



# 2 ALTERNATIVES

This Chapter describes land use and transportation alternatives that are further evaluated in Chapter 3.

## 2.1 PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The City of Bellevue has identified the Wilburton Commercial Area (Study Area) as a future urban neighborhood with new opportunities for businesses, entertainment, and housing. New improvements to transit, pedestrian, and cyclist connectivity have provided a catalyst for change. East Link light rail will offer high capacity transit connectivity to the region by 2023; the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) will create a regional non-motorized connection for pedestrians and cyclists, and the City-led initiative of the Grand Connection will create opportunities to connect Downtown and the Study Area for cyclists and pedestrians. Other assets in the Study Area include the existing Medical Institution District, located in the northwest corner of the Study Area, which includes the Medical Institution (MI) and BelRed Medical Office (BR-MO-1) zoning. There will also be a new elementary school that will be just to the southeast of the Study Area. Refer to Section 2.2 for a full description of the study area.

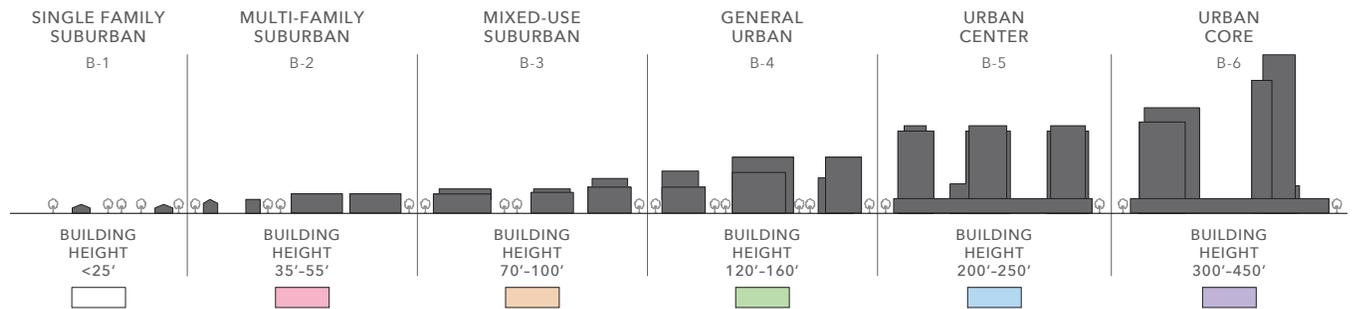


In addition to transportation connections and the Medical Institution District, the Study Area has a unique context within the City of Bellevue. Directly to the west is the high growth center of Downtown Bellevue which serves as the Eastside's primary urban and employment center. To the north is the emerging BelRed neighborhood which includes the Spring District adjacent to the Spring District/120th East Link station. The Spring District includes the Global Innovation Exchange, a partnership between Microsoft, University of Washington, and Tsinghua University that serves as a high tech and innovative education institution. Additionally, REI will relocate their corporate headquarters to the Spring District.

The City is engaged with a 15-member Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to assist in crafting the future vision of the Study Area. The CAC has been tasked with developing a preferred alternative for the land use, transportation, and urban design vision for the Wilburton Commercial Area. The CAC has identified a number of priorities and opportunities to best capitalize on the planned and proposed improvements in and around the Study Area. These priorities include increased density around transit and other significant transportation nodes, an increase in parks and open space, improved pedestrian and cyclist facilities, affordable housing and commercial space, and a unique and authentic aesthetic quality. Based upon these priorities and a new vision for the Wilburton Commercial Area, the proposal is to prepare recommendations for amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, and Zoning Map for City Council consideration.

As a companion effort, the City is planning for the Grand Connection, which envisions improvements focused on the non-motorized public realm between Meydenbauer Bay west of Downtown and the ERC in the Study Area. The Grand Connection includes improvements to pedestrian and cyclist facilities, as well as public spaces through a series of small- and large-scale improvements centered around developing a memorable urban design experience, while improving mobility and connectivity for non-motorized transportation. As part of the Grand Connection visioning process, options were developed for the segment that crosses I-405 and interfaces with the ERC in the Study Area.

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluates three options for the I-405 crossing segment of the Grand Connection. Ultimately the Grand Connection will be the subject of a separate evaluation, but this EIS examines the relationship of the I-405 crossing segment



**Exhibit 2-1** Transects

Source: NBBJ, 2017

and the Study Area including cost, experiential quality of the crossing, land use impacts, relationship to public space elements, and interface with existing and proposed transportation systems. In this EIS, a No Action and two Action Alternatives are tested.

**No Action Alternative:** The No Action Alternative is required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and assumes the current Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, and Zoning Map are retained.

The Wilburton Commercial Area could grow from about 3.6 million square feet of development to 4.2 million square feet of development under this alternative. See Exhibit 2-1 illustrating height and form transects and Exhibit 2-2 showing the ultimate achievable development pattern of the No Action Alternative. Most of the growth could be in office and retail space with small amounts of hotel and residential use. This includes portions, north of NE 8th Street and east of 116th Avenue NE, that were part of the BelRed planning initiative and were rezoned under that process. Existing zoning allows for building heights in the range of 35 to 70 feet, with a small portion near the Medical Institution District that allows heights up to 200 feet.

There would be no new design guidelines or development standards for the Study Area. City-planned transportation investments in the current Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element could be made. However, it is assumed the Grand Connection would not be developed under the No Action Alternative. As a King County-led initiative, the ERC would be completed under the No Action Alternative.



-  Building Height < 25'
-  Building Height 35'-55'
-  Building Height 70'-100'
-  Building Height 120'-160'
-  Building Height 200'-250'
-  Building Height 300'-450'



**Exhibit 2-2** No Action Alternative Plan View

Source: NBBJ, 2017



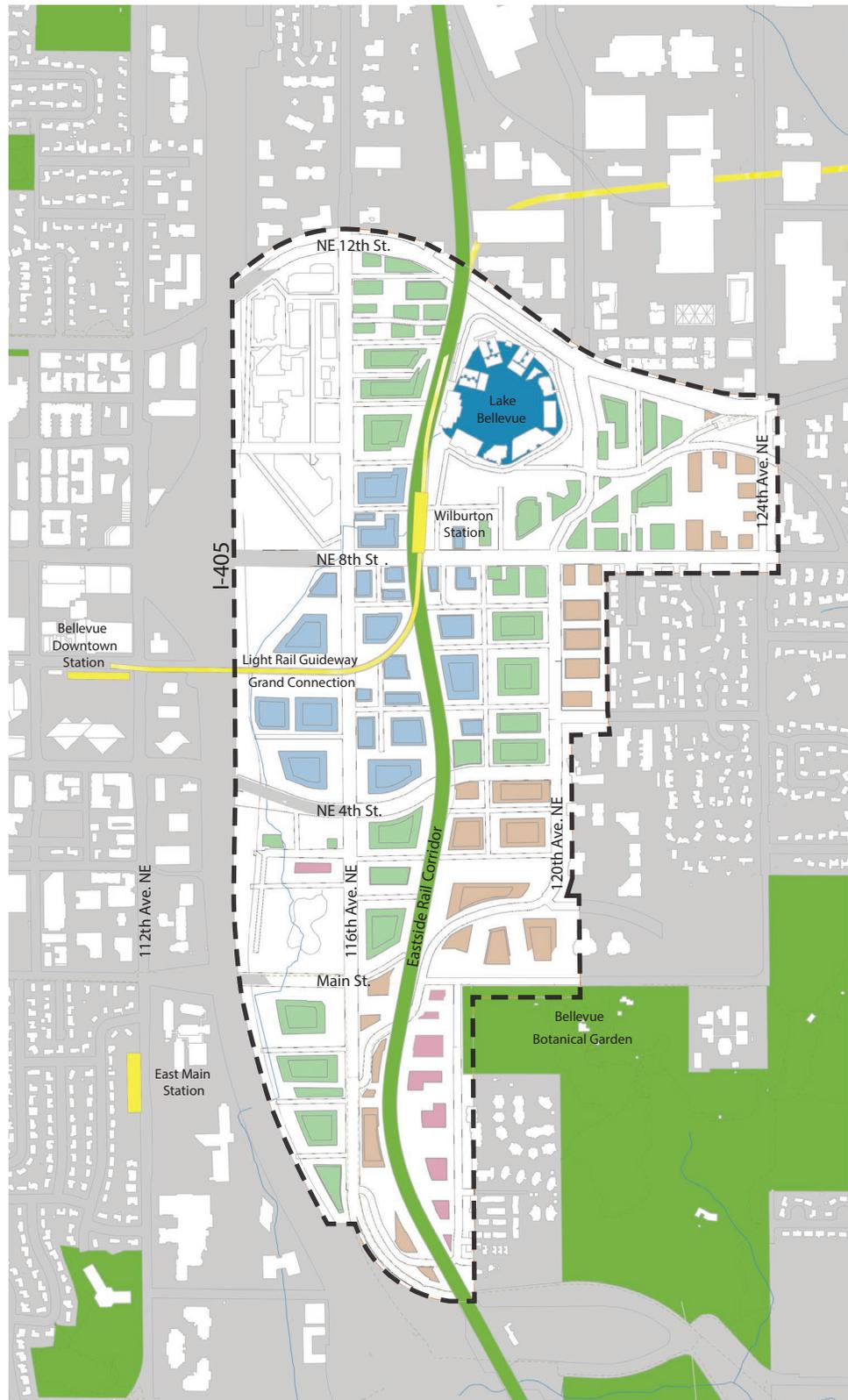
**Alternative 1:** Under Alternative 1, the Wilburton Commercial Area Land Use & Transportation Plan could enable development of a more intense urban form and promote additional multimodal connections. New Land Use Code standards could increase allowable building heights and floor area ratios while providing custom design guidelines for buildings to create compatible urban forms. There could be a greater concentration of development and mix of uses, with an emphasis on adding housing, office/medical, retail, and hotel space.

The amount of potential building space could grow to as much as 13.1 million square feet, or 8.8 million square feet more than the No Action Alternative. See Exhibit 2-3. The greatest intensity of land use could occur south of the new Wilburton light rail station, primarily between NE 8th Street to the north, NE 4th Street to the south, I-405 to the west, and the ERC to the east. The distribution pattern of height and density would correlate with planned transportation improvements and encourage multimodal options such as transit, walking, and cycling. The ERC could connect to the eastern terminus of the Grand Connection and could improve pedestrian and bicycle connections, while establishing a north-south spine through the Study Area. Additional street connections could allow for smaller blocks and a different development pattern and opportunities from the No Action Alternative. The range of building heights could be 35 to 250 feet, with a range between 120 and 160 feet the most predominant building form. The greatest range of heights, 200 to 250 feet, would primarily occur south of NE 8th Street, north of NE 4th Street and between I-405 and the ERC. Smaller corresponding areas would exist immediately around the light rail station, north of NE 8th Street, and immediately east of the ERC.

