

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

The 2014 major update of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan.

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

Growth Management Act:

The state Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the City to conduct a major update of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency with changes to GMA and the regional planning framework. In addition, this is an opportunity for the City to update the plan to better reflect local conditions and needs.

Prior Council action:

The City Council initiated the update of the Comprehensive Plan in October 2012 and significant public engagement has been underway since that time. With the last major plan review in 2004, this update will recognize changes to the City, extend the planning horizon to 2035, and address changes to state laws and regional plans. Council direction on project principles, a community engagement plan, and a project work program will guide the update to ensure that it captures the community's interests and priorities.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

- Action
 Discussion
 Information

Background information about the Comprehensive Plan update was presented to the City Council on May 13. At this Study Session, the City Council is requested to continue its review and provide direction to the City's boards, commissions and staff regarding the project principles, community engagement plan, and work program. In addition, the Study Session provides an opportunity to discuss how to engage the community in the update of the Vision element of the plan and the process for updating subarea plans.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

This is a continuation of the Study Session held on May 13. At that meeting staff provided an overview of changes that have occurred to Bellevue since the last update in 2004, reviewed the

policy framework of the Comprehensive Plan, and briefed Council on a range of early public engagement activities that have occurred since the update project was initiated last October.

Key outreach activities that occurred earlier this year included a Joint Boards and Commissions Forum held on January 24 with seven of the City's boards and commissions, a public event at the Crossroads Community Center on January 29, the Spring Forward Expo on April 24, and a number of meetings with stakeholders, interest groups and neighborhoods. The City has also issued news releases, posted a project website, and conducted other activities. One of the ongoing activities is soliciting "best ideas" from the community through a new social media tool called Ideascale. Citizens can submit their ideas and comment and vote on others at:

<https://bellevuesbestideas.ideascale.com>

A discussion paper (Attachment 1) provides a summary of the Comprehensive Plan update project, including:

- What is the Comprehensive Plan?
- Why does the plan need to be updated?
- What has changed since 2004?
- Growth Management Act Framework
- What do we need to do?
- Community outreach and engagement.

At the Study Session on May 13 staff briefly presented the draft project principles (Attachment 2); community engagement plan, already well underway (Attachment 3); draft work program, including four specific amendment requests (Attachment 4); a proposed process to update the Community Vision (Attachment 5); and a discussion paper regarding the City's fourteen subarea plans (Attachment 6). *Attachments 1-3 are unchanged reprints from the versions Council reviewed on May 13. Attachments 4-6 have been updated to respond to questions from Council and provide additional information.*

These documents will guide the boards, commissions and staff as they continue with the update process and ensure that the update addresses those issues most important to the community. The Planning Commission is the primary advisory body for the Comprehensive Plan update. The other boards and commissions will provide important input as well, and there will be direct outreach to the Bellevue Network on Aging and to Youth Link.

At the earlier Study Session, Council discussed four specific amendment requests that individuals asked to be included in the work program. The draft work program document included in Attachment 4 has been updated to include more information, as you requested, about the 156th Avenue NE triangle site and the community members' interest in development of a policy that would require reevaluation when major changes occur, such as movement of a light rail station location. Information about the planned GRE development at the Angelo's site within that triangle area is also included. While community concerns about height, scale and neighborhood compatibility for that area were addressed during the Bel-Red planning process, the Comprehensive Plan update is an opportunity to reconsider the community's concerns and review requests to modify subarea plan boundaries, recognizing those changes that occurred after the Bel-Red Subarea Plan adoption.

Attachment 5 outlines a suggested process for updating the Community Vision portion of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff heard interest from some Councilmembers that the Vision update should occur early enough in the process to guide the direction of the policy review and update process. Building off of recent and ongoing public outreach activities that ask the community about their future vision for Bellevue, staff suggests a community workshop hosted by the Planning Commission that would categorize public ideas, audit the current Vision, and transform groups of individual ideas into major themes that could be used to amend the current vision.

Recommendations to update the Vision would return to Council this fall. It is recognized that updating the Vision in the Comprehensive Plan is different from, yet related to, the Council's interest in developing a strategic vision that would help guide upcoming budget discussions.

Council also expressed interest in the approach to updating the City's subarea plans, noting that some have not been updated in more than twenty years. Attachment 6 has been revised to provide additional information about the subarea plans and to suggest some various approaches that the City might take to update them following the overall Comprehensive Plan update. The outreach process for the Comprehensive Plan update is an opportunity to talk with the community about the subarea plans to hear their thoughts on which plans need the most attention. Using the feedback received during the plan update process, staff would refine the recommended process for the updates.

Staff is seeking Council's direction regarding the draft project principles, community engagement plan, and draft update work program. This direction will mark a change in the project from an issue identification and early outreach phase to one focused on issue analysis and policy development. Working with the boards and commissions through 2013, staff will analyze identified issues, prepare updates to the plan, and begin to identify the need for new and revised policies. A set of draft amendments to the plan will be prepared in late 2013 and early 2014. A public hearing on the draft update is anticipated to occur in the first half of 2014, with anticipated adoption of the update in late 2014.

Questions for the Council at this stage include:

- Are we on the right track?
- Do we have the right plan in place to fully engage the community?
- Are we missing any specific topics that need to be included in the update?

