wilburton's Sustainable District Opportunity Assessment:

- Increase awareness and usage of non-drive-alone travel options in Bellevue as normal, commonplace ways to get around for commuting and other trips.
- Create an environment for workers, residents and the general public that is increasingly supportive of non-drive-alone travel options.
- Increase transportation system efficiency and preserve mobility as Bellevue's residential and worker populations grow.
- Improve transportation access to employment, education, health care, and other essential goods and services for city residents and workers through increased viability of multiple travel options.
- Develop TDM programming that meets the traveling needs of marginalized populations.<sup>19</sup>

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan sets out the following Mobility & Access goals and policies for the Wilburton sub-area:

- Create a safe, walkable, bikeable, and transit-rich urban neighborhood.
- Develop a land use pattern that leverages investments in light rail, the Eastrail corridor, and the Grand Connection.
- Promote and implement sustainable mobility through integrated transportation and land use planning, increased access to low carbon transportation options, and innovative technologies.
- Incorporate an integrated system of local access and active transportation facilities to support transit-oriented and trail-oriented land use patterns.
- Provide a system of active transportation connections that links park facilities with each other and with other points of interest, including transit, employment, and medical facilities.
- Cultivate mixed-income communities that integrate market rate development with subsidized affordable housing and increase opportunities for a range of residential unit types, including for seniors and families, that are close to and/or integrated with neighborhood amenities and services.
- Develop compact, mixed-use sites and neighborhoods that support access to jobs, daily necessities, services, transit, and key neighborhood amenities like the Eastrail corridor and the Grand Connection.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> <u>https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/city-council/council-vision/safe-efficient-transportation-system</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Bellevue Transportation Demand Management Plan 2024-2033

The Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan sets the following goals and priorities:

- Accelerate and increase investments in multi-modal transportation infrastructure.
- Enhance walkability and livability by increasing amenities in walking distance
- Evaluate parking needs to promote changes in commuting patterns.

### Precedents

### Key Takeaways

The Wilburton sustainable district's mobility strategy draws on precedents from urban districts that have successfully implemented transit-oriented development and multimodal infrastructure. For example, Portland's Lloyd District, which saw a 25% increase in transit ridership and bike/pedestrian travel, underscores the benefits of accessible transit networks and comprehensive cycling infrastructure, resulting in a 20% reduction in single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) use. With multi-use roadways and Eastrail connecting to the Wilburton light rail station, the Wilburton district can see similar impacts. Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan further demonstrates the impact of aligning land use with sustainable transit, achieving a 50% rate of all trips made by foot, bike, or public transit. This achievement highlights the effectiveness of zoning adjustments, transit connectivity, and enhanced pedestrian safety measures, such as pedestrian-prioritized crossings and parklet programs. Similarly, Indianapolis' TOD Overlay District exemplifies how targeted zoning amendments can drive compact, walkable development along transit corridors, reducing car dependency and fostering community-centered growth. Stockholm's Hammarby Sjöstad provides a case study in limiting parking provisions and enhancing multimodal transit, leading to a low SOV rate of 21% and a 28% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to adjacent areas. These examples collectively demonstrate that strategic zoning, robust multimodal infrastructure, and transit-oriented development can support Wilburton's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled, lowering emissions, and achieving Bellevue's ambitious sustainable commute targets.

### CASE STUDIES

### Lloyd District, Portland, OR

This EcoDistrict emphasizes transit-oriented development with extensive light rail and bus connectivity, resulting in a 25% increase in transit ridership and bike/ped travel, and a 20% reduction in single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) use.<sup>20</sup> The district is improving its cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, enhancing mobility and reducing emissions.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Lloyd Ecodistrict Roadmap - Portland Sustainability Institute

According to Lloyd TMA survey results, 1997 commute mode split was as follows:

#### COMMUTE MODE SPLIT (1997)



Where as in 2011, commute mode split was found to be: COMMUTE MODE SPLIT (2011)



### **Targets:**

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030<sup>21</sup> and 80% by 2050.
- Portland has a citywide goal of 25% bicycle mode split for all trips.<sup>22</sup>

- 100% of all streets within the Lloyd EcoDistrict will need to be green streets to achieve district Elders in Action (EIA) goals<sup>23</sup>.

### Initiatives:

- Public Transit Connectivity: Served by three MAX light rail lines and multiple bus routes, reducing the need for private vehicles.

- Cycling Infrastructure: 681 mi of additional bicycle facilities identified as part of The Bicycle Plan for 2030. 58% completed as of 2020.<sup>24</sup>

- Pedestrian Design: Enhanced pedestrian-friendly walkways, enhancing foot traffic and reducing VMT.

### **Progress and Impact:**

- Transit ridership and bike/ped travel increased by 25%.
- Enhanced livability with reduced air pollution and traffic congestion, contributing to better public health and community well-being.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> <u>https://www.portland.gov/bps/climate-action/progress-toward-carbon-reductions</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030, 2019 Progress Report

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Lloyd Ecodistrict Roadmap - Portland Sustainability Institute

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030, 2019 Progress Report

### Indy Rezone, Indianapolis, IN

In 2021, the city-county of Indianapolis made amendments to Indy Rezone, their 2016 zoning update. These changes included creating a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) overlay district. The decision to revise the regulations came after five years of implementing the 2016 rules, as city staff realized the original zoning regulations didn't align with the desire for walkable, mixed-use development, resulting in additional time and costs for projects.<sup>25</sup> The TOD Overlay District, or Secondary District, is a buffer area that includes the property and uses within 1,000 feet of IndyGo's BRT lines.