**Alternative 2:** Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1 except that potential growth could be approximately one-third higher, up to 16.3 million square feet of development, or 12.1 million square feet more than the No Action Alternative, and the urban form could be more intense across the Study Area. See Exhibit 2-4. Building heights between NE 8th Street, NE 4th Street, and west of 116th Avenue NE along I-405 could reach a range of 300 to 450 feet in height, with ranges between 200 and 250 feet, and 120 and 160 feet being the most predominant. Alternative 2 would organize the greatest density along the 116th Avenue NE corridor from NE 12th Street to NE 4th Street. The greatest intensity of development, 300 to 450 in height, would be located west of 116th Avenue NE and between NE 4th

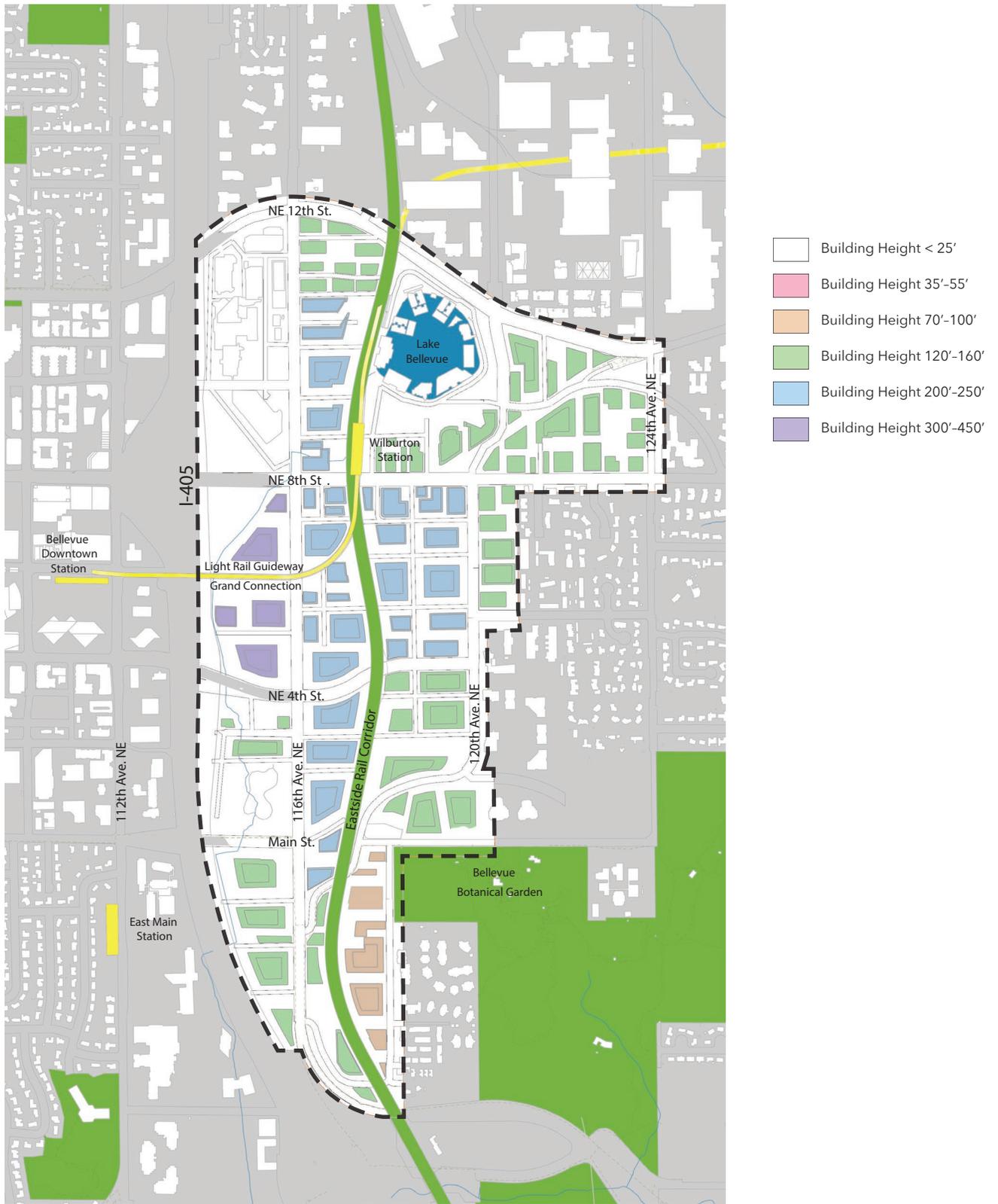


-  Building Height < 25'
-  Building Height 35'-55'
-  Building Height 70'-100'
-  Building Height 120'-160'
-  Building Height 200'-250'
-  Building Height 300'-450'



**Exhibit 2-3** Alternative 1 Plan View

Source: NBBJ, 2017



**Exhibit 2-4** Alternative 2 Plan View

Source: NBBJ, 2017



and NE 8th Streets. The ranges between 200 and 250 feet would mainly occupy the properties on the eastern side of 116th Avenue NE, and the ranges between 120 and 160 feet would make up much of the balance of the Study Area. Additional street connections could allow for smaller blocks and a different development pattern and opportunities from the No Action Alternative.

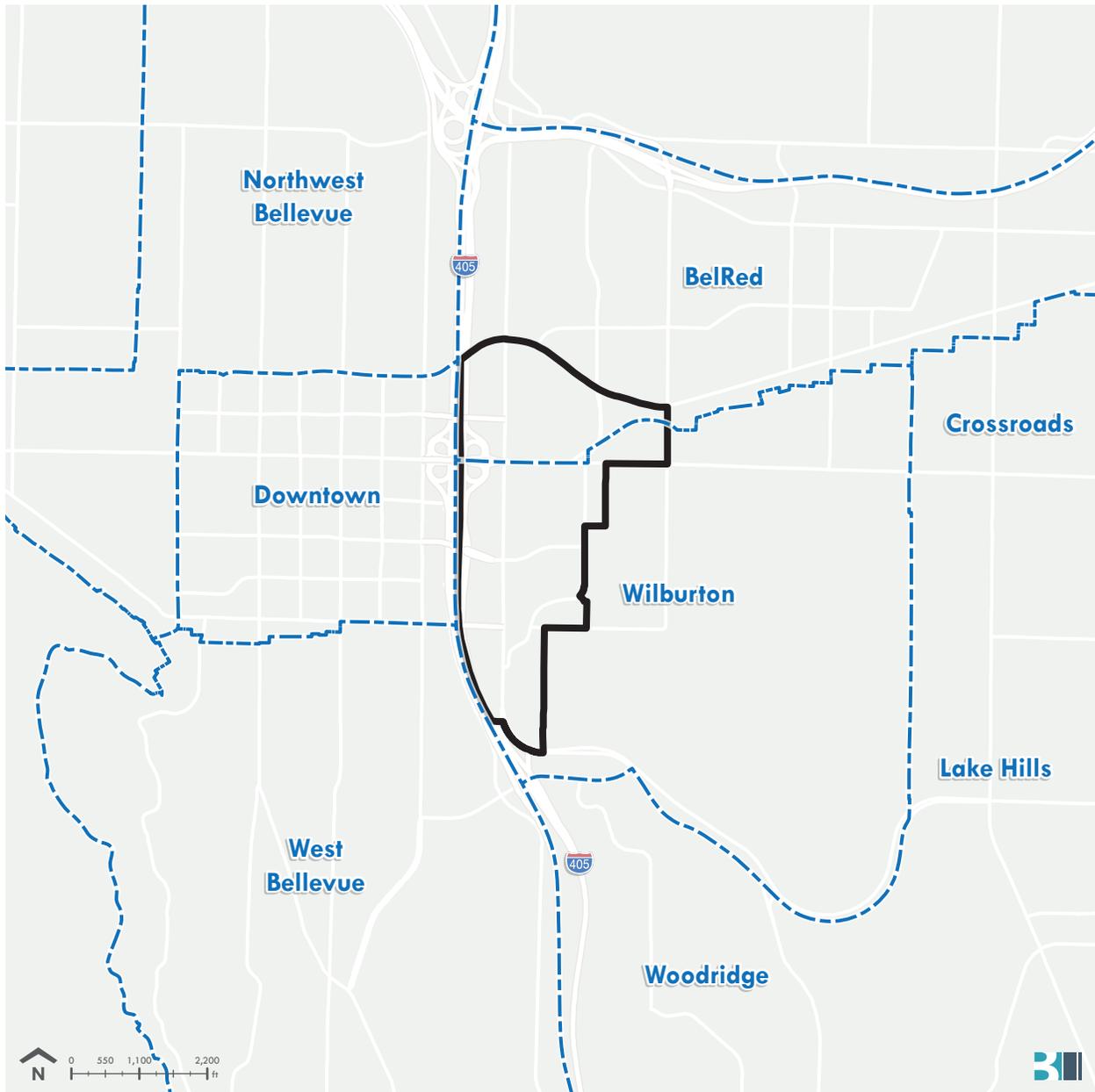
## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The Wilburton Commercial Area (Study Area) boundary overlaps two subareas, BelRed and Wilburton/NE 8th. To the west is I-405 and Downtown Bellevue. Directly north of the Study Area is BelRed and the Spring District, and to the east is the predominately single-family neighborhood of Wilburton Hill. To the south is the Woodridge neighborhood. See Exhibit 2-5.

More specifically, the Study Area is bound by NE 12th Street to the north, I-405 to the west, SE 5th Street to the south, 120th Avenue NE to the east, and a smaller area bound by NE 8th Street and 124th Avenue NE to the east. See Exhibit 2-6.

In 2023, the Study Area will have high capacity transit access with the Wilburton light rail station located north of NE 8th Street and east of the ERC. Three additional stations will serve the entire Study Area within a half-mile walkshed including the Downtown, Spring District/120th, and East Main light rail stations. See Exhibit 2-6.