As the Comprehensive Plan update project moves forward, the City Council will be regularly updated and involved in key milestone actions.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the proposed Council principles, work program and community engagement plan for the Comprehensive Plan update. Also provide initial thoughts on how the Council would like to be involved in updating the Community Vision element of the Plan, and on the process for updating Subarea Plans.
2. Revise and approve revised Council principles, work program and community engagement plan for the Comprehensive Plan update.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Alternative 1. Approve the proposed Council principles, work program and engagement plan for the Comprehensive Plan update. Also provide initial thoughts on how the Council would like to be involved in updating the Community Vision element of the plan, and on the process for updating subarea plans.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments reprinted from May 13

1. 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update Overview
2. Draft Project Principles
3. Draft Community Engagement Plan

Updated attachments

4. Draft Update Work Program
5. Community Vision Update Process
6. Subarea Planning Process Discussion Paper

A community engagement binder is available in the Council Office that includes reports from the public engagement events and individual public comments.

A state Department of Commerce Comprehensive Plan Checklist was provided in the May 13 agenda packet and is also available in the Council Office.

2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE OVERVIEW (Reprint of the May 13 Study Session version)

Forming our Future – Updating the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

“On a cold day early in the spring of 1953, civic leaders Phil Reilly and Eugene Boyd donned overcoats and fedoras to pose for a newspaper photographer next to a road marker reading ‘Bellevue Unincorporated.’ As Boyd steadied the signpost, Reilly reached up with a charred stick and crossed out the ‘Un’ in Unincorporated. Bellevue had officially become a city on March 31, 1953.”¹

The past sixty years have seen a dramatic transformation of Bellevue from a rural residential community of less than 8,000 to one of the state’s leading economic centers and largest cities. Bellevue is now home to a number of headquarters, such as Puget Sound Energy, PACCAR, Symetra, and Expedia, and has more employees working here than residents. Yet, through all the change that has occurred in these last six decades, the forward thinking minds of the community have protected the City’s vibrant neighborhoods, enhanced the quality of life, and continued to make Bellevue a welcoming, diverse, friendly community that is a great place to live and raise a family.

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan seeks to continue the City’s tradition of successfully planning for the future and managing change. While the update responds to a state requirement, more important is that the plan continue to be a relevant document for the community to help guide City decisions and actions that lead to better outcomes.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is the holder of the community’s vision for the future of Bellevue, it sets policy that directs city actions and decisions, and it guides city investments in infrastructure. The plan addresses a wide range of topics, including land use, housing, transportation, parks, economic development and human services.

Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan has been a fundamental part of the community’s vision for the future since the beginning of the City. Following the City’s incorporation in 1953, the City Council’s first act, Ordinance Number 1, established the Planning Commission, beginning a long history of planning for the community’s future. The City’s first Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act was adopted in 1993, and last underwent a major review in 2004. Over

¹ *Bellevue Timeline*, University of Washington Press, 2004

time the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan has successfully guided growth and development resulting in today's strong Downtown and the City's vibrant residential neighborhoods.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for how we seek to grow. More importantly, the plan is a statement of the community's values and where we want to be in the future. Using the plan as a guidepost, it helps actions we take now lead to a greater tomorrow.

The plan consists of four key components:

- The Community Vision statement illustrates the city we hope to become
- "Elements" of the plan include goals and policies that guide city actions
- Subarea Plans for each of fourteen geographic areas in the city
- Transportation plans that contain potential transportation projects

The Comprehensive Plan provides the overall policy structure that helps ensure consistency between the City's various functional or system plans as well as coordinating them with the city's plan for growth. The Comprehensive Plan includes broad, citywide policies that frame fundamental management of land uses and city resources.

WHY DOES THE PLAN NEED TO BE UPDATED?

Every seven years Bellevue is required to update its Comprehensive Plan to ensure its continued compliance with the state Growth Management Act and, just as important, to ensure it reflects the dynamic changes and trends that have and will continue to affect the growth of the community. The required update deadline for Bellevue, as with other cities in King County, was redefined as June 2015 after having previously been 2011. (The fiscal crisis caused by the economic downturn led the state to postpone this update deadline to 2015.)

The update is an opportunity to look ahead twenty years and discuss with the community what City do we want to become? The update gives us a chance to ask the community if we are on the right track. The update also gives us the opportunity to acknowledge how the City and the world have changed since the last major update and to bring in current information, such as Census data.

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2004?

More than meeting a state requirement, it is important that the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan remain a relevant guiding document for the community. Last updated in 2004, significant changes have occurred to the City that need to be addressed. Population is now 130,200, up from 117,000 in 2002. The City has grown, annexing over 900 acres through the South Bellevue

annexations in 2012. Explosive Downtown growth occurred in 2006-2008 and Microsoft became a major employer in the city. In addition to on-the-ground development, planning efforts paved the way for additional development activity, including plans for Wilburton, Crossroads, BelRed, light rail and Eastgate. Meanwhile a number of regional efforts have occurred, including the adoption of VISION 2040 (the regional growth management plan), Transportation 2040, the Regional Economic Strategy, and a major update to the Countywide Planning Policies.

Several of the changes to the City can be directly associated with goals the City previously set in the Comprehensive Plan. Growth in population is on track with targets the City adopted in the 2004 plan – it calls for a housing unit target that would result in a population of about 137,000 in the year 2025. The completion of the South Bellevue annexations follows from the City’s annexation policies and growth expectations outlined in the plan. The strong growth Downtown goes back to decisions the City made in the early 1980’s with adoption of the Downtown Subarea Plan. And while the City’s increasing diversity was not completely expected, the City began to recognize the trend and the value of the City’s cultural diversity in the 2004 plan.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT FRAMEWORK

The Growth Management Act (the “Act”) establishes a schedule for cities and counties to periodically conduct a review of their comprehensive plans and development regulations to ensure that they remain consistent with state law and respond to local changes. The Act was enacted by the state in response to problems associated with uncoordinated and unplanned development and lack of common goals for the use of land. At the time, citizens were concerned with traffic congestion, pollution, water quality, school crowding, sprawl, and the loss of rural, agriculture and forest lands. Some of those concerns remain today.