#### **Goals**:

- To create community and economic development potential within Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors; this includes IndyGo's Red, Blue and Purple lines
- To facilitate the development of compact, walkable mixed-density neighborhoods and mixed-use, commercial centers within 1/2 mile of existing and proposed BRT stops
- To amend Indy Rezone—the Indianapolis-Marion County Consolidated Zoning Ordinance—to support TOD patterns, corresponding with public investments in transit
- To limit non-contributing or unproductive development patterns and uses along transit corridors.

### Initiatives:

- Recalibrating the lot and yard standards in Dwelling Districts across Marion County to support and encourage infill-housing development
- Revising the development standards for Mixed-Use Districts to promote this land use tool for commercial and neighborhood development
- Adding design standards that support walkability, improved streetscapes, better residential and commercial design as well as a variety of housing types that will support greater housing options and affordability.

### Hammarby Sjöstad, Stockholm, Sweden

Hammarby Sjöstad is a redevelopment project in southern Stockholm. The district spine is a 37.5-meter-wide boulevard and transit corridor, which connects key transport nodes and public landmarks.<sup>26</sup> Only 21% of trips made by Hammarby Sjöstad residents are by car, while 52% are by public



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> ULI - Reshaping the City 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> <u>https://www.neighbourhoodguidelines.org/hammarby-sjstad-case-study</u>

transportation, and 27% by bicycle or by foot. CO2 emissions per apartment from transport by car are more than 50% lower in Hammarby Sjöstad than in the surrounding districts.<sup>27</sup>

### Targets:

- To create a place where 80% of trips would be made by public transport, bike or foot.

### Initiatives:

- Expansion of the district with transport investments, including increased bus service, cycle paths, pedestrian bridges, ferry service and an extension of the tramline.
- Development has been focused on a dense settlement structure, concentrated along main transit corridors.
- Limited parking area and provision of a carpool with priority parking.

### **Progress and Impact:**

- In 2007, 79% of Hammarby Sjöstad residents walked, cycled or used public transport for commuting.<sup>28</sup>
- The district has achieved a 28% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- High resident satisfaction with mobility options, reducing the need for private cars.

### Codifying a Sustainable District

In 2017, **Buffalo**, **NY** launched its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) aimed at enhancing walkability and endorsing principles of green and intelligent growth, marking the city's first major zoning overhaul in over six decades. The UDO's objectives included encouraging pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhoods, supporting developments centered around public transit, and bolstering economic hubs. Key zoning modifications under the UDO comprised eliminating citywide minimum parking requirements, mandating new building layouts for enhanced streetscapes, and preserving significant green spaces previously vulnerable to industrial development.<sup>29</sup>

**San Antonio, TX** categorizes properties within a quarter mile of public transit stops as "TOD-C," and those between a quarter and a half mile as "TOD-P." Properties in TOD-P districts are required to comply with only 75 percent of the minimum parking requirements articulated by the Code. Properties within TOD-C districts need only 50 percent of the minimum parking standards if they are between a quarter of a mile and 500 feet from a public transit stop.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> <u>https://www.c40.org/case-studies/c40-good-practice-guides-stockholm-hammarby-sjostad/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Iverot, S., & Brandt, N. (2011). The development of a sustainable urban district in Hammarby Sjöstad, Stockholm, Sweden. Environment, Development and Sustainability.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> <u>https://www.buffalogreencode.com</u>

Properties that are within 500 feet of a transit stop have no parking requirements. Up to 75 percent of existing parking in these zones may be redeveloped so long as such development is designed for transit-oriented uses.

### **Boulder Junction, CO**

Phase 1 of Boulder Junction was funded significantly by the city. Phase 2 is anticipated to be developed after 10 to 15 years based on the estimated amount of development that can be absorbed in the Boulder market.<sup>30</sup> To implement pedestrian and bicycle paths, the district used funds allocated as part of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by the city, with an estimate of approximately \$1.1 million. In 2010, property owners in the Phase 1 area of Boulder Junction, west of the railroad tracks, petitioned City Council to create two overlaying, general improvement districts – one for parking and the other for TDM programs. These two overlaying general improvement districts allow for the construction, operation and maintenance of public improvements and certain services within the district. Additionally, developers pay Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) fees for the first two years, after which point property taxes are used to continue funding the benefits outlined in the next section<sup>31</sup>.

A goal that 55% of trips will be made by walking, biking, carpooling, transit, or to be completely avoided through telecommuting or compressed work schedules was implemented. The latest study conducted by FTH found the automobile trip generation rate for the district to be 58%.

The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) District pays for transit passes, car sharing, and reduced-cost bike sharing programs for people who live or work in Boulder Junction. Development fees and property taxes fund the TDM district. The parking district manages on-street and off-street parking, which works in combination with zoning regulations for parking maximums. At Depot Square Station, the district manages shared spaces in the parking facility for residents, the hotel, transit users, and RTD employees. 75 of the 386 spaces are reserved for transit users, parking is free for those who live in the parking district, and paid parking is available to the public.<sup>32</sup> Boulder Junction residents and employees receive 50% off a Republic Rider (Annual) Boulder B-Cycle Pass. This non-profit program provides access to a network of shared bicycles located at more than 40 stations throughout Boulder.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Boulder CO - Transit Village Area Implementation Plan 2007

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Boulder Junction Transportation Demand Management District

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Boulder Junction TOD Guide

### Resources



### Introduction

Increased material consumption and waste has historically been linked to rising standards of living. Since 1960, the amount of municipal solid waste generated in the U.S. has nearly tripled, and twothirds of all material discarded nationally still goes to waste in landfills or incinerators.