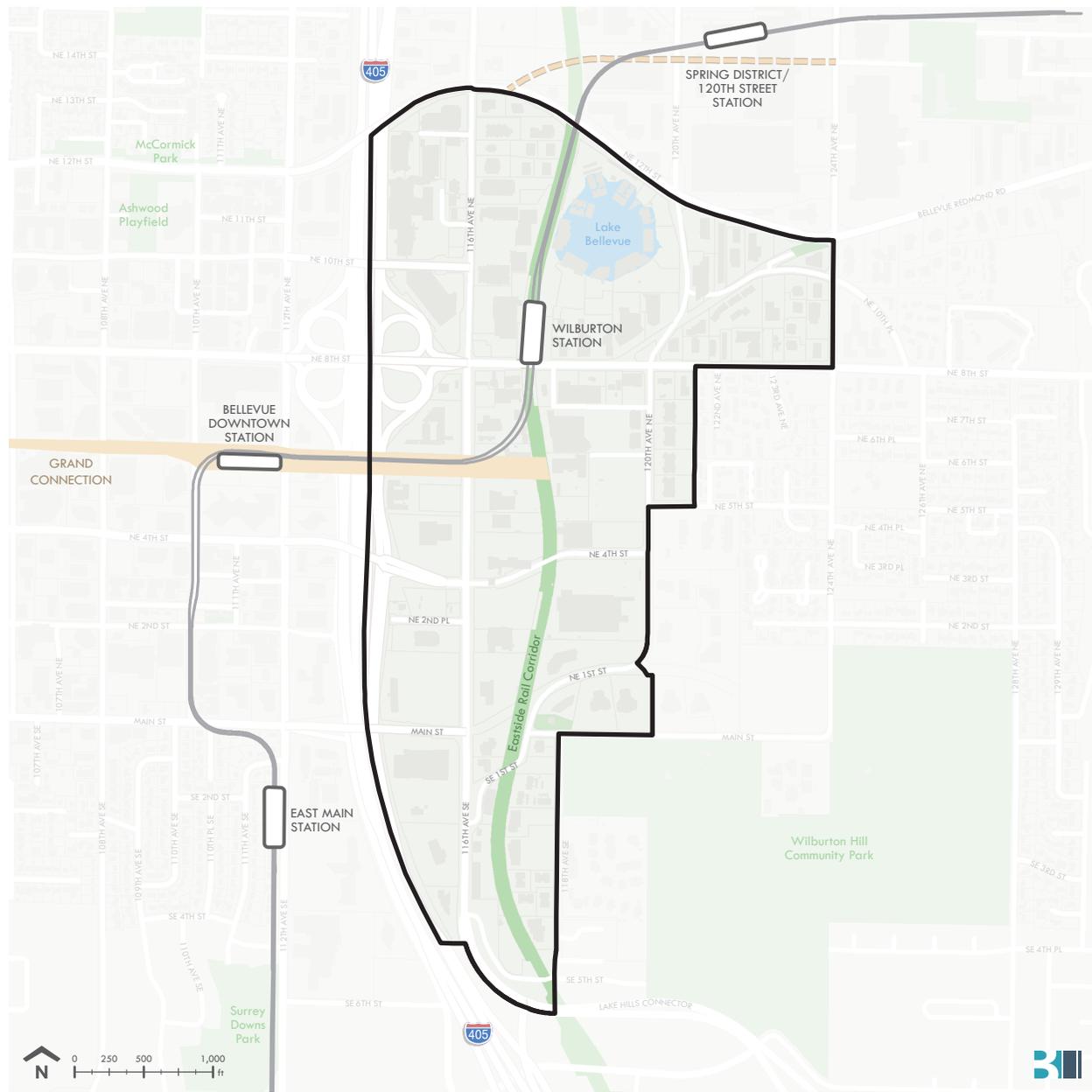
Access to I-405 is provided via the interchanges at NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street. Access to SR 520 is provided via interchanges at NE 10th Street and NE 4th Street. King County is leading an initiative to transform the former BNSF rail line into a regional trail (ERC) to form a north-south spine within the Study Area with connections to Woodinville in the north, and Renton to the south. See Exhibit 2-6.



**Exhibit 2-5** Wilburton Commercial Area Boundaries and Neighborhood Planning Areas

Source: City of Bellevue, BERK, 2017

-  Wilburton Study Area Boundary
-  Neighborhood Areas



**Exhibit 2-6** Wilburton Commercial Area Study Area

Source: City of Bellevue, BERK, 2017

-  Wilburton Study Area Boundary
-  Grand Connection
-  East Link Light Rail Stations
-  East Link Light Rail Route
-  Spring Blvd–Under Construction
-  Parks & Open Space
-  Buildings



## 2.3 OBJECTIVES AND ALTERNATIVES

### OBJECTIVES

In accordance with SEPA, this section states the proposal's objectives, specifying the purpose and need to which the proposal is responding. For a non-project action, such as plan changes or regulatory amendments, objectives can be expressed in terms of a vision and principles.

The following Bellevue City Council Principles are intended to provide consistent direction over the course of the Wilburton Commercial Area Land Use & Transportation Project.

1. **Grand Vision.** Ensure that the vision for the Wilburton project area is extraordinary and fully capitalizes on the special opportunities created by the area's outstanding location and access.
2. **Special Niche.** Create alternatives and explore innovations that will provide Wilburton an economic niche that complements and adds to the vitality of Bellevue and the Eastside.
3. **Grand Connection.** Ensure that the vision for the Grand Connection encompasses the entire corridor from the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront to the Eastside Rail Corridor, and that it positions the corridor to serve as both a memorable and transformative public space as well as a means of non-motorized transportation.
4. **Neighborhood Identity.** Develop placemaking and urban design strategies that create a strong and unique neighborhood identity for Wilburton.
5. **Emerging Opportunities.** Address changes and opportunities that have emerged since the last major update of the land use plan for Wilburton.
6. **Integrated Station Area Planning.** Integrate station area planning for the Wilburton/Hospital light rail station with the balance of the Wilburton Plan, while utilizing this station as an opportunity to establish connectivity between the two areas bisected by NE 8th Street.
7. **Community Benefit.** Create community benefit and value for the surrounding neighborhoods of Downtown, BelRed, and the greater subarea of Wilburton. Benefit and value should be



derived from connectivity, access to services, and improved urban amenities that serve all residents and businesses.

8. **Affordable Housing Opportunities.** Consider opportunities for land use changes in the area to provide for affordable housing.
9. **Impact Mitigation.** Ensure sensitivity to potential adverse impacts of change on nearby residential neighborhoods, and provide for a graceful transition between new development and established neighborhoods.
10. **Economic Vitality.** Enhance economic vitality and advance the goals of the City's Economic Development action plan.
11. **Timing.** Explore means by which key elements of the vision can be in place by the 2023 initiation of light rail service. This includes pedestrian connectivity across I-405 and NE 8th Street, as well as catalyst land use elements.
12. **Public Engagement.** Utilize effective public engagement strategies to involve diverse stakeholders in conversation about the project.

The planning process is currently being guided by a 15-member CAC, constituted by the City Council to develop the vision. The Committee is assisting in shaping the land use, transportation, and urban design vision for the planning process. The Final Environmental Impact Statement would include the CAC's final recommendations.

The Citizen Advisory Committee has identified the following vision for the Wilburton Commercial Area:

*“ The Wilburton Commercial Area is Bellevue’s next urban mixed-use community that enhances livability, promotes healthy living, supports economic vitality, and serves the needs of a diverse population. As Bellevue’s cultural and innovative hub, it serves as a regional and international destination that connects people and fosters community by leveraging its existing assets to define a unique sense of place and character. ”*

To evaluate each alternative's ability to achieve City Council Principles, performance measures have been developed and are described in Section 1.6 above, and each Chapter 3 environmental section.



## GROWTH AND LAND USE MIX

The level of growth in each alternative considers a 20-year market analysis as well as the City's Comprehensive Plan balance of growth.

- The No Action Alternative Future Baseline estimate of 4.2 million total square feet of space is based on land use estimates the City prepared for its transportation model and rely on a City distribution of Comprehensive Plan growth estimates across the City for the year 2035. The net growth is the smallest of the three alternatives evaluated at 625,636 square feet of development.
- Alternative 1 illustrates a “medium” estimate in the range of market projections. About 13.1 million square feet of total development is assumed with 9.4 million net new development above existing space, mostly in office and housing, and 8.8 million net new building space above No Action.
- Alternative 2 shows the market study “high” estimate of 20-year market demand representing 16.3 million square feet of total development. There would be an estimated 12.7 million square feet of net new development above existing with a substantial increase in office and housing space. There would be 12.1 million square feet of net development above No Action.

Ultimate space based on properties developing to the proposed zoning envelope is also shown post-2035. See Exhibit 2-7 and full buildout growth levels.

**Exhibit 2-7** Growth and Land Use Mix by Alternative, 2035 and Full Buildout

LAND USE TYPE	EXISTING	NET NEW DEVELOPMENT			TOTAL DEVELOPMENT		
		No Action Alternative	Alternative 1 (Medium)	Alternative 2 (High)	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1 (Medium)	Alternative 2 (High)
<b>Housing Square Feet</b>	250,000	85,440	3,548,600	4,800,000	335,440	3,798,600	5,050,000
Housing Units	246	89	3,700	5,000	335	3,946	5,246
<b>Office Square Feet</b>	980,000	370,299	3,807,400	5,150,000	1,350,299	4,787,400	6,130,000
<b>Retail/Commercial Square Feet</b>	955,000	126,010	533,800	722,000	1,081,010	1,488,800	1,677,000
<b>Hotel Square Feet</b>	250,000	42,904	720,900	975,000	292,904	970,900	1,225,000
Hotel Rooms	452	86	1,200	1,500	538	1,652	1,952
<b>Medical: Institutional &amp; Office Square Feet</b>	1,140,000	see office	813,300	1,100,000	1,140,000	1,953,300	2,240,000
<b>Industrial Square Feet</b>	30,000	983	0	0	30,983	30,000	30,000
<b>Square Feet 2035</b>	<b>3,605,000</b>	<b>625,636</b>	<b>9,424,000</b>	<b>12,747,000</b>	<b>4,230,636</b>	<b>13,029,000</b>	<b>16,352,000</b>
<b>Ultimate Full Buildout Post 2035 Space</b>		625,636	12,747,000	19,195,500	4,230,636	16,352,000	22,800,500

Note: Medical includes institutional and office space. Office includes commercial office space and minimal governmental space.