The Act includes thirteen goals that serve as a foundation for all comprehensive plans. A fundamental tenet of the Act is to direct growth to urban areas where it can be efficiently served by urban services. The Act also seeks to preserve rural, agricultural, forest and environmentally critical areas. Through the requirement for comprehensive plans, the Act requires communities to plan for growth and the necessary public services and utilities associated with the growth.



The regional growth plan, VISION 2040, designates Downtown Bellevue as a Regional Growth Center – one of few locations in the four county region where dense urban development is anticipated and where infrastructure improvements are prioritized.

The Growth Management Policy Council is a board comprised of representatives from King County and cities in the county that works to establish policies at the countywide level that guide issues that extend beyond the boundaries of a single jurisdiction. Major updates of the Countywide Planning Policies were adopted in 2010 and 2013 to support the current round of local plan updates. Of particular interest in the Countywide Planning Policies are growth targets that allocate anticipated growth in population and employment among all jurisdictions in King County. (For population, the targets are based on projections from the state Office of Finance and Management; for employment, the targets are based on forecasts from the Puget Sound Regional Council.)

Bellevue Growth Targets	
	2006-2031 Target
Population	17,000 new housing units
Employment	53,000 new jobs

Initial analysis shows that City has sufficient land capacity to meet these growth targets without any additional changes to land use designations or current densities. In accordance with the Growth Management Act, cities periodically complete a buildable land study to document land that is available for future development. The study considers vacant and redevelopable land. It accounts for environmentally critical areas and development constraints and it includes a market factor to recognize that it is unlikely that an area will ever fully build out. The City is currently

updating the buildable lands study to include changes, such as the Bel-Red area rezone, and so that up-to-date figures can be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

Due to the comprehensive nature of the plan, the update requires participation by all departments in the City. The City has established a cross-departmental project team to lead the project and is working to reach out and include all departments.

Attachment 4 provides a draft work program that outlines four phases to the 2014 update project. It also lists key issues that have been identified in early community outreach and lists the Comprehensive Plan sections and topic areas that need to be addressed in the update. Some portions of the plan may need relatively little change from the goals and policies that exist today. Others will require more substantive review and updates.

General schedule for the Comprehensive Plan Update

2012	2013	2014
Review of existing Comp Plan		
Data collection		
Council initiation		
Scoping		
	Analysis and development	
	Draft and review potential amendments	
		Public Hearing
		Council adoption
Community outreach		

EARLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The process of updating the City's Comprehensive Plan is dependent on actively engaging all aspects of the community to identify their vision for the future. During the early stage of project staff has conducted a range of "early public engagement" to help define the project work program. Additional outreach and engagement will occur throughout the update, which is detailed in Attachment 3, the Community Engagement Plan.

On January 24 the city held a Joint Boards & Commissions Forum for members of seven of the city's boards and commissions to come together and share their ideas for the future of the city. With participation of the majority of board and commission members, the forum provided an

introduction to the update and reviewed how the city has changed over the last ten years. Board and commission members were able to pull on their experience serving on the city's boards and commissions to discuss the emerging needs of the Bellevue community. As the city works on the update, their participation and contribution will be critical to making sure that the plan anticipates the city's changing needs and provides the appropriate policy direction.

Additionally, the East Bellevue Community Council hosted a public event at the Crossroads Community Center to hear from the public their ideas about the city and its future. Over 40 people attended the event. Participants spent considerable time engaging each other, those Community Council members and city board and commission members that attended, and City staff in discussing their vision for the future of Bellevue.

Staff has also met with stakeholders and conducted other outreach, including meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and Bellevue Downtown Association, the Spring Forward Expo, engagement of Youth Council and high school students, neighborhood meetings, and articles in the *Bellevue Reporter*, *It's Your City* newsletter and *Neighborhood News*. A project website is posted at:

<http://www.bellevuewa.gov/comp-plan-update.htm>

Overall, citizen and commission comments about the plan and the future of the city have been very positive. Many expressed how much they like living or working in Bellevue and there was an interest in finding a way to both preserve what people love about Bellevue while looking for opportunities for improvement.

As expected for a plan that encompasses the whole community, comments have been wide ranging. Topics that have been emphasized include:

- Economic development, including specifically the support for smaller and growing businesses, and businesses that provide local, neighborhood services. Several people saw a need for more attention to neighborhood shopping centers.
- Environmental stewardship, including how the city might address some environmental issues such as water quality on a broad scale, and how the city can retain its great natural setting even as the city continues to become more urban.
- Culture and diversity were recognized as something that has changed dramatically over the last two decades and is seen as an asset that the city can better leverage.
- Housing affordability was identified as a barrier to attracting new families and something that should be addressed to support economic development

- Mobility was identified as both an economic issue – needing to be able to support people trying to get to jobs, services, and stores – and as a desire to have options other than driving across town, such as being able to walk to local services.
- Education is recognized as a critical component of the Bellevue community. People often choose to live in Bellevue for the quality of the schools. Increased connections to higher education have the potential to be an economic driver.
- Partnerships and collaboration were also identified as important for the city, with many recognizing the value Bellevue School District, Bellevue College, non-profits, community and business associations, and others bring to the community and that the best solutions will be completed in collaboration with partners.

A community engagement binder is available in the Council office that includes reports from the public engagement events and individual public comments.