Wilburton district in Bellevue is dedicated to embracing advanced approaches in material, resources, and waste management aligning with Washington State's commitment to achieving significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, targeting a 45% reduction by 2030 and a 95% reduction by 2050, relative to 1990 levels.<sup>33</sup> As an emerging urban neighborhood, recycling and waste diversion in Wilburton will focus on commercial and multi-family buildings, which have historically been challenging to achieve high rates and also to track accurately. The city is focusing on supporting existing and new buildings in setting up the infrastructure and resources to facilitate high levels of waste diversion in higher-density buildings.

#### **Key Actions**

These key actions were developed through a combination of research into precedents and best practices, and stakeholder engagement.

### **KEY ACTIONS**

#### Sustainable materials

- Embodied carbon targets to encourage mass timber or other low-carbon construction strategies
- Incentivize carbon disclosures and whole-building life cycle analyses
- Test new low-carbon materials and incentivize material innovation
- Implement a carbon cap on new development projects
- Develop and promote 'nutrition label' for sustainable building materials
- Encourage healthy materials
- Limit Living Building 'red list' materials

### Waste reduction and recycling

- Minimum construction waste diversion rates
- Encourage building reuse and salvage assessments

#### Circular economy practices

• Design for flexibility and re-use

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> <u>https://ecology.wa.gov/air-climate/responding-to-climate-change</u>

### Existing Local Policy & Initiative Review

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan sets out the following Resources & Waste goals and policies for the Wilburton sub-area:

- Minimizing the rate at which resources are consumed
- Minimizing the amount of noise, waste, and emissions generated
- Increased percentage of waste recycled or composted, especially in the commercial sector
- Prioritize the use of products that are recyclable and made from recycled materials or have other environmental attributes throughout their lifecycle
- Engage in Environmentally Preferable Purchasing practices and support product stewardship to reduce waste to landfill and carbon emissions
- Work with residents, businesses, and waste haulers to continue to improve the percentage of waste diverted from landfill

### Solid Waste & Recycling Conservation Program

- The Utilities Department manages programs to promote conservation, waste reduction and resource management.

### The Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan sets the following goals and priorities:

- Achieve a diversion rate of 50% by 2030, reaching Zero Waste of Resources (90% diversion) by 2050.<sup>34</sup>

### Precedents

### Key Takeaways

Wilburton's resources strategy focuses on sustainable materials, waste diversion, and circular economy principles and is already a part of King County's progressive programs. Boulder's EcoDistrict emphasizes low-carbon materials and boasts a 75% waste diversion rate for construction projects.

Further informed by the Better Market Street Project in San Francisco, Wilburton will consider incorporating recycled materials into construction—using recycled asphalt and concrete for paving and structural elements and extending recycled materials to public amenities, supporting a circular economy model. Locally, Bellevue's Environmental Stewardship Plan, which targets a 50% waste diversion by 2030 and a 90% diversion by 2050, underpins Wilburton's initiatives to implement minimum construction waste diversion rates, encourage building reuse, and design for adaptability, as seen in parking structures with flat slabs for future conversion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Sustainable Bellevue Plan 2021-2025

#### **CASE STUDIES**

#### **Boulder**, Colorado

The **Boulder Junction EcoDistrict** follows the EcoDistricts Protocol, emphasizing sustainable development with low-carbon building materials and green infrastructure. The EcoDistrict currently covers over 160 acres. The city of Boulder has passed the Universal Zero Waste Ordinance that requires all properties to have separate compost, recycling and trash services.<sup>35</sup> Currently, the city has achieved a 56% diversion rate that is tracked on a live dashboard<sup>36</sup>. These waste diversion goals have led to a reported 75% reduction in waste for construction projects within the district by 2022.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> <u>https://www.bouldercoloradousa.com/travel-info/travel-sustainably/green-lifestyle/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> <u>https://bouldercolorado.gov/boulder-measures/zero-waste-diversion</u>

### Better Market Street Project, San Francisco, CA

The **Better Market Street Project** in San Francisco aims to deliver streetscape and safety improvements along 2.2 miles of Market Street between Octavia Boulevard and The Embarcadero. The project is using recycled materials as part of its comprehensive strategy to update and revitalize Market Street's infrastructure.

Use of Recycled Materials in Construction:

- <u>Recycled Asphalt and Concrete:</u> The project utilizes recycled asphalt and concrete for paying and structural el



concrete for paving and structural elements, reducing the demand for new materials and minimizing environmental impact.

- <u>Sustainable Streetscape Elements</u>: Incorporation of recycled materials extends to streetscape features such as benches, planters, and other public amenities, promoting a circular economy approach.

### King County, WA

As per the 2019 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, 37 cities within the country participate in the solid waste system, disposing over 931,000 tons of garbage at Cedar Hills. The county has been tracking recycling and disposal activities to understand and better forecast waste generation trends. This system of tracking waste has allowed the country to be more intentional and targeted in its approach.

In 2023 the King County Solid Waste Division <u>launched Re+</u>, with a goal to reduce the amount of waste going to the regional landfill by 70% by 2030. As part of the program, the county is investigating a new technology, called mixed waste processing, that can capture and divert valuable resources from the stuff that does end up in the garbage bin<sup>37</sup>.

Additionally, the country has set the following targets to measure progress toward the goal of zero waste of resources<sup>38</sup>:

<sup>38</sup>King County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan 2019

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> <u>https://kingcountygreen.com/2023/08/08/a-pathway-to-zero-waste-king-county-explores-innovative-technologies-to-meet-waste-reduction-goals/</u>

### **Generation Rate Target:**

- Per capita: 20.4 pounds/week by 2030, and Per employee: 42.2 pounds/week by 2030.

### **Recycling Rate Target:**

- 70 percent (interim goal).