Source: Existing Space—City of Bellevue; Future Space—Leland Consulting Group, 2017



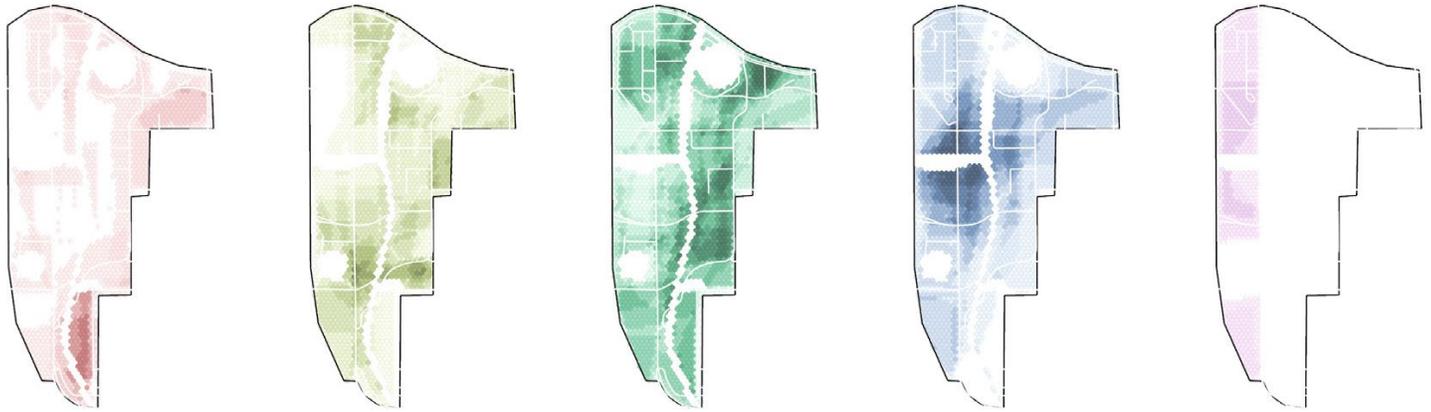
## URBAN FORM

The alternatives were developed through a series of exercises conducted by the CAC, as well as input from stakeholders and City staff. The CAC employed a transect, which provided ranges and examples for development patterns that are common throughout Bellevue, as shown in Exhibit 2-1. These ranges began at typical single-family development (B1) and had a maximum development that resembled Downtown Bellevue (B6).

The CAC engaged in discussions regarding the existing development patterns as well as planned improvements such as light rail, the ERC, the Grand Connection, and the Study Area's context. Existing development patterns show a range of heights from 35 to 55 feet south of NE 8th Street. In the area north of NE 8th Street, greater building heights are found, primarily near the Medical Institution District. This area was part of the BelRed zoning effort. In this area heights up to 200 feet are allowed under current zoning and regulations. See Exhibit 2-9.

Following these discussions and analysis, the CAC engaged in an exercise to begin envisioning the distribution of development intensity. The exercise began with annotating maps with corresponding development patterns based upon the transect provided. The results of the exercise were consolidated to identify common themes and principles of organization of density. See Exhibit 2-8.

Following the consolidation of the original exercise results, transects were reviewed through a three-dimensional visualization tool to allow the CAC to better understand the spatial relationship of their alternatives, including the relationship to surrounding development patterns such as Downtown, BelRed, and Wilburton Hill and to better understand the relationship to changes in topography and transportation networks such as transit stations and arterial road networks. The CAC conducted a series of refinements based on the additional analysis to develop the alternatives included as part of this analysis. To develop a cohesive long-term vision for the Wilburton Commercial Area, the Committee considered the Study Area in its entirety, including development beyond the planning horizon of 2035.



**Exhibit 2-8** Example of Consolidated Results of CAC Exercise on Density Distribution

Source: NBBJ, 2017



**Exhibit 2-9** Approximate Existing Building Form: About 3.6 Million Square Feet

Source: NBBJ, 2017



## No Action Alternative

Under current zoning, the No Action Alternative would retain similar building forms as found today, with potential increases in intensity east of the Medical Institution District along 116th Avenue NE, and modest increases south of the Spring District on NE 12th Street. See Exhibit 2-10.



**Exhibit 2-10** No Action Alternative Building Form, 2035: About 4.2 Million Square Feet

Source: NBBJ, 2017

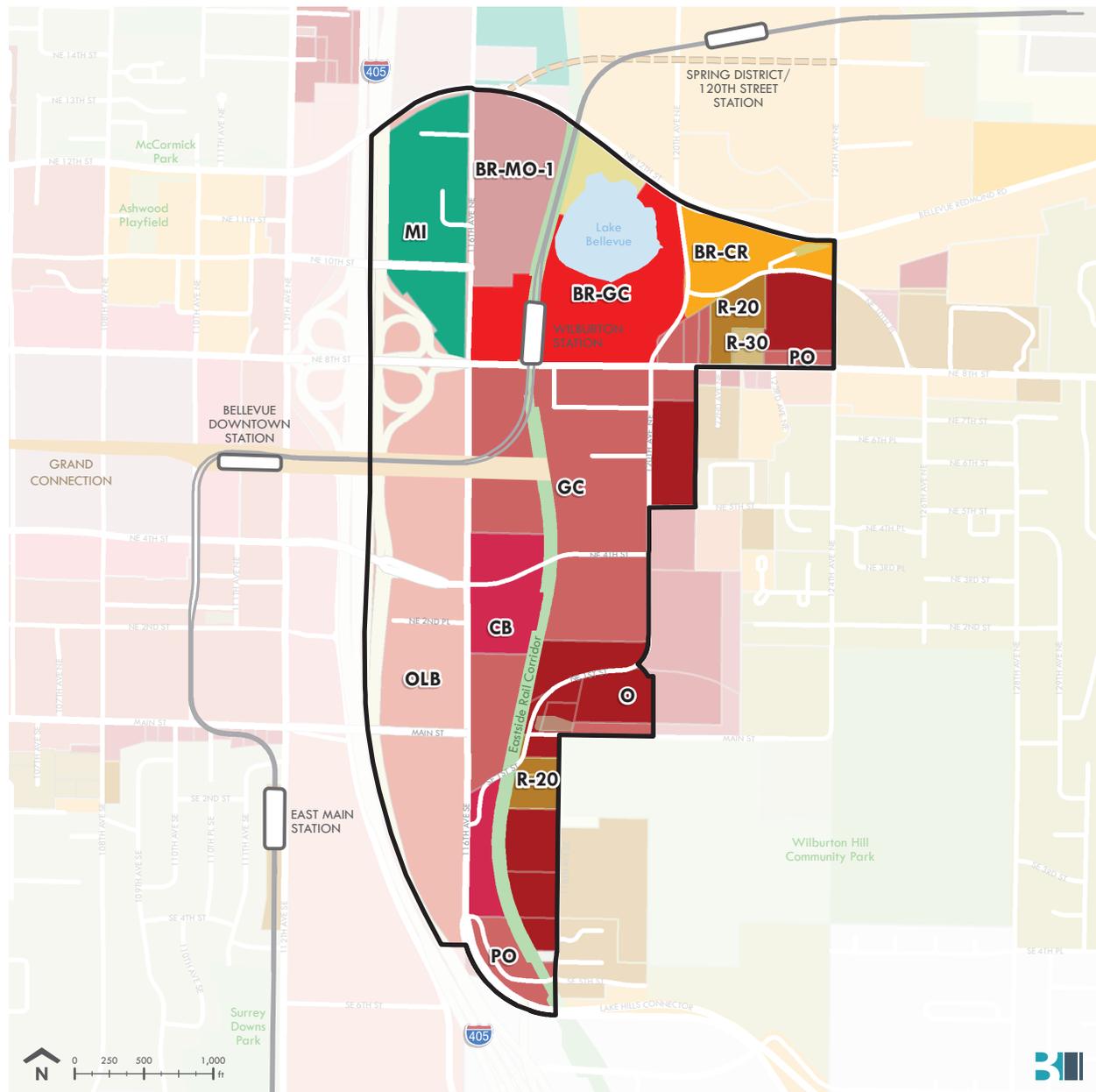


The predominant zoning under the No Action Alternative is General Commercial, though cumulatively the variations of office zones are also prominent. Limited residential zoning also exists. The northern portion of the Study Area includes parcels that were included as part of the BelRed Corridor Project. These areas represent the greatest opportunities for increased density upon redevelopment under the No Action Alternative. Building heights east of 116th Avenue NE and west of the ERC could range up to 160 feet. Acres in each zoning district under the No Action Alternative are shown in Exhibit 2-11.

**Exhibit 2-11** No Action Alternative Zoning Acres

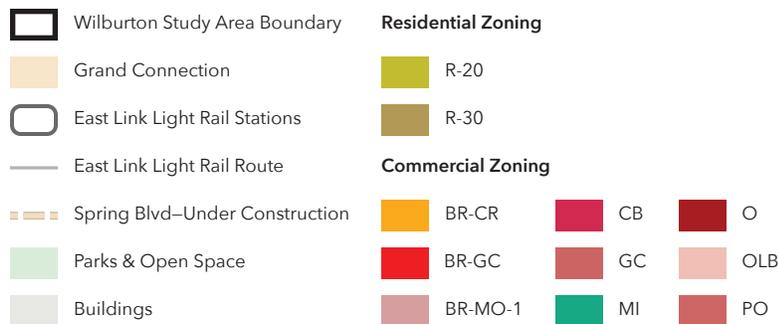
TYPE OF DISTRICT	TOTAL ACRES	PARCEL ACRES
<b>Commercial/Mixed Use</b>		
BR-CR	11	8
BR-GC	32	29
BR-MO-1	19	17
CB	17	13
GC	63	54
MI	21	19
O	34	30
OLB	71	38
PO	9	4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>Residential</b>		
BR-R	6.6	6
R-20	8	7
R-30	1	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>225</b>

Source: City of Bellevue, NBBJ, BERK, 2017



**Exhibit 2-12** No Action Alternative Zoning Map

Source: City of Bellevue 2016; BERK, 2017





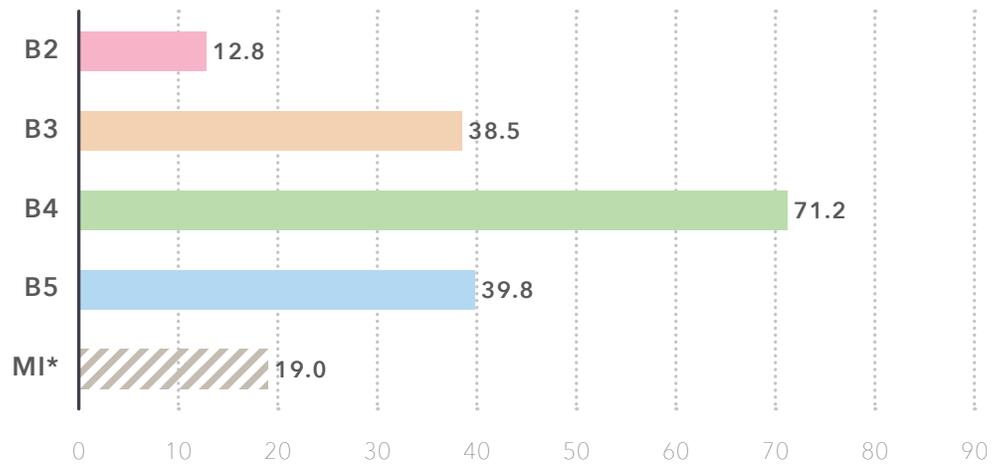
## Alternative 1

The following graphics represent results of the CAC exercise and refinement using existing Bellevue development typologies (transects). Alternative 1 could create a mixed-use urban form. If most properties were to achieve the development potential in Alternative 1, the result could be about 13.1 million square feet by 2035, and 16.3 million square feet of development at full buildout. This development could occur both during and after the 2035 planning period. Under Alternative 1, building heights range from 35 to 250 feet. General Urban form (B4), at a range of 120 to 160 feet in height, predominates across most parcels. Near the light rail station and the intersection of the Grand Connection and ERC, Urban Center (B5) provides for more intense development. This intent is to maximize opportunity around future transportation investments that reduce the dependency of automobiles. In the northwest, MI zoning would be retained where the current medical