DRAFT PROJECT PRINCIPLES
(Reprint of the May 13 Study Session version)

Forming our Future – Updating the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan captures the community’s Vision for the future. It directs how the city will grow and change over the next twenty years, and it guides city actions and investments. With the last major update adopted in 2004, this update will comprehensively assess the Comprehensive Plan according to the following project principles:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Remain relevant to our community | Ensure that community values and priorities are the foundation for the plan and reinforce the Comprehensive Plan as the entire community’s vision for how Bellevue will grow and evolve to meet the needs and opportunities of the future. |
| Advance the community Vision | The new Comprehensive Plan will look to the future to the year 2035 and should be evaluated to ensure that it is appropriate for our changing community. |
| Address the needs of a more diverse community | Ensure that the plan continues to be relevant for the needs of all aspects of the community, including the young and old, disadvantaged and those from diverse backgrounds. |
| Engage the entire community in the update process | The update process will engage the community, including a wide range of stakeholders, neighborhood groups, businesses, and other agencies. Recognizing the increasing diversity of the community and the need to include all perspectives, outreach will include innovative practices. |
| Use the current plan as the foundation for the update | The current Comprehensive Plan serves the city well and is based on a vision first established decades ago. The update will build off the current plan that focuses growth in Downtown and other commercial centers while preserving key aspects of community character and enhancing quality of life. |

Address emerging issues

The update provides the opportunity to consider new, emerging issues that have arisen since 2004, such as:

- New economic development strategies stemming from the City Council's retreat, and the update of the Regional Economic Strategy
- The City's adopted Environmental Stewardship Initiative, and further information about the environment
- Growing understanding of the role land use and transportation patterns play in public health

Increase the plan's accessibility, usability

This update will look for ways to make the document more accessible to the public and relevant to City actions. This may include reducing the number of policies and using clear, straight forward language to make the plan easier to read. New technology tools give us an opportunity to make an electronic version of the document more accessible on-line.

Meet our state and regional requirements

The plan will be assessed for consistency with changes to the state Growth Management Act, the Regional Plan (Vision 2040), and the Countywide Planning Policies.

Connect to implementation strategies

To be effective, the City's plan for the future needs to connect to City actions, such as the Land Use Code, Capital Improvement Program, and other implementation strategies.

Measure progress and success

Over time, the City will measure progress in meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and acknowledge successes in working toward the community's Vision.

DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN
(Reprint of the May 13 Study Session version)

Forming our Future – Updating the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is based on the vision, values and expectations of the Bellevue community. Therefore, the update of the plan must connect with the community and gather the community's input to be successful. Public engagement for the project is an opportunity for the community to help shape the plan. It is also an opportunity for the public to learn more about the city and for the community to build connections.

Public outreach for the update project began in January 2013 and will be ongoing throughout the project in 2013 and 2014. Public comment will be sought from a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, business and property owners from throughout the city. The intent is to engage the entire community to reflect the diversity of Bellevue.

Objectives for Public Engagement

- **All aspects of the community** – Connect with young and old, different ethnicities, different geographic areas, residents, businesses, employees and property owners, those with less access to city services, and those that might be less familiar with city planning. Because this is a plan for the future (20 years or more), the plan includes specific outreach targeted to school-age populations and young adults of Bellevue.
- **Ongoing outreach** - Seek ideas and perspectives on an on-going basis throughout the entire project on the full range of topics covered in the Comprehensive Plan update. Outreach will keep stakeholders informed of the current project status and regularly alert people of project news.
- **Multiple levels and styles of engagement** – From formal to informal, the project will engage the public in a variety of manners giving people options for how to engage. In addition to traditional events, like open houses and public hearings, the project will connect with people in new and innovative ways and use online tools.
- **Build community** – The update process should lead to more than just a plan. The process itself should help build relationships in the community and a stronger connection to the City.

- **Coordinate and collaborate** – The update will work with associations, organizations, government agencies and other groups for the purpose of helping disseminate information and soliciting feedback about the update.
- **Increased understanding** – Outreach will help members of the community understand the City policy and how it impacts City decisions and priorities.

Public Engagement Strategies

The Comprehensive Plan update project will use a variety of engagement and outreach strategies to seek public input throughout the project. Key outreach strategies identified below will be used to achieve the outreach objectives.

Boards and Commissions

Recognizing the Planning Commission’s traditional role, it will serve as the advisory body for the overall Comprehensive Plan update. The Planning Commission will hold regular study sessions and will be responsible for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan as a whole to ensure that it works as an integrated, accessible document. The Planning Commission will review the Land Use, Housing, Economic Development and other portions of the Comprehensive Plan. It will also be responsible as the primary venue for public comment, including holding a public hearing.

Recognizing the complexity and multiple disciplines involved in the update, six other City boards and commissions will be directly involved in the process: Transportation Commission, Parks & Community Services Board, Human Services Commission, Arts Commission, Environmental Services Commission, and the Bellevue Network on Aging. These commissions will provide consultation to the Planning Commission regarding their area of expertise.

- The Transportation Commission will be consulted regarding the Transportation Element and transportation project lists.
- The Parks & Community Services Board will be consulted regarding the Parks, Open Space and Recreation Element.
- The Human Service Commission will be consulted regarding the Human Services Element and will provide input on the Housing Element.
- The Arts Commission will be consulted regarding and identifying art and culture policies throughout the plan.
- The Environmental Services Commission will be consulted regarding policies regarding city utilities in the Utilities and Capital Facilities elements.
- Some issues, such as environmental stewardship and community health, that span multiple disciplines will be considered by multiple boards and commissions.