### **Disposal Rate Target:**

- Per capita: 5.1 pounds/week by 2030, and
- Per employee: 4.1 pounds/week by 2030

In 2020, the Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) committed to specifying low-embodied carbon building materials in King Country capital projects in addition to increasing the purchase of sustainable and recycled content products and materials<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> King County Strategic Climate Action Plan

## Water & Ecosystems



### Introduction

The Wilburton sustainable district aims to integrate nature into the urban environment, promoting biodiversity and enhancing residents' quality of life. The district will focus on integrating water management, green infrastructure, and ecosystem preservation to create resilient and vibrant urban districts: Effective stormwater management through green infrastructure reduces the risk of flooding, minimizes water pollution, and recharges groundwater supplies. This not only protects natural water bodies but also ensures a sustainable water supply for urban needs. Future climate data assessed in Bellevue's Climate Vulnerability Assessment projects an increase in storm intensity and extreme precipitation events.

As Bellevue continues to grow and develop, its environmental resources—such as natural open spaces, water quality, and tree cover—are at risk of being negatively impacted. Safeguarding these resources is vital for maintaining both community livability and Bellevue's goal as a "City in a Park." Much of the existing habitat in the Wilburton TOD area is degraded, making restoration and enhancements a key district goal – particularly where they can be incorporated into neighborhood amenities such as parks and open space.

Preserving and enhancing urban green spaces and natural habitats supports biodiversity, which is essential for ecosystem health. The city has identified salmon habitat within the Sturtevant Creek Basin making it a critical ecosystem to rejuvenate.<sup>40</sup>

Enhancing livability for residents is a key goal for the district. Green infrastructure and urban green spaces provide recreational opportunities, reduce urban heat island effects, and improve air and water quality, all of which are all critical for public health. Access to nature and green spaces has been shown to reduce stress, enhance mental health, and promote active lifestyles.

### **Key Actions**

These key actions were developed through a combination of research into precedents and best practices, and stakeholder engagement.

### **KEY ACTIONS**

Sustainable water management and infrastructure

- Shared green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and low-impact development (LID) guidelines
- Rainwater collection and utilization
- Shared GSI + open space opportunities ('stormwater park' concept)

#### Ecosystem restoration

- Stream conservation and restoration
- Daylighting water resources
- Preserving and restoring natural habitats and developing ecological corridors (i.e., connect wetland, Sturtevant Creek, Lake Bellevue, and other site features)
- Educational/experiential design opportunities (i.e., elevated walking paths through wetland)
- Explore partnerships with local schools
- Enhanced tree canopy as part of future development
- Edible Landscaping
- Pollinator Pathways

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Sturtevant Creek Basin Fact Sheet

### Existing Local Policy & Initiative Review

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan sets out the following Water & Ecosystems goals and policies for the Wilburton sub-area:

- Minimizing the susceptibility of environmentally sensitive areas to damage
- Maximizing open space, habitat and opportunities for recreation
- Improving infrastructure systems to support healthy living for people and wildlife
- Incentivize improvements that enhance the aesthetic and functional qualities of natural features, such as Sturtevant Creek, Lake Bellevue, and the wetland at 116th Avenue NE and Main Street.
- Incentivize opportunities through the development process to expand green stormwater infrastructure, tree canopy, and landscaping that enhances ecological functions and urban wildlife habitat connectivity.

### The Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan sets the following goals and priorities:

- Achieve a 40% tree canopy cover. To achieve this goal, the study found that the city would need enough trees to provide tree canopy for 670 acres of land.<sup>41</sup>
- Locate 100% of households within 1/3 mile of a park, open space, and/or trail. As of 2020, 73 percent of Bellevue residents lived within 1/3 of a mile to a park, open space, or trail access point.

The City of Bellevue is developing a Watershed Management Plan to improve the health of our streams, lakes, and wetlands over the next 20 years.

### Precedents

### Key Takeaways

Wilburton's water and ecosystems actions leverage successful urban precedents in integrated water management and ecological resilience. At Thornton Place, daylighting Thornton Creek provides stormwater management for a 680-acre watershed, removing up to 80% of total suspended solids and reducing impervious surfaces by 78%, and enhances biodiversity through native plantings. Similar benefits could be realized by daylighting and/or restoring sections of Sturtevant Creek that run through the Wilburton district. Vancouver's "One Water" framework captures and treats 90% of annual rainfall, using green infrastructure and permeable surfaces to manage runoff from 40% of impervious areas by 2050, showcasing the potential of urban green assets in stormwater management. The use of tree cages, engineered soils, and bio-swales, coupled with green roofs and advanced metering infrastructure, provides a scalable model for sustainable urban water management while enhancing local biodiversity and mitigating urban heat islands. These approaches could also be implemented around Lake Bellevue and along daylit stretches of Sturtevant Creek to enhance biodiversity and improve

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> <u>https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/community-development/planning-initiatives/comprehensive-plan</u>

water quality. The daylit section of Sturtevant Creek that runs through the city-owned Lincoln Center site represents a prime opportunity to pilot these approaches and demonstrate their benefits.

In Southeast False Creek, Vancouver, stormwater-fed wetlands and intertidal habitats support local biodiversity. The area's integration of novel habitats supports spawning herring, marine birds, and native wildlife like beavers, river otters, and seals, showcasing how dense urban areas can coexist with natural ecosystems. Portland's EcoRoof and Montgomery County's RainScapes Rewards further demonstrate the impact of incentivizing private stormwater management to scale green infrastructure adoption at district scales.

#### **CASE STUDIES**

The **South LA Wetland Park** received an Envision Platinum certification for its innovative approach to stormwater mitigation. Built on a brownfield formerly used by the LA Metro, the project turned underutilized space within a dense, urban neighborhood into both a park and an infrastructural resource. The manmade wetland mimics a native marsh habitat, and contains boardwalks, trails, and rock gardens for community members to enjoy. It also doubles as a water treatment system -- the basin can hold up to 4.5 acres of runoff from surrounding storm drains, removing toxins and sediment and providing resilience against flooding.