**Exhibit 2-13** Alternative 1 Building Form: ~16.3 Million SF Ultimate Space (Shown), 13.1 Million SF in 2035

Source: NBBJ, 2017



**Exhibit 2-14** Alternative 1 Transects by Acreage

*\* MI is located in the northwest corner of the Study Area.*

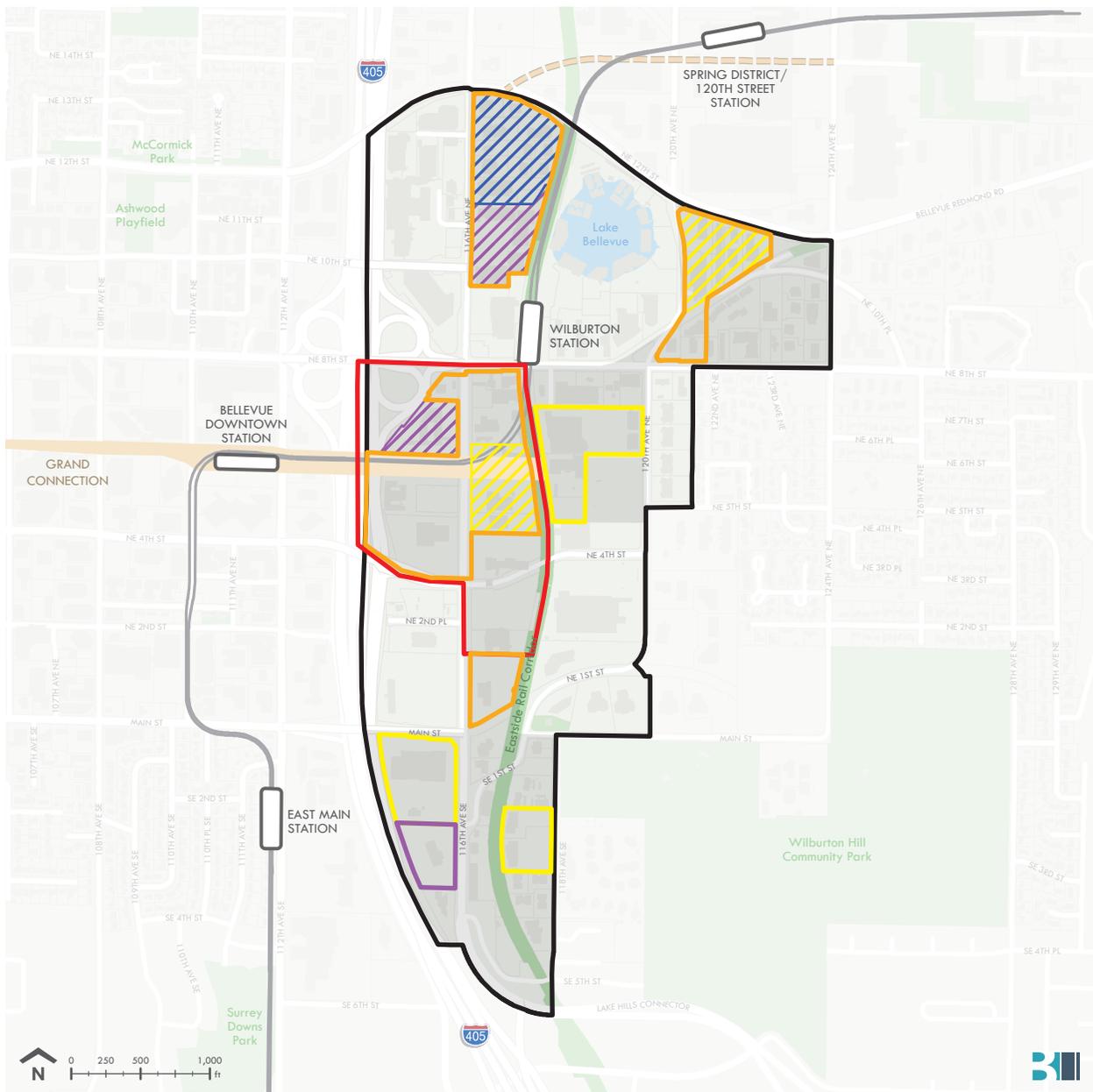
*Source: NBBJ, BERK, 2017*

institutions are located and would not be increased. The area immediately east of the Medical Institution District, along 116th Avenue NE, would also retain much of its existing zoning from the BelRed planning process with the exception of properties located directly west of the light rail station. Height and density would begin to diminish within the Study Area to the east and to the south as a transition towards the Wilburton Hill neighborhood and the Wilburton Hill Park.

Within the 2035 planning period, growth could potentially be phased on parcels considered more likely to redevelop, given the ratio of building to land values and less intense uses as evaluated by the City in its 2015 buildable lands analysis and in the Wilburton Commercial Area Market Analysis (Leland Consulting Group 2016). The anticipated development could be about 13.1 million square feet by 2035. Phasing could ensure that the development of the Wilburton Commercial Area does not exceed that evaluated as part of the 2035 planning horizon.

For purposes of this EIS, the redevelopable properties are assumed to change to a pattern of denser housing, office, and retail near the future Wilburton light rail station. Other redevelopable sites are also considered for office, housing, and hotel along the ERC and 116th Avenue NE.

Under Alternative 1, the areas of retail could be concentrated where the greatest densities occur, south of NE 8th Street and the transit station, and north of NE 4th Street, between the ERC and I-405.



**Exhibit 2-15** Alternative 1 Land Use Distribution, 2035

Source: City of Bellevue, BERK, 2017





Residential uses could be distributed throughout the Study Area but mainly away from the core of the Study Area between NE 8th Street, NE 4th Street and west of the ERC. Office uses could be concentrated north of NE 4th Street. Hotel uses could anchor the northern and southern portions of the Study Area in response to proximity to the Medical Institution District and light rail stations. See Exhibit 2-15. The CAC is currently engaged in more detailed conversations regarding potential districts and the concentration of particular uses within them.

## Alternative 2

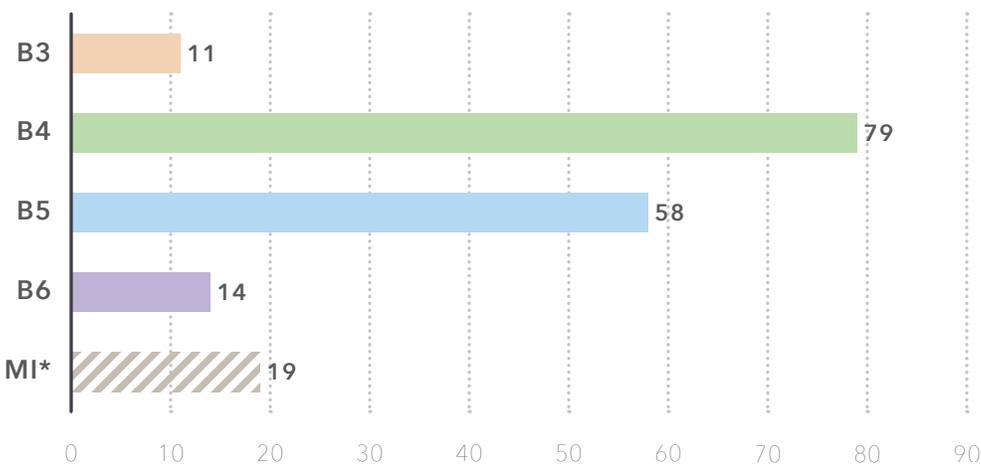
Alternative 2 proposes the greatest change in future urban form from current conditions and current plans. If all sites were to develop to the full capacity per the proposed transects, there could be an increase in intensity across the Study Area, with most concentrated development at the Wilburton light rail station and along the ERC and 116th Avenue NE. The total building space could equal 16.3 million square feet by 2035, and 22.8 million square feet at full buildout. This development would occur both during and after the 2035 planning period. Building heights range from 70 to 450 feet.

General Urban (B4) predominates in extent, but Urban Center (B5) and Urban Core (B6) are in proximity to the station, 116th Avenue NE, Grand Connection, and the ERC and occupy greater areas than in Alternative 1. Alternative 2 focuses on creating density along the 116th Avenue NE corridor, envisioned as a grand boulevard. Heights and densities would also diminish closer to the Wilburton Hill Neighborhood and Wilburton Hill Park, but to a lesser degree than under Alternative 1. Similar to Alternative 1, the Medical Institution District would retain its existing zoning. A smaller portion east of 116th Avenue NE and north of NE 8th Street would retain its existing BelRed zoning than under Alternative 1, isolated to properties north of the existing Design Market development.