The Planning Commission will ultimately review the entire draft update and will hold a public hearing on the plan amendment package prior to transmitting its recommendation to Council for adoption.

In addition to being review bodies, the meetings of the boards and commissions will be a regular opportunity for the public to find out about the plan update and to engage on specific topics. Seven of the City's boards and commission met in a unique joint meeting on January 24 in a forum asking the commissioners about their vision for the future of Bellevue. Regular meetings of the boards and commissions will continue throughout 2013 and into early 2014 and additional joint meetings will be scheduled at key project milestones.

Public Events and Open Houses

In addition to the boards and commissions forum on January 24, a discussion forum and scoping meeting for the general public was held at Crossroads Community Center on January 29. The Comprehensive Plan update was a key feature of the Spring Forward Expo on April 24. Future events and open houses will be scheduled around project milestones and advertised broadly through multiple forms of media.

Website *Forming Our Future – Comprehensive Plan Update*

The City's project website will be continually updated with project information and notices of meetings and events. Interactive features may include on-line survey tools and other ways to comment.

"Best Ideas for Bellevue" Social Media Campaign

Running May through July 4, the City is using an online community dialog tool to ask people to identify their best ideas for shaping Bellevue's future. Seventeen "best ideas" have already been posted to the site. Those that participate will have the opportunity to win awards from local merchants. Results of the process will be included in the City's Vision update process.

Neighborhood Engagement

The City will connect with neighborhood leaders, use the Neighborhood News newsletter, build off of Neighborhood Outreach forums, and attend neighborhood meetings. Staff may also develop a "Meeting in a Box" information kit that includes information about the update project and how to collect neighborhood comments that can be used by neighborhood groups.

Speakers Forums

In coordination with the establish Neighborhood Outreach forums, the City is looking to host a number of speakers to talk about technical and emerging issues. For example, we may attempt to

coordinate a speaker panel regarding the economic value of higher education. This may include tours of successful development projects and meetings with other experts on key issues.

Key Stakeholder and Targeted Meetings

To better communicate with and engage the diverse communities of Bellevue, a variety of focused meetings with small groups of people will be held at key points in the process to explore issues in greater depth, review draft analyses and conclusions, or test strategies and policies for addressing issues. Based on the objectives of the meeting, participants could be targeted to reflect a particular demographic (e.g. ethnicity, age, geography) or expertise (e.g. technical, stakeholder) focused on specific issues in the Comprehensive Plan. The City has already reached out to the Chamber of Commerce and Bellevue Downtown Association. Staff has also begun to identify some of the “hard to reach” such as leaders in the disabled community.

The Bellevue Network on Aging has been actively involved and will continue to be consulted during the update process. The City is also very interested in engaging the youth as the plan potentially affects them more than anyone. The entire Sammamish High School freshman class recently conducted a planning assignment looking at potential futures for Eastgate, Newport Hills and Lake Hills. Engagement with the Bellevue Youth Council and with Youth Link will be part of the process.

Coffee and Conversations

Most people do not have the time or inclination to visit city hall for meetings about large projects with a broad purpose like the Comprehensive Plan. Simple, informal events in various neighborhood locations (e.g. coffee shops, neighborhood parks) around the city will offer a chance for more individualized conversation and provide venues for local residents and business owners to be informed about the project and provide feedback. These may be hosted and publicized by local neighborhood, business and social organizations to encourage their members to stop by and visit with staff and possibly commission members.

Media

News releases and story pitches to local media surrounding major project milestones. Use of *It's Your City*, Neighborhood News internally, and external media including *Seattle Times*, *Bellevue Reporter*, *Puget Sound Business Journal*, transit blog, etc.

DRAFT 2014 UPDATE WORK PROGRAM
(Responses to individual requests revised after the May 13 Study Session)

Bellevue's current Comprehensive Plan is serving the City well. It establishes a clear, vibrant Vision for the year 2025 and supports the City's general land use pattern of focusing growth in Downtown and other commercial areas, while protecting residential neighborhoods. However, much has changed since the last major update was adopted in 2004. The City witnessed a boom of Downtown development and annexation of the Eastgate area. Several significant plans were completed, including those for Bel-Red, Wilburton, Crossroads and Eastgate/I-90. Additionally, the nature of the community continues to change, becoming more diverse and older. And while the City has made significant strides in meeting the goals of the current plan, some issues continue to present challenges, such as meeting objectives for housing affordability and addressing the needs of households of all economic segments.

The Comprehensive Plan update is anticipated to include:

1. Amendments required because of changes to the state Growth Management Act, other state laws, and regional planning documents
2. Amendments that bring the plan up to date and extend the planning horizon year to 2035
3. Amendments to keep the plan relevant to the community, City Council and staff, and that reflect City actions since the last update and Council direction from current and recent projects
4. Those amendments sought by individual citizens, subject to the direction of the City Council

UPDATE STEPS

The update project has four general phases. This Council study session marks the end of the first phase that consisted of early community outreach and issue identification. Data collection and staff auditing of the current plan occurs during this first phase. The second phase focuses on analysis of issues and development of possible update opportunities. Updated goals and policies are drafted during the third phase. Review and adoption occurs in the final phase.

During these steps, issues will be reviewed through a number of means. Staff will conduct technical analysis of issues and present them to the City's boards and commissions for their guidance. Issue forums, tours and guest speakers will be arranged to review key topics. Staff will assess current goals and policies against state law, regional plans and current best practices. And the City will continue to engage the community to seek its participation through a number of different venues.