### **Thornton Place, WA**

A key sustainability feature is the daylighting and restoration of Thornton Creek, which provides stormwater management for 680 acres of the watershed.<sup>42</sup> The design incorporated bioswales and natural landscaping to treat runoff removing 40-80% of total suspended solids from 91% of the average volume of annual stormwater runoff, reduced impervious surfaces by 78%,<sup>43</sup> and enhances biodiversity with native plant species.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> <u>https://grist.org/urbanism/2011-06-06-seattle-urbanism-transit-state-of-the-art-green-mixed-planning/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> <u>MithunSolomon - Thornton Place Fact Sheet</u>

### False Creek, Vancouver, BC

The city has developed two districts, Northeast False Creek and Southeast False Creek, as eco-districts. Southeast False Creek is designed as a mixed-use community with a total population of 11,000 – 13,000 people, with a focus on residential housing. Northeast False Creek represents approximately 58 hectares (~143 acres) of mostly undeveloped land along the downtown False Creek waterfront.<sup>44</sup>

### Northeast False Creek Targets:

- Ensure extraordinary biodiversity, the mitigation of urban heat island effect, to protect from the effects of excess storm water and increase canopy cover to 22% by 2050
- Reduce per capita water consumption by 33% from 2006 levels.
- 90% of all water should be filtered before entering waterways.
- Landscapes should be designed to be drought tolerant and resilient to climate variability. Irrigation needs should be minimized or eliminated.

A new island with adjacent intertidal habitat and a stormwater-fed wetland in Hinge Park were created in southeast False Creek as part of the Olympic Village. These features create a variety of habitats – freshwater wetland, rocky intertidal zone, and shoreline forest – and provide a precedent for incorporating novel habitats for biodiversity into dense urban neighborhoods. False Creek now supports spawning herring, marine birds, and increasing populations of harbor seals and river otters. A pair of beavers made the Hinge Park wetland their home in 2015.<sup>45</sup>

### Portland

The EcoRoof Incentive program<sup>46</sup> sets forward a goal of establishing 17 ha (43 ac) of EcoRoofs, which are lightweight, low-maintenance green roofs. As of 2010, there are more than 172 EcoRoofs in Portland.<sup>47</sup> Through the EcoRoof Initiative, the city has approved \$1.9 million in projects, offering property owners reimbursements of \$5 per square foot of EcoRoof. The roofs are expected to reduce runoff by 5168 m3/ha (552,600 gal/ac). Portland also has a Clean River Rewards<sup>48</sup> program which offers discounted stormwater utility fees to private-property owners who manage stormwater onsite.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> <u>https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/northeast-false-creek-sustainability-and-resiliency.aspx</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Vancouver Biodiversity Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> <u>https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/44422</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> <u>https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/298042</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> <u>https://www.portland.gov/bes/grants-incentives/clean-river-rewards-0</u>

### Codifying a Sustainable District

### Northampton, MA

In 2017, Northampton established a Sustainable Growth Overlay District spanning over a 30-acre area. This district is directly adjacent to the central business district, making it an attractive area for development.<sup>49</sup>

The district requires a park/common area fully designed and constructed to be integrated into the project. This area is required to be easily accessible and available for residents of the project. At a minimum, this space shall be 300 square feet or 30 square feet per dwelling unit of buildable land area, whichever is greater.

### Norfolk, VA

The city of Norfolk's revised its zoning code in 2018 called ZoneNorfolk, that "considered the risks of sea-level rise on the built environment." Under this code, all new development is to meet a "resilience quotient" that encompasses risk reduction, stormwater management, and energy resilience. In addition, ZoneNorfolk added two resilience- specific overlay zones, namely the Coastal Resilience Overlay (CRO) and the Upland Resilience Overlay (URO).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> ULI - Reshaping the City - Zoning for a More Equitable, Resilient, and Sustainable Future

## **District Framework Evaluation**

The following sustainability frameworks were evaluated for district certification opportunities:

- Just Communities (previously EcoDistrict Framework)
- LEED for Cities and Communities (US Green Building Council; previously LEED for Neighborhood Development)
- Envision (Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure)
- Living Community Challenge (International Living Future Institute)
- WELL Community Standard
- Sustainable SITES
- Salmon Safe

In evaluating sustainable district frameworks, we sought to combine market awareness with demonstrable rigor and reasonable flexibility. Some of the evaluated frameworks were deemed unsuitable given their current status—for example, EcoDistricts was in a state of transition after being transitioned to Just Communities, and the Living Communities Challenge had stopped taking new registrations. Envision and Sustainable Sites are too narrowly focused— on infrastructure and landscape, respectively—but may still be useful for selected focus areas within the district.

Fortunately, one of the most comprehensive programs, LEED for Communities, scored well on its own. In addition to being a well-recognized rating system that includes rigorous standards, LEED for Communities aligns well with the priorities identified for Wilburton. All LEED rating systems are flexible by nature, allowing teams to chart a custom path based on a project's strengths.

LEED for Communities also does not require a certain number of buildings in the project boundary to be LEED certified, which can help a neighborhood with a large number of existing, non-certified buildings to achieve program certification. While LEED will be included as an option in the city's green building incentive program, there are many other measures that can demonstrate a high level of environmental performance.

As LEED for Communities began to surface as a prime contender, we looked more closely at the requirements to ensure that nothing would preclude Wilburton from becoming a certified district. Two key prerequisites were identified for investigation. Our initial estimate of the district's open space showed that the Wilburton TOD area might not meet the LEED requirement. It therefore may be necessary to establish a LEED boundary that is slightly larger than the Wilburton TOD area boundary, for purposes of certification only.