**Exhibit 2-16** Alternative 2 Building Form: About 22.8 Million SF Ultimate Space (Shown), 16.3 Million SF in 2035

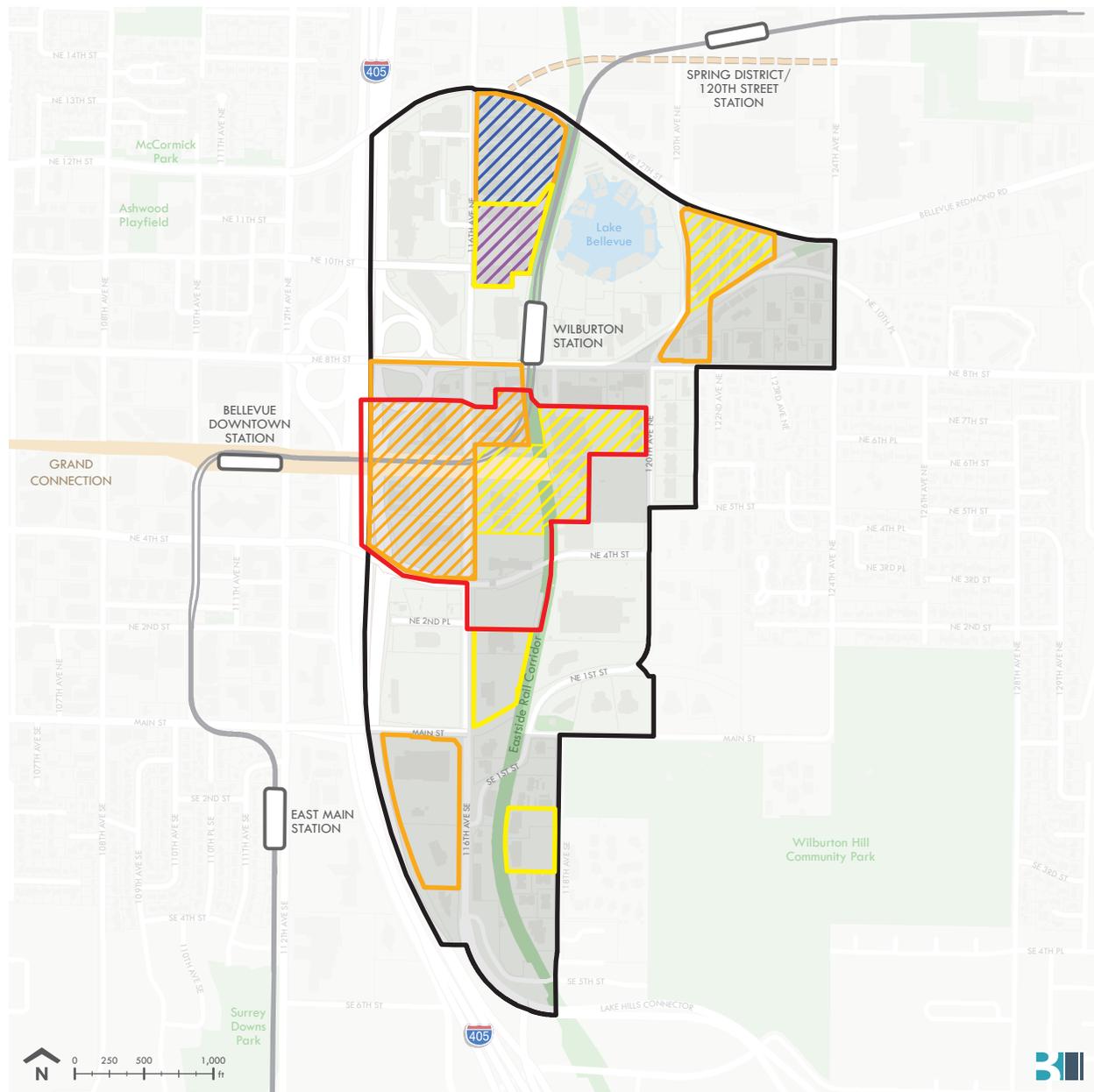
Source: NBBJ, 2017



**Exhibit 2-17** Alternative 2 Transects by Acreage

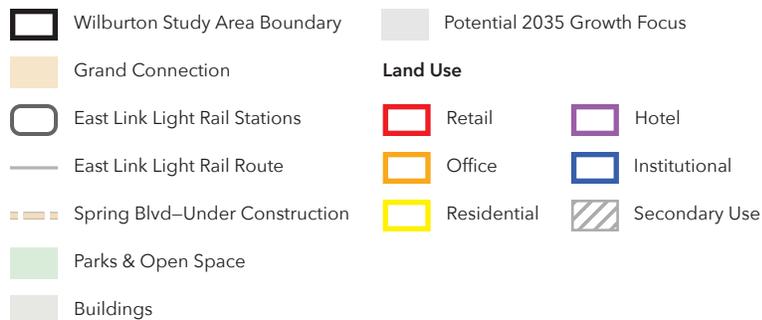
\* MI is located in the northwest corner of the Study Area.

Source: NBBJ, BERK, 2017



**Exhibit 2-18** Alternative 2 Land Use Distribution, 2035

Source: City of Bellevue, BERK, 2017





Within the 2035 planning period, growth is anticipated to occur first on redevelopable parcels (given building-to-land values) and present less intense uses, as described for Alternative 1. Under Alternative 2, a slightly different land use distribution is anticipated, with most in and around the future Wilburton light rail station as well as the ERC and 116th Avenue NE. The anticipated development during the 2035 period would be about 16.3 million square feet. Phasing could ensure that the development of the Study Area does not exceed that evaluated as part of the 2035 planning horizon.

Under Alternative 1, the area's retail is likely to be concentrated where the greatest densities occur, south of NE 8th Street and the transit station, and north of NE 4th Street, between the ERC and I-405. Alternative 2 assumes a slightly different configuration of retail concentration, existing further south of NE 8th Street than Alternative 1, and across the ERC to properties further east. Alternative 2 also considers a greater concentration of office uses south of NE 4th Street, than Alternative 1. Residential uses could be more evenly distributed throughout the Study Area. See Exhibit 2-18. The CAC is currently engaged in more detailed conversations regarding potential districts and the concentration of particular uses within them.



## MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

### Assumed Transportation Improvements

The No Action Alternative includes transportation network assumptions that are currently included in City plans. These projects are:

- NE 6th Street extended from I-405 southbound to 120th Avenue NE
- 116th Avenue NE remains in its current cross-section
- A pedestrian and cyclist bridge carrying the ERC over NE 8th Street (King County-led initiative)
- An at-grade, signalized crossing of the ERC at NE 4th Street

Outside of the Study Area, key transportation network assumptions include:

- I-405:
  - » Southbound braid from SR 520 to NE 10th Street
  - » I-405 and 132nd Street (Kirkland) half diamond ramps to the north
  - » Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes
- SR 520:
  - » Corridor widening and transit improvements between I-405 and I-5
  - » Eastbound slip ramp under 148th Avenue NE to 152nd Avenue NE
  - » Ramps to/from east at 124 Avenue NE (complete full interchange)
- I-90:
  - » Removal of reversible express lanes (Mercer Island)
  - » PM Peak period shoulder lane eastbound from Eastgate to Issaquah
- ST2: International District/Chinatown to Overlake Transit Center LRT
- ST3: Overlake Transit Center to Downtown Redmond LRT and I-405 Bus Rapid Transit from Lynnwood to Burien

### Key Decisions

While much of the transportation network within the Study Area is committed—for example East Link light rail, the ERC, and most arterial cross-sections—there are some key decisions that would be influenced by the Wilburton Commercial Area Land Use & Transportation Plan. Those decisions are the NE 6th Street extension, the cross-section of


**Exhibit 2-19** Transportation Network Assumptions

LOCATION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2
<b>NE 6th St Extension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To 120th</li> <li>To 116th</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To 120th</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To 120th</li> <li>To 116th</li> </ul>
<b>NE 4th St/ERC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At grade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At grade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At grade</li> </ul>
<b>NE 8th St/ERC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overcrossing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overcrossing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overcrossing</li> <li>At grade crossing</li> </ul>
<b>116th Ave NE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 lanes with buffered bike lanes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 lanes with buffered bike lanes</li> </ul>
<b>Throughout Study Area: New Street Grid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Exhibit 2-22</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Exhibit 2-22</li> </ul>

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2017

116th Avenue NE, and the ERC crossings at NE 8th and NE 4th Streets. The way these improvements would be matched to alternatives is identified in Exhibit 2-19.

## NE 6th Street Extension

As described in the NE 6th Street Extension (I-405 to 120th Avenue NE) Design Report (August 2012), the NE 6th St Extension will provide a new crossing over the I-405 northbound lanes, primarily for HOV, transit, and non-motorized modes of travel. It is intended to relieve congestion on parallel streets, provide direct access from the east side of I-405 to the Bellevue Transit Center for improved bus circulation, and better connect Downtown Bellevue and the Wilburton area.

Under all three alternatives, the NE 6th Street Extension to 120th Avenue NE was assumed. In addition, operations analyses was conducted for the No Action Alternative and Alternative 2 to test how a NE 6th Street extension to 116th Avenue NE would perform. Because these two scenarios represent the high and low ends of potential traffic volumes, Alternative 1's impacts would fall within these bookends though it was not explicitly tested.

To provide additional information, operations analyses are conducted for the No Action Alternative and Alternative 2 to test how a NE 6th Street extension to 116th Avenue NE would perform.

The purpose of testing different transportation options is to consider how regional traffic would respond to different extensions and to consider the balance of regional mobility, local mobility, and feasibility of improvements.



## NE 4th Street/ERC and NE 8th Street/ERC

The Eastside Rail Corridor Trail will be 16.7 miles of regional trail connecting Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville, and Redmond. It is part of a larger 42-mile Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) stretching from King to Snohomish County with a collaborative vision to develop options for non-motorized use, transit, and utilities. The trail will link commercial districts, neighborhoods, employment, and transit along with major individual trails crossing the region.

The Wilburton segment of the ERC Trail begins at I-90 and extends to 108th Ave NE in Kirkland. Multiple highway crossings, a new bridge across I-405 (south of and outside of the Study Area boundary), and integration with the planned East Link light rail line add complexity to the project. South of the Study Area, the ERC will have a connection to the Mountains to Sound Greenway/I-90 Trail that extends into Seattle and a scenic crossing at the historic Wilburton Trestle. The ERC will provide accessible bicycle and pedestrian travel through the Study Area with connections to other modes along the route.

The ERC interface with NE 8th Street is currently planned to be a bridge rather than an at-grade crossing. The CAC wishes to enhance connectivity and forego (or supplement) another elevated structure. Thus, under Alternative 2, this EIS considers the possibility of a new pedestrian signal at an at-grade crossing of the ERC at NE 8th Street.

The ERC interface with NE 4th is planned as a signalized at-grade crossing. The CAC considered both an at-grade and bridge crossing, rating them similarly, but responded to concerns that if both NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street were bridge crossings, it would limit the at grade length of the ERC (330 feet of at-grade experience versus 880 feet of at-grade experience) and limit interface with development to the west (e.g. retail).

## 116th Avenue NE Cross-section Revisions

The current 116th Avenue NE cross-section (and No Action Alternative) focuses on the movement of vehicles and provides relatively narrow sidewalks without a continuous street tree canopy. Alternatives 1 and 2 would modify the cross-section for 116th Avenue NE to include buffered bike lanes and wider sidewalks with street trees. This cross-section would support a local-access non-motorized corridor parallel with the regional connections provided by the ERC.