GENERAL UPDATE SCHEDULE

The Comprehensive Plan update will occur over a two-year period to allow time to hear from the community and craft a relevant and effective plan that meets their expectations.

General schedule for the Comprehensive Plan Update

2012	2013	2014
Review of existing Comp Plan		
Data collection		
Council initiation		
Scoping		
	Analysis and development	
	Draft and review potential amendments	
		Public Hearing
		Council adoption
Community outreach		

WORK PROGRAM AND KEY ISSUES

The table below provides an outline of the primary categories of review for the update and the types of amendments that may be anticipated. A range of early public engagement activities and initial staff analysis of the existing plan helped identify a number of key areas of review:

Economic development

Bellevue has historically been seen as a good place for business and the Comprehensive Plan strongly supports business and economic development. The update is an opportunity to incorporate the Council's current economic strategies and ensure that other elements of the plan are aligned with the City's economic priorities. It will be important for the update to reflect the economic growth that has occurred since 2004 and to link the City's economic development strategies with land use, housing, environment, transportation and other policies. In addition to the City's overall economic health, early outreach identified the need to support start-ups and small, local businesses and the economic viability of local commercial and neighborhood centers. The update will also address the recently updated Regional Economic Strategy.

Environmental stewardship

While the City has a strong set of environmental policies that reinforce the City's Vision as a "City in a Park" with urban development set amidst high quality natural areas, a number of changes have occurred since 2004. The City started the Environment Stewardship Initiative and the state established a long-range goal for reducing greenhouse emissions to respond to the threat of climate change. In early outreach, citizens indicated that preserving and enhancing natural areas is becoming more critical as the City and region continue to grow. They identified future opportunities, such as access to a BNSF bike trail and to lakes Washington and Sammamish as ways to further the City's vision as one with great natural areas. In the update it may be important to look at how environmental issues are addressed, not just within the Environmental section of the plan, but throughout the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the interaction land use, transportation, utilities, and economic development all have with the environment.

Community health

Public health has become a national concern, especially the health of the country's youth. Health involves many factors and increasing research over the last decade has pointed to the role land use, access to recreation (especially walking), and access to healthy foods play in obesity and health. While Bellevue generally provides good access to food choices and recreation, the Seattle-King County Department of Health advocates that cities review how local policies can and should affect community health.

Culture and diversity

Bellevue has become one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the state with nearly 1/3 of residents foreign born. Diversity is even greater for families with children. Meanwhile, the City is also growing older with a wave of population just entering retirement. The Comprehensive Plan update is an opportunity to assess how the City responds to the changes in the community, whether to facilitate 'aging in place' or to reflect the value of a diverse and vibrant culture. The update process also needs to take diversity into account and seek ways to provide access to all segments of community.

Neighborhood centers and community gathering

Bellevue survey data has consistently shown that people love their neighborhoods. Many residents in our early outreach emphasized a need to preserve the qualities of their neighborhoods. People expressed concern about the health of some neighborhood centers and talked about the need to build a stronger sense of community. People asked for more gathering places ("third places") and a way to stimulate neighborhood businesses services, not just those Downtown. The update is an opportunity to review economic, land use and transportation

policies that support both preservation of neighborhoods and ways to strengthen neighborhood centers and opportunities for community gathering. This may build off the work completed for Crossroads, Wilburton, Factoria and Eastgate that supports working towards mixed use development that creates greater opportunities for housing and local services within the City's commercial centers as well as work to maintain neighborhood centers.

Mobility

Early outreach comments made it clear that the community envisions a City where it is easy to get around. People talked of making Bellevue a better place for walking and bicycling through such techniques as increased weather protection for sidewalks and separated bike routes, and they identified a desire for improved transit as ways to access stores and services without having to always use a car. Transportation was also identified as an important component to support businesses and economic development. The update is an opportunity to assess the state-of-the-art for measuring transportation level of service and to look at mobility comprehensively. The City completed a Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan update in 2009 and an update of the Transit Master Plan is underway. Light Rail Best Practices resulted in a number of Comprehensive Plan amendments in 2008 that helped establish the vision for integrating light rail. The update will organize and consolidate these different efforts to ensure that we have a consistent, clear picture of future mobility for Bellevue. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan has several overlapping and out-of-date transportation project lists. Ideally, these lists create a long-range vision for the City's transportation network that lead to development of the City's 12-year TFP (Transportation Facility Plan). The Comprehensive Plan update can consolidate and update the transportation project lists to improve support for future TFP updates.

Partnerships and collaboration

Bellevue has a long track record of collaborating with the community. To function at the high level the community expects requires collaboration and partnerships with the community, businesses, organizations, and other cities and agencies. Comments during early outreach emphasized the opportunity to better coordinate and partner with the Bellevue School District and Bellevue College, whether for access to recreation or to stimulate learning that supports our economy. The Comprehensive Plan has the ability to be a tool that identifies and coordinates partnerships to help align initiatives inside and outside City Hall. With a common Vision for the future, City departments can be better coordinated and work more effectively. This update can strengthen the relationship of the City's Vision and its policies to near-term actions, and create a stronger nexus between the City's Vision and the City's biennial budget.