The second concern was a mention of a required master plan, which does not exist for the Wilburton TOD area. An exploratory call with the US Green Building Council, which manages the LEED rating system, confirmed that a variety of plans can fulfill this requirement. In particular, the City of Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan, Environmental Stewardship Plan, Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA, and 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and Wilburton Vision Implementation Environmental Impact Statement, were identified as suitable documents for a LEED application.

In addition to confirming that all prerequisites could be met, we also conducted a preliminary evaluation of the full LEED for Communities rating system and determined that LEED Silver is well within reach and higher performance levels are possible.

## **Recommended Implementation Strategy**

### **Strategic Elements**

To create a sustainable district in Wilburton, the individual actions within each focus area, described above, are organized into an overarching strategy. This strategy is primarily focused on analyzing and articulating the value of a sustainable district to stakeholders, and is comprised of the following elements:

- 1. Actions or investments that have already been completed and/or are fully committed
- 2. Sustainability requirements or incentives embedded into city policies and/or code
- 3. City-led actions, investments, or practices that are expected but not yet committed
- 4. Priority actions that require additional analysis or support to achieve, and/or which will be implemented through public-private partnerships or entirely through the public sector

### **Element Descriptions and Examples**

The first element of the strategy is utilizing the sustainable district concept as a narrative framework to support the Wilburton community vision. Specifically, quantifying the sustainability benefits of existing investments and committed actions such as transit-oriented development around the Wilburton link light rail station, and integrating development of the city-owned Lincoln Center site with the Grand Connection. The sustainability and climate benefits of these investments and plans will be communicated to stakeholders and the public, to support a narrative of place and expand the vision for Wilburton as a showcase for sustainable development that can inform future growth areas.

Examples of priority actions that fall under this first element include things like the Wilburton Link light rail station, integrating new development with Eastrail, and integrating new development with the Grand Connection.

The second element of the strategy was embedding sustainability into the Wilburton Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code amendments. This included working closely with city staff to establish strong policy language supporting the sustainable district concept as well as specific high-priority district elements such as net-zero emissions development; integrating sustainability priorities into urban design guidelines for new development; establishing the city's most advanced green building incentives in the Land Use Code; and establishing code requirements that support Eastrail corridor integration, walkability, and other priorities that support both the Wilburton community vision and the sustainable district.

Examples of priority actions that fall under the second element include things like incentivizing high performance buildings in the Land Use Code, and embedding sustainable design requirements like walkability in the Land Use Code (e.g. specifying block circumference and local access requirements).

The third element of the strategy covers actions that are certain or highly likely to be implemented in Wilburton because they are standard city practice (including State mandates and Bellevue city code), and actions that are currently planned for Wilburton but have not yet been fully committed or funded. Quantifying and articulating the value of a sustainable district can help to identify and prioritize which city-led actions are likely to yield the greatest benefit in supporting both sustainability goals and the Wilburton community vision.

Examples of priority actions that fall under the third element include things like building out publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure, designing and implementing Complete Streets and traffic calming on major arterials, and increasing tree canopy and green stormwater infrastructure in the public right-of-way.

The fourth element of the strategy is actions that the city can support but for which the city will not be primarily responsible for implementing. This may include public-private partnerships, as well as entirely private-sector led actions. This element also includes actions for which additional analysis is needed to confirm that they meet minimum cost/benefit thresholds to be worth prioritizing.

Examples of priority actions that fall under the fourth element include things like supporting the creation of a district energy system, supporting the expansion of smart / on-demand public transit systems, incentivizing new development to pilot and report on low-carbon construction technologies, and supporting building design that promotes deconstruction and materials re-use.

Taken together, these elements combine to support a strategy of quantifying the value of the overarching vision for a sustainable district, as well as the specific priority actions described above, and articulating that value to stakeholders to create the support and shared vision necessary to drive implementation over time. The next phase of this work, described in greater detail in the 'Summary and Next Steps' section, is intended to produce an implementation framework plan for creating and operating a dedicated sustainable district over time.

## **Summary and Next Steps**

This assessment concludes that it is both possible and valuable to advance the work of creating a dedicated sustainable district within the Wilburton TOD area. Such a district can advance the city's sustainability goals in ways that leverage existing regional investments and local planning work, while adding value to the community's vision for Wilburton as Bellevue's next great urban neighborhood. To realize this opportunity, the city must work closely with the community, business and property owners, regional partners, and other stakeholders to align on a district vision and identity, a framework for measuring success, and investment in the early projects that will provide the foundation for long-term success.

There are several discrete actions necessary to complete the work undertaken with this assessment, and to launch the next phase of work.

### Land Use Code

The City of Bellevue is currently leading the Wilburton Vision Implementation Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA). The draft LUCA includes green building incentives, access requirements, and building and site development standards. The high-performance building incentive structure will be drafted as a Director's Rule and included in the Wilburton LUCA by reference.

### **District Vision and Identity**

Crafting the district vision and identity is a shared process between the city and stakeholders that requires dialogue over time. Building on the stakeholder workshops and community input conducted as part of this assessment, the next phase of work includes discussing the conclusions of this report with those stakeholders, continuing to define the value that a dedicated sustainability district could create, and identifying how early project opportunities can inform and support the existing community vision for creating a great urban environment for people to live, work, and play.

#### **District Framework**

As of the publication of this assessment report, the most promising framework for measuring success appears to be LEED for Communities. The city will continue to assess the potential for district-scale certification, weighing the costs and benefits – both to the city and to the community and stakeholders. In consultation with those stakeholders and rating system experts, the city will make a determination about whether to pursue LEED certification for the district.