**Exhibit 2-20** Existing 116th Avenue NE Cross-section

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2017



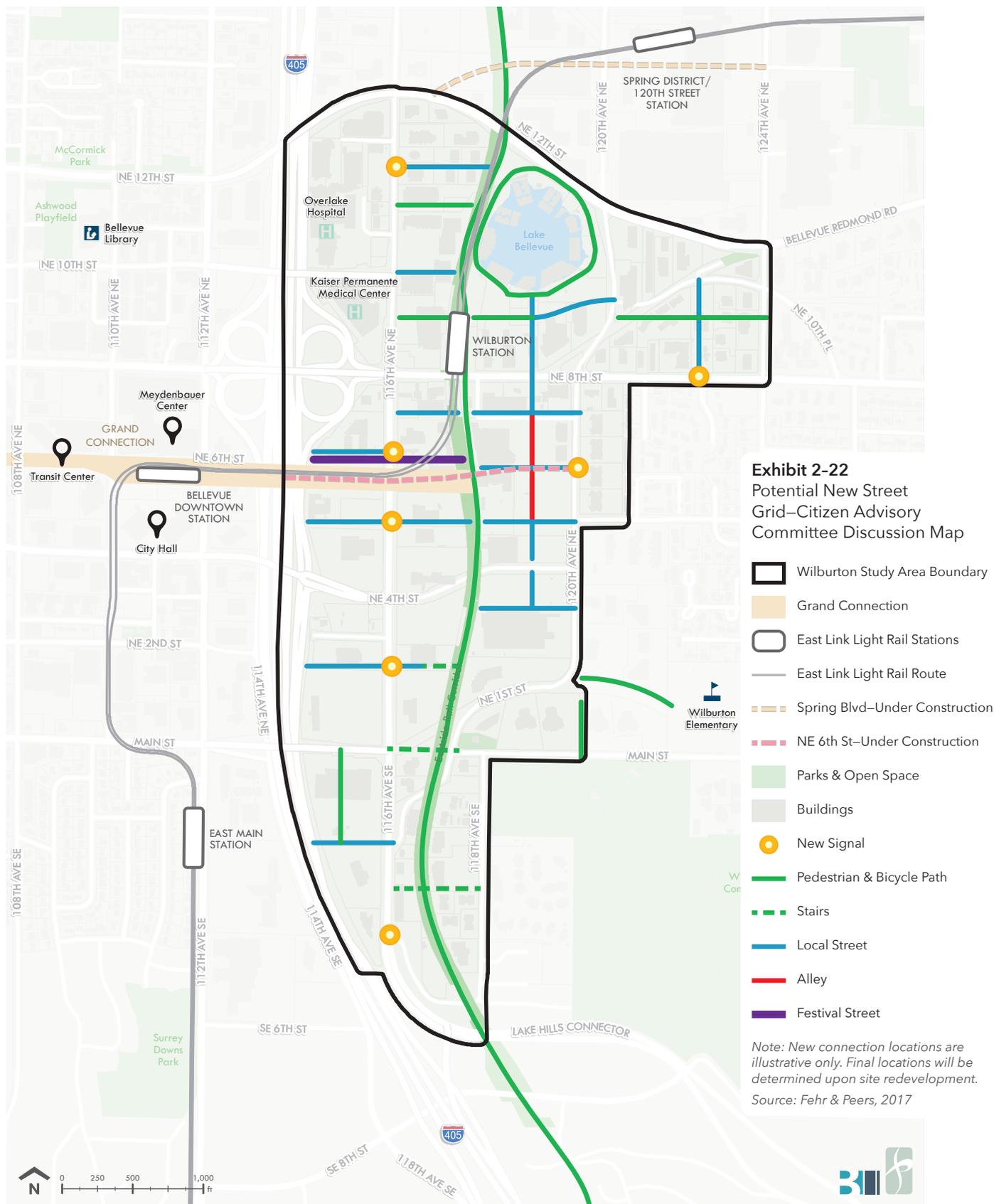
**Exhibit 2-21** Potential Revised 116th Avenue NE Cross-section—Alternatives 1 and 2

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2017



## New Street Grid

The project team worked with the CAC to develop a concept for a finer-grained transportation grid that would be implemented as redevelopment occurs under Alternatives 1 and 2. Within the Study Area the existing “superblock” style street grid would be broken down with additional local streets and improved pedestrian/bicycle connections. The transportation grid concept proposes a combination of new local streets, pedestrian paths, and alleys to provide a more permeable network. The new grid would allow more direct travel within Wilburton, particularly for pedestrians and bicycles. Signals would be implemented at arterial intersections, resulting in a higher intersection density and more frequent crossing opportunities than with the No Action Alternative. Additionally, there would be unique environments created by festival streets and alleys that would serve as third places and multi-modal connections. A discussion map for the Wilburton Commercial Area CAC shows potential new street connections—see Exhibit 2-22.





## GRAND CONNECTION

The Grand Connection is planned as a signature urban connection between Meydenbauer Bay at Lake Washington and the ERC in the Study Area that will focus on improvements to the non-motorized network. These improvements include elements of placemaking and public space, connectivity and mobility, art and culture, and overall experiential quality of the urban environment from the perspective of a pedestrian or cyclist. A description of the concept is found in the June 2017 Draft Grand Connection Framework Plan:

“ The concept of the Grand Connection seeks to connect Bellevue’s waterfront, beginning at Meydenbauer Bay, and through its dynamic Downtown, connecting to the Wilburton Commercial Area across Interstate 405, and interfacing with the Eastside Rail Corridor. ”

The visioning process for the Grand Connection was separated into two sequences of work. The first sequence focused on the existing infrastructure of the route between Meydenbauer Bay Park and the west side of I-405. The second sequence of work focused on the crossing of I-405 and its relationship to the ERC and Wilburton Commercial Area. This EIS only evaluates the segment that crosses I-405 and interfaces with the ERC and Study Area.

The Grand Connection options considered for the I-405 and Wilburton Commercial Area interface range from a sculptural

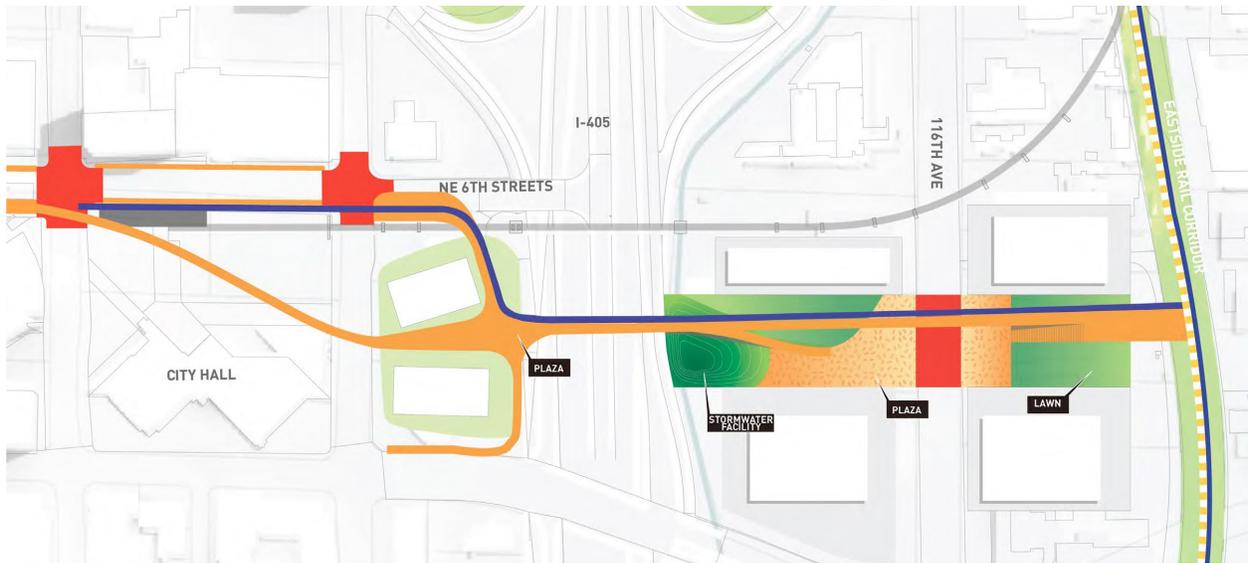


**Exhibit 2-23** Grand Connection I-405 Option A: Sculptural Bridge

Source: Balmori Associates, 2017



bridge that capitalizes on existing infrastructure assets, a signature linear bridge, and the creation of a public space with a partial lid over I-405 between NE 6th Street and NE 4th Street. These options are evaluated in this EIS with respect to their compatibility with each alternative and for their contribution to cumulative beneficial and adverse environmental impacts. Ultimately the Grand Connection will be the subject of a separate evaluation and EIS process.



**Exhibit 2-24** Grand Connection I-405 Option B: Linear Bridge

Source: Balmori Associates, 2017



**Exhibit 2-25** Grand Connection Option C: Lid Park

Source: Balmori Associates, 2017

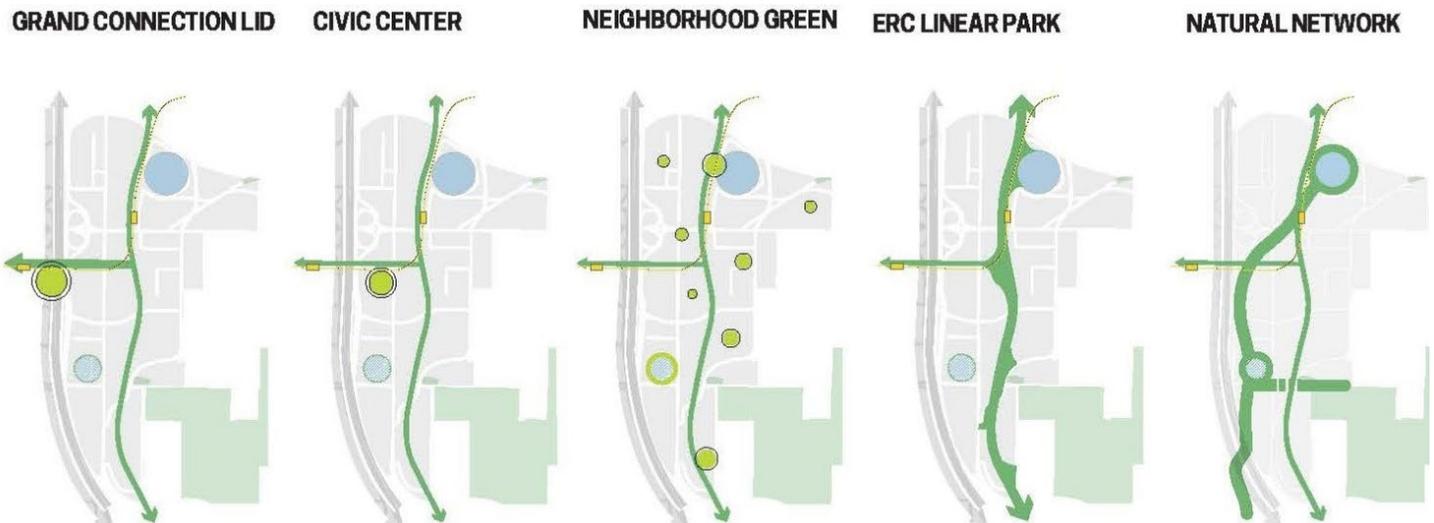


## PUBLIC SPACE

At the programmatic level, a detailed public space plan has not yet been formed. The conceptual elements considered by the CAC and property owners during scoping included:

- Grand Connection Lid: A lid concept, over I-405, creating a public space and connecting Downtown and the Wilburton Commercial Area. (See Grand Connection Option C above.)
- Civic Center: A large public space in the Study Area.
- Neighborhood Green: Multiple smaller public spaces, including plaza spaces and neighborhood parks.
- ERC Linear Park: Expanding the ERC with nodes of activity along the linear park including a connection to the Grand Connection.
- Natural Network: Enhancing the natural systems by enhancing, exposing, and utilizing the natural systems such as the lake, wetland, and creek as amenities.