Work Program Topic List

Topic/Component	Description of Updates	References
General updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update out of date data, facts, figures and references • Review for consistency with Countywide Planning Policies, regional plan and state law • Review for internal and external consistency 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040
Usability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review language for clarity, precision and usability • Make the plan more accessible to the general reader • Reduce redundancy and remove out-of-date policies • Ensure that policies are at the “policy level” 	
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess community Vision and update as appropriate 	
Introduction & Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance readability, such as with an executive summary • Review policies on citizen engagement, including the aspect of culture and diversity, and related to city master planning processes 	
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update population and employment forecasts and targets • Update/add information regarding growth strategy that focuses on Downtown and other commercial centers • Improve support for neighborhood and mixed used centers and recognize Downtown as a residential neighborhood • Review land use designations, including commercial and multifamily 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040 Early outreach
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate updated needs assessment with City’s regional partner ARCH • Update policies on housing needs consistent with Countywide Planning Policies • Review how policies support changing demographics 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Early outreach

Capital Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update consistent with current system plans • Review need for additional civic facilities based on growth • Review guidance to CIP process • Review how to support and integrate partnership opportunities 	GMA
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates for consistency with system plans for City-managed utilities • Updates related to plans for non-city-managed utilities 	GMA
Stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate NPDES-related stormwater policies that emphasize low impact development; integrate with land use, transportation and other policy areas 	NPDES
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider multimodal strategies to support land use, economic development, environmental and community objectives • Assess state of the art for measuring concurrency and mode split and consider additional policy direction • Update and consolidate transit sections consistent with Transit Master Plan update • Review/update consistent with current light rail direction, including policies related to access to station areas • Consolidate/update existing multiple long-range transportation plans consistent with the Transportation Facilities Program (TFP) 	GMA Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040 Early outreach
Station Areas Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate project, that may result in Comprehensive Plan amendments to be folded into overall update 	Station Area Planning Project

Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update economic data • Updates based on current economic strategy discussions and updated Regional Economic Strategy • Recognize significant/growing economic areas, including retail, high tech, medical, tourism/hotels, entertainment, auto sales, and small business development • Address ways to attract “knowledge workers” • Address connections to higher education • Improve “nimbleness” in responding to situational instances (linked with Land Use) 	Bellevue Economic Strategy Regional Economic Strategy Countywide Planning Policies Vision 2040 Early outreach
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how plan supports K-12 and higher education as a community and economic asset 	
Community Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review across Comprehensive Plan to address issues of healthy communities, such as walkability 	Countywide Planning Policies
Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update recognizing changes in city demographics, including needs related to seniors, public health, and homelessness 	
Diversity/Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update demographic data • Integrate Bellevue Diversity Initiative • Review issues related to culture, ethnicity and age across the Comprehensive Plan 	Early outreach
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate city’s Environmental Stewardship Initiative strategies • Address state/regional climate change goals • Review across Comprehensive Plan to incorporate greenhouse gas reduction and mitigation strategies • Review city objectives for ecosystem restoration and improving water quality 	Bellevue Environmental Steward Initiative Countywide Planning Policies Early Outreach State goals
Parks, Open Space & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update consistent with POS system plan • Review long range goals to preserve, expand park system, including the need for parks serving developing areas, such as Downtown and BelRed • Update Community Services policies 	GMA
Urban Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider updates related to the Downtown Livability project and other planning studies 	Downtown Livability Project

Annexation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now has limited importance; reduce and merge into Land Use Element 	
Downtown Subarea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate potential policies amendments, projects and updates to the land use designations that result from DT Livability and DT Transportation Plan projects 	Downtown Livability Project Downtown Transportation Plan
Eastgate/I-90 Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update portions of the Eastgate, Richards Valley, and Factoria subarea plans to include the Eastgate/I-90 project recommendations 	Eastgate/I-90 Project
Subarea Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a schedule for updating individual subarea plan on a rotating schedule beginning in 2015 • Develop a preliminary map to guide boundary updates 	
Glossary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor updates 	
Shoreline Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated under separate SMP process 	SMP Update project

INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC SCOPING REQUESTS

Due to its wide ranging nature and the importance of addressing community interests, the update is an opportunity for the public to suggest any number of potential amendments. Many public comments are broad in nature or concern the overall plan and vision for the city. However, the City has also received requests from individuals that specific amendments be considered as part of the update. Unlike the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process, there is neither an application form nor threshold criteria for considering whether requests for individual amendments should be part of the major update. These requests are noted in the table below along with brief staff comments. The Council may choose to include or not include any of these requests to be considered further in the 2014 update work program.

While each of these requests has merit as an issue for consideration, staff believes that some of are better addressed through other means.

BelRed Residential Zoning

Mr. Walter Scott requests a change to the BelRed Subarea to provide greater flexibility within the BR-R (Residential) zone to alleviate challenges he is having leasing older commercial space that is now designated for residential uses. When BelRed was adopted it was recognized that it would take years for the area to transition toward the vision of the plan. It was also recognized that adjustments to the plan might be needed. A five-year review of the Subarea Plan is called for in the plan and is anticipated to occur in 2014. It would make sense to consider Mr. Scott's request through the BelRed review process so that it could be evaluated along with other BelRed issues.

156th Avenue NE Triangle

Several community members request returning the triangle area on 156th Avenue NE from BelRed to the Crossroads subarea and restoring the zoning designations that existed prior to the BelRed planning effort. They argue that the relocation of the Overlake Village light rail station further to the north makes the triangle area less accessible and no longer appropriate for BelRed intensities. They also expressed concern for the heights and shape of development that may occur in the area. While community concerns about height, scale and neighborhood compatibility were addressed during the BelRed planning process (for example the allowed heights are nearly the same as previously allowed; view protection is actually improved), the Comprehensive Plan update is an opportunity to reconsider the community's concerns and change subarea plan boundaries recognizing those changes that occurred after the Bel-Red Subarea Plan adoption.