### **Early Actions + Public Private Partnerships**

The city will also continue to work with stakeholders to identify and find ways to support key early projects, including a potential district energy system based on recovering heat from a King County wastewater main, identifying opportunities for shared infrastructure that could replace building-by-building requirements, and coordinating closely on development plans for city-owned parcels.

### **Organizational Development**

In the longer term, the city will evaluate possible governance structures for the district, which may include transferring oversight and management to a private or nonprofit third party.

## **Appendices**

## Appendix A – Rating System Comparison

The following sustainability frameworks were evaluated for district certification opportunities:

	LEED for Cities and Communities	Living Communities Challenge	JUST Communities	Envision	Sustainable Sites	Salmon Safe - Urban Development
Status/ Logistics	Active; LEED ND has evolved into LEED for Cities and Communities	Not taking new registrations; unclear on future status.	Active; undergoing changes; EcoDistricts merged into Just Communities; re- launched in 2024	Active	Active	Active
Main Focus Areas	Ecology, Transportation, Water, Energy, Resources, and Equity	Place, Water, Energy, Health and Happiness, Materials, Equity, and Beauty	Seventeen comprehensive commitments organized into the five essential categories – Belonging, Opportunity, Wellbeing, Mobility, Environment	Infrastructure Sustainability and Resiliency - Quality of Life, Leadership, Resource Allocation, Natural World, and Climate and Risk	Focus on green infrastructure - Water, Soil & Vegetation, Materials, Health and Well-being, Construction, Operation, and Education	Cure Urban Certification Standards - Water Balance, Erosion Prevention, Water Quality, Ecology Enhancement
Market Awareness	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	Medium
Flexibility	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Rigor/ Structure	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Alignment with Priorities	High	High	Variable	High, for specific infrastructure projects	High, for specific landscape projects	High
Approx. Application Fees (not including submittal prep)	\$13,600	NA	\$10,500with a \$2,500 recertification fee every two years	\$2,000 registration + verification fees (~\$20 - 56k)	\$9,500	Fee available upon request.

### **Appendix B – Additional Citywide Code and Policy Precedents**

### Energy

### Boston

Boston's Zero Net Carbon Building Zoning Initiative aims to establish a zero net carbon standard for new construction, aligning with the city's 2050 carbon neutrality goals. These amendments build upon and refine the 2022 effort, to better reflect updated state building codes and city ordinances, including the specialized stretch energy code and Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO), respectively. If the current goals of the BPDA (Boston Planning & Development Agency) Zero Net Carbon Building Zoning Initiative<sup>50</sup> are adopted.

- New buildings filing a Project Notification Form (PNF) in Boston with 15 units or more, a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft., and additions of a minimum of 50,000 sq. ft. or more to existing buildings, will be required to meet a net-zero emissions standard (BERDO 2050 CO2e Emissions Standard).
- New hospitals, general manufacturing, and labs will have phased-in emissions standards that accelerate what would otherwise be required for existing buildings.
- Large projects will continue to be required to demonstrate compliance with LEED certifiability. This decision is made to capitalize on the familiarity stakeholders have with the review process while simultaneously providing flexibility for new buildings to pursue additional sustainability certifications. LEED v5 will be introduced in 2025, advancing more holistic sustainability requirements.
- Small and Large projects will be required to report on embodied carbon.
- Projects with a gross floor area (GFA) exceeding 50,000 sq. ft. will conduct a building life cycle analysis.

### Vancouver, BC

Vancouver has committed to achieving Net Positive Energy. The city has advanced towards carbon neutrality, with actions encompassing building energy retrofits, district energy systems, and significant investments in renewable energy sources. Vancouver is aiming to derive 100% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, with actions including the development of hydroelectric power, solar energy installations, and district energy systems that utilize waste heat recovery. One such program is the False Creek Neighbourhood Utility (NEU) Program, a district energy system that is outlined below.

**Bloomington, MN's** city zoning code has a floor area ratio (FAR) bonus within the High Intensity Mixed Use with Residential (HX-R) District. Buildings that obtain LEED certification are eligible for up to one-half square foot additional floor area per square foot of floor area depending on the level of certification (up to a maximum FAR bonus of 1.0). Adopted in 2004, the incentive was applied to a district with multiple light rail stations where the city wanted to encourage high density. Building permits are not issued until an independent inspector verifies that the construction plans can reach the LEED certification level stated and certificates of occupancy are not issued until USGBC grants LEED certification to the building. Orlando, FL has a similar density and intensity bonus for mixed-use projects that meet specific performance criteria.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> <u>https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/03de9a26-3688-4c27-9566-109682b36426</u>

### Livability & Wellbeing

### Vancouver, BC

The city is making concerted efforts to address homelessness, provide affordable housing, and ensure accessibility to services for all community members. Vancouver's affordable housing strategy includes technical measures like modular housing construction, streamlined permitting for affordable units, and the inclusionary zoning policy, which requires a percentage of new developments to be allocated as affordable housing. The city enhances accessibility through the Universal Design approach in public spaces and transportation systems, incorporating tactile walking surface indicators, audible pedestrian signals, and accessible public transit vehicles.

### Mobility

### Vancouver, BC

The city adopted the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP) in 2011. The plan outlines ten goal areas and 15 measurable targets. In 2014, Light-Duty Vehicles contributed to 31% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions and Heavy-Duty Vehicles added another 5%.