All options are qualitatively evaluated for general compatibility with the alternatives and general feasibility. The options are also not to be considered mutually exclusive, but would likely consist of a layering and integration of each option.



**Exhibit 2-26** Public Space Options

Source: NBBJ, 2017



## POLICY AND CODE AMENDMENT CONCEPTS

To put the land use concepts into effect, amendments to policies in the Comprehensive Plan and regulations in the Land Use Code would be included as part of the proposal. Following are elements of the policy and code proposals.

- **Policy:** Amendments to the Wilburton and BelRed Subarea Plans and the Comprehensive Transportation Project List may be needed as the initial implementation steps to many code-related and infrastructure projects.
- **Land use:** The Land Use Code would be amended to address district-specific development standards for the Wilburton Commercial Area, but not for the Wilburton Subarea in its entirety. Land Use Code amendments would also cover portions of BelRed that overlap with the Wilburton Commercial Area, north of NE 8th Street. While land uses may be similar to the current code, there would be requirements/incentives for achieving mixed-use transit-oriented development around the Wilburton light rail station and other non-motorized connections, plus housing in general and affordable housing in particular. Floor area ratios and building heights would be modified to fit transects of the selected and refined land use concept.
- **Urban design:** Design standards and guidelines specific to the Wilburton area would address building form and materials, upper story stepbacks, massing size, building/sidewalk relationships, and transitional standards along boundaries with lower intensity uses, etc.
- **Parking:** Parking standards would apply minimum and maximum parking stall ratios and require no or minimal parking near the East Link station where transit-oriented development is proposed. Most parking would be in the form of underbuilding/structured parking, except within low intensity transections such as B2 or B3.
- **Affordable housing:** The City would encourage affordable housing by increasing allowed building heights and densities as follows:
  - » Under the No Action Alternative, the City would continue the multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program adopted in 2015. Housing projects in targeted areas (including the Wilburton Commercial Area) receive a tax exemption



in exchange for setting aside units for income-eligible households as follows: Ten percent of all dwelling units in the project are affordable to household incomes 60 percent (or less) of the King County median income, adjusted for household size; and another 10 percent are affordable to household incomes 70 percent (or less) of the median. Any unit of 300 square feet or less must be affordable to household incomes 45 percent (or less) of the median.<sup>1</sup> Under Alternatives 1 and 2, changes to the MFTE program would be made consistent with Bellevue's Affordable Housing Strategy to encourage developer participation. The City would also seek to expand the entire Wilburton Commercial Area as eligible for the MFTE program as part of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

- » In exchange for allowing developers to construct larger and taller buildings, the City would require that the developer either 1) create rental units affordable to people at 80 percent of median income (earning 4.6 square feet of additional building area per square foot), 2) create ownership housing (e.g. condominiums) affordable to people at 100 percent of median income (earning 7.2 square feet of additional building area per square foot), or 3) pay into a fund to build affordable housing elsewhere. This set of incentives would be added to Wilburton under Alternatives 1 and 2, and the current code that does not incorporate incentives would continue under the No Action Alternative.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://planning.bellevuewa.gov/community-development/housing/multi-family-tax-exemption/>.



## ALTERNATIVE COMPARISONS

Land use, transportation, public space, and code features appear in the table below, along with their inclusion in the alternatives.

**Exhibit 2-27** Summary of Features for Each Alternative

FEATURE	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2
<b>Net Growth in Building Space</b>	625,636	9,424,000	12,747,000
<b>Total Building Space 2035</b>	4,230,636	13,029,000	16,352,000
<b>Ultimate Building Space Post-2035</b>	4,230,636	16,352,000	22,800,500
<b>Zoning / Transect Mix</b>	Typically, General Commercial and Office-related zones with small amounts of housing in suburban forms. Heights range from 35-100 feet in most instances, except in the northwest, where heights of up to 200 feet are possible.	Greater increase in office and housing uses, as well as retail and hotel. Building heights range from 35 to 250 feet. General Urban (B4) form at 120-160 feet predominates. Near the transit station and the intersection of the Grand Connection and ERC, Urban Center (B5) provides intense development that could reach heights between 200 and 250 feet.	Similar to Alternative 1, with more increase in all uses, particularly office and housing. Height ranges from 70 to 450 feet. General Urban (B4) predominates in extent but Urban Center (B5) and Urban Core (B6) are in proximity to the station and along 116th Avenue NE and the ERC. The greatest intensity of 300 to 450 feet would occur west of 116th Avenue NE and between NE 4th and NE 8th Street.
<b>Transportation</b>	Planned Network  See "Multimodal Transportation" Section above.	New multimodal connections per "Multimodal Transportation" Section above.	
<b>Grand Connection</b>	No connection in neighborhood	Test compatibility of different Grand Connection concepts with land use and transportation elements.	
<b>Public Space Network</b>	Current Plans	Test compatibility of different public space concepts with land use and transportation elements.	
<b>Policy and Code Proposals</b>	No change to plans and code	Amend Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, and embed affordable housing and urban design strategies.	

Source: City of Bellevue, BERK, 2017



## ALTERNATIVES

The intent of the Draft EIS alternatives is to compare environmental impacts of three alternatives and to provide that information to City decision makers, citizens, and other agencies. The preferred alternative and final plans that will ultimately be adopted may not be exactly one of the EIS alternatives as defined in this document, but will necessarily fall within the range of the alternatives analyzed in the EIS.

It is likely that, because of additional evaluation by the City and community, the City will continue to modify the Wilburton Commercial Area proposed plans and regulations. In that case, the City may evaluate preferred concepts in the Final EIS. As described, the City would ultimately adopt a final plan that is within the range of the alternatives analyzed in the EIS.

## 2.4 PURPOSE OF THIS EIS

This EIS provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis of environmental impacts associated with the Wilburton Commercial Area Land Use & Transportation Plan proposal and alternatives. The purpose of this EIS is to assist the public and City of Bellevue decision makers in considering future growth, multimodal transportation improvements, and policy/code proposals appropriate in the Wilburton Commercial Area.

## 2.5 SEPA PROCESS

### PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Scoping is a process intended to identify the range of issues to be considered and evaluated of every EIS on the probable significant adverse impacts and reasonable alternatives, including mitigation measures. The City issued a Scoping notice in late March 2017 with a 21-day comment period lasting through mid-April. One comment letter was received addressing fish passage and stormwater retrofits. The letter was from the Muckleshoot Tribe and has been considered in the Water Resources and Ecosystems topics of this EIS. See Appendix A.



A Final EIS will include responses to public comments received during the 45-day comment period that follows issuance of this Draft EIS. See the Fact Sheet for the methods to submit comments.

## PRIOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Final EIS and Record of Decision in 2011 addressed East Link light rail, including stations serving Mercer Island, south Bellevue, downtown Bellevue, BelRed, and Redmond's Overlake area. Bellevue stations included the Wilburton station. Relevant information from the 2011 Final EIS was considered in the preparation of this EIS and is hereby incorporated by reference.

A Draft and Final EIS (2007) were prepared for the Bel-Red Corridor Project. A portion of the Bel-Red Corridor Study Area overlaps the Wilburton Study Area and includes areas around Lake Bellevue and east of the Medical Institution District. Relevant information from the 2007 Final EIS was considered in the preparation of this EIS and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Two Draft EIS documents were prepared for Phase 1 (January 28, 2016) and Phase 2 (May 8, 2017) of the Energize Eastside project on behalf of the Cities of Bellevue, Newcastle, Redmond and Renton. The Energize Eastside program includes options within the Wilburton Study Area that would introduce new 230-kv transmission lines into areas where they do not currently occur. The Draft EIS documents were considered in the preparation of this EIS and is hereby incorporated by reference.

The development of the Overlake Hospital area was anticipated in the "Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Overlake Hospital Medical Center Master Development Plan" published in 1999. The EIS alternatives reinforce the recently developed Medical District evaluated in that EIS and is hereby incorporated by reference.

## LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

SEPA requires government officials to consider the environmental consequences of actions they are about to take and to consider better or less damaging ways to accomplish those proposed actions. They must consider whether the proposed action will have a probable significant adverse environmental impact on elements of the natural and built environment.



This EIS provides a programmatic analysis of the Wilburton Area Land Use & Transportation Project proposals. The adoption of comprehensive plans, areawide zoning, development regulations, or other long-range planning activities is classified by SEPA as a non-project action (i.e., actions that are different or broader than a single site-specific project, such as plans, policies, and programs (WAC 197-11-774)). An EIS for a non-project proposal does not require site-specific analyses; instead, the EIS discusses impacts and alternatives appropriate to the scope of the non-project proposal and to the level of planning for the proposal (WAC 197-11-442).

## **INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This EIS has been developed pursuant to the SEPA/GMA provisions of WAC 197-11-210 integration. This means that the environmental review is integrated with the Wilburton Commercial Area planning and decision-making process. The process has included the development of alternatives by the CAC during the scoping period, and the consideration of environmental issues during CAC plan development efforts, such as the use of the Draft EIS to facilitate the development of CAC preferred proposals.

## **PHASED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

SEPA allows phased review where the sequence of a proposal is from a programmatic document, such as an EIS addressing a comprehensive plan or development regulations, to other documents that are narrower in scope, such as those prepared for site-specific, project-level analysis (WAC 197-11-060(5)). The City of Bellevue is using phased review in its environmental analysis of the Wilburton proposals.

Additional environmental review will occur as other project or non-project actions are proposed to the City in the future. Phased environmental review may consider specific development proposals, capital investments, or similar actions. Future environmental review could occur in the form of Supplemental EISs, SEPA addenda, or determinations of non-significance. An agency may use previously prepared environmental documents to evaluate proposed actions, alternatives, or environmental impacts. The proposals may be the same as or different than those analyzed in the existing documents (WAC 197-11-600[2]).



## 2.6 BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF DELAYING THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposal includes the adoption of amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, and Zoning Map for future development in the Wilburton Commercial Area. Delaying implementation of the Proposal would delay the potential impacts identified in this Draft EIS, including a more intense land use pattern, increases in vehicle trips, and higher demand for public services and utilities.

If the Proposal is not adopted, mixed-use development would be less likely to occur. Generally, mixed-use development in an infill urban setting tends to support transit and non-motorized travel and allows for growth where there is existing infrastructure and minimal environmentally sensitive areas. Adverse impacts associated with infill development are generally less overall compared to "green field" development.

If the Proposal is not adopted, the policies and regulations applicable to the Study Area would not be updated. Redevelopment may occur at a slower pace.

Goals that focus growth around the Wilburton light rail station would be implemented to a lesser degree, and economic development could be slower in the Study Area.



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