### **Targets:**

- By 2040, at least two-thirds of all trips will be made by foot, bike, and public transit<sup>51</sup>, with 22% of these trips to be made on foot.
- Reduce distance driven per resident by 20% from 2007 levels
- 2/3 of trips in Vancouver will be by active transportation and transit
- 50% of distance driven on Vancouver's roads will be by zero emission vehicles<sup>52</sup>

### Initiatives:

- Land Use Directions: The city is revising their zoning regulations, and design guidelines to prioritize and encourage a dense and diverse mix of services, amenities, jobs, and housing types in areas well served by frequent, high-capacity transit.<sup>53</sup>
- Pedestrian Design: Enhanced pedestrian-friendly walkways, enhancing foot traffic and reducing VMT. The city has launched multiple projects to enhance walkability and pedestrian safety such as making the False Creek bridges and other deficient areas safer and more accessible on foot,



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Vancouver Transportation 2040 Plan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> <u>https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/transportation.aspx</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Vancouver Transportation 2040 Plan

launching a parklet program to foster the conversion of on-street parking spaces into low-cost public spaces, and Implementing signal measures to prioritize pedestrian movement at intersections.

### **Progress and Impact:**

- As of spring 2015, 50% of all trips originating in the city are made by foot, bike, and/or transit.
- Between 2008 and 2014, the number of daily bike trips doubled from 50,000 to 100,000 per day.<sup>54</sup>

### Portland, OR

### Initiatives:

- Public Transit Connectivity: Served by three MAX light rail lines and multiple bus routes, reducing the need for private vehicles. The city is also working with partners to deliver a Broadway Corridor subway line, and an expanded trolley bus network.
- Cycling Infrastructure: 681 mi of additional bicycle facilities identified as part of The Bicycle Plan for 2030.

### Progress:

- 58% of the new bicycle network target completed as of 2020.55

### Resources

N/A

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Vancouver Greenest City 2020 Action Plan 2015-2020

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030, 2019 Progress Report

### Water & Ecosystems

### Vancouver, BC

Vancouver has committed to achieving Net Positive Water. The City of Vancouver uses an integrated One Water approach to managing water that recognizes value in the interconnected types of water: drinking water, rainwater, wastewater (such as sewage), groundwater, and waterbodies.<sup>56</sup>

Through the RainCity strategy<sup>57</sup> the city is building on and increasing more than 300 green rainwater infrastructure assets across Vancouver.

### **Targets:**

- Capture (infiltrate, evapotranspirate, and/or reuse) and clean (treat) a minimum of 90% of Vancouver's average annual rainfall volume (long term)
- Manage urban rainwater runoff from 40% of impervious areas in the city by 2050.

To achieve these targets, the city published a Rainwater management design standard for the volume of rainwater to be managed by sites and GRI assets to 48 mm per day.

Vancouver operates over 110 community gardens in parks, schools, and on private lands, utilizing composting and rainwater collection systems to promote sustainable gardening practices.

The city encourages the installation of green roofs and living walls to reduce building energy consumption, manage stormwater, and enhance biodiversity. Technical guidelines and policies support their integration into new and existing buildings.

The city is implementing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) to monitor and manage water use efficiently, coupled with public education campaigns on water conservation.

Rainwater management approaches include permeable pavements and bio-swales.

The city has integrated nature into the urban environment, promoting biodiversity and enhancing residents' quality of life.

As part of the 2019-2022 Capital Plan and operating budget, the city allocated nearly \$70 million from within existing budgets, to support the delivery of priority investments and program development associated with the RainCity Strategy implementation and GRI through the Streets and Public Spaces, Buildings and Sites, and Park and Beaches Action Plans.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> <u>https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/one-water.aspx</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Vancouver Rain City Strategy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Vancouver Rain City Strategy

Vancouver Park Board operates 250 parks and has adopted the Biodiversity Strategy to Increase the amount and ecological quality of Vancouver's natural areas to support biodiversity with the target of restoring or enhancing 25 hectares of natural areas by 2020.<sup>59</sup>

### **Performance Metrics:**

- Amount (hectares) of natural areas.
- Ecosystem health of important aquatic ecosystems (False Creek, Still Creek, and Musqueam Creek).
- Percent of residents within a 5-minute walk of natural spaces (>0.5 ha) by neighborhood.
- Number of volunteers involved in biodiversity projects.

Metro Vancouver Regional District completed its regional Biodiversity Strategy between 2001 and 2006.

### Impact:

- Stanley Park is an important urban forest. Over \$8 million was spent on replanting trees, improving public safety, and addressing long-term forest health following the 2006 windstorm.
- Ongoing work to restore Still Creek resulted in the return of over 20 chum salmon each year since 2012. Now salmon and trout are found in five streams in the city.

In 2021, Park Board commissioners also approved the updated Local Food System Action Plan to support growing spaces, land and food programming, public food markets, and community kitchens to share food and culture across the city.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Vancouver Biodiversity Strategy

## **References & Resources**

### ULI Report - Reshaping the City (2023)

https://knowledge.uli.org/-/media/files/research-reports/2023/uli-report-reshaping-the-city-final.pdf?rev=39f9e302029d4ab8a99c5b2d1129a642&hash=D63154AA4EC5F6222FECA99E7C085E23

### Lloyd District Roadmap (2016)

https://prosperportland.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Lloyd-Ecodistrict-Roadmap.pdf

### Washington State Building Code

https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/buildings

#### Sustainable Bellevue Plan 2021-2025

https://bellevuewa.gov/sites/default/files/media/pdf\_document/2020/Bellevue%20Enviornmental%20Stewardship%20Plan\_Adopted.pdf

### Bellevue Tree Canopy Assessment (2021)

https://bellevuewa.gov/sites/default/files/media/pdf\_document/2023/Bellevue%20WA%20-%20Urban%20Tree%20Canopy%20Assessment%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20V1.1.pdf

#### **Bellevue Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2023)**

https://bellevuewa.gov/sites/default/files/media/pdf\_document/2024/Bellevue%20Climate%20Vulnerability%20Assessment%20%282%29.pdf

# Sustainable District Opportunity Assessment





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