Within this triangle area it is important to note that GRE has submitted Master Development Plan and Design Review applications for a development of residential and senior housing uses at the former Angelo's Nursery site. The combined decision for the development is expected to be issued in July. Concurrently, the applicant has also submitted the associated construction permits for the project anticipating breaking ground later this year. In addition to the GRE project, interest has been expressed for a mixed use project at the Sherwood shopping center site.

The same Crossroads-area community members also request that the City add policy direction to the plan that would ensure that the City reevaluate components of the plan when major changes occur, such as the movement of a light rail station location. While the City generally does consider how to respond to major changes that impact the community, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to set goals for a future long term vision, rather than be reactionary to various changes. When significant changes do occur, Council often discusses how to best respond, whether through a change to the Comprehensive Plan or other means. Nonetheless, consideration of whether some form of policy direction would be helpful could be included in the update process.

Downtown Boundary

Another request is to modify the southern Downtown boundary to fix the boundary where it transverses a parcel. While zoning and Land Use Code issues, such as dimensional standards, are being considered during the Downtown Livability project, the Comprehensive Plan would be the appropriate venue to make any change to a subarea boundary. In this case, staff recommends that boundary adjustments related to split parcels be considered as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, but only in these cases of split parcels. Otherwise, this long-standing boundary provides the adjacent residential neighborhood certainty that it will not be encroached upon by Downtown and its general location on all sides of Downtown should be maintained.

Factoria Professional Office Zone

The fourth request would seek evaluation of the Factoria PO (Professional Office) site located adjacent to Newport High School and consideration of a more intense designation. This site was

considered during multiple annual amendment cycles and has been looked at in times past. The general conclusion from previous reviews was that PO remains the appropriate use for the site and that there may be other ways to support redevelopment of the site, including possible permit avenues that could be perused at the time the property owners wish to redevelop. At this time, the work program does not include reconsideration of the PO designation at this site. However, it is possible that policy review (and not map review) could occur that would provide direction for modifying standards that apply in the PO zone. Alternatively, the site could be looked at during future review of the Factoria Subarea Plan.

At the Council's direction, staff could prepare additional analysis of any of these requests for further consideration at an upcoming meeting.

Individual Public Scoping Requests		
Request	Proponent	Staff Comments
Bel-Red BR-R Reconsider BR-R zoning in the NW portion of Bel-Red	Walter Scott	This potential change to the BelRed zoning should be considered as part of the planned 5-year BelRed review scheduled to occur in 2014
Crossroads/Bel-Red Reconsideration (1) Revert zoning from BR-RC3 to CB in the BelRed area adjacent to 156 th Avenue NE and move to Crossroads Subarea in recognition of change to light rail station location. (2) Ensure plan review when major changes impact the community.	Campbell et al.	The subarea boundaries and policy issues could be reviewed during the plan update process.
Downtown Boundary Review DT boundary on south edge of DT	Issue arose from DT Livability process.	The Comprehensive Plan update is the appropriate place to address issues where boundaries split parcels.
Factoria PO Change designation to O or create some new classification between PO and O that allows a more intensive use where the PO does not abut SF properties.	Chris Benis	This proposal is similar to several annual amendment requests initiated by Mr. Lorge and Mr. Benis. PO was determined to be the best designation for the site. The site could be looked at in a future Factoria Subarea Plan update.

COMMUNITY VISION UPDATE
(Revised after the May 13 Study Session)

Forming our Future – Updating the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

What is the Community Vision?

The Community Vision, “Bellevue 2025,” is an element of the Comprehensive Plan that paints a picture of where the community aspires to be in the future. The current Vision, last updated in 2004, speaks to the community’s hope for Bellevue in the year 2025. The update of the Comprehensive Plan will extend this horizon to 2035.

The Vision acts as a foundational piece to provide overall guidance and context for all of the goals and policies in the plan. It is made up of fourteen statements that, while identifying individual aspects of the City, should be viewed as a whole. Following are the major planks of the current Vision; explanatory text in the Comprehensive Plan elaborates on each point:

- *A “City in a Park”*
- *A dedicated steward of environmental quality, where key natural features are
 - *preserved and restored*
 - *A model of superior urban design and “people places”*
 - *A community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods*
 - *A city that meets the housing needs of all citizens**
- *A regional economic center with a strong and diverse economy*
- *A city with a great Downtown—viable, livable, and memorable*
- *The Eastside’s transportation hub, offering an array of mobility choices
 - *The center of arts and culture for the Eastside*
 - *A community that cares for people and families in need
 - *A safe and secure community*
 - *A city served by outstanding facilities and services*
 - *A leader in meeting regional challenges*
 - *An active and engaged community***

How is the Vision used?

The Vision is a key part of the Comprehensive Plan, given that the plan is the central framework for the growth and development of the entire city. Some of the ways in which the Vision is used include the following:

- Serves as a framework for the entire Comprehensive Plan. The Community Vision depicts the aspirations that all the Comprehensive Plan elements are working together to reach.
- Helps focus our understanding of needs and strategic actions. By identifying gaps between where we currently are and where the Vision indicates we want to be, the Vision establishes a “dynamic tension” that leads to action.
- Provides a “One City” context for the City organization. Over the course of the “One City” initiative that has served to align all the departments and multiple business lines of the City organization, the Vision has been critical to point to a set of outcomes that the entire City is working to achieve. The Comprehensive Plan Vision is inclusive and sweeping enough to serve as that framework and has been an important element of the “One City” initiative.

Where is the Vision found?

While the Vision is a fundamental part of the Comprehensive Plan, it can actually be hard to find. There is no “Vision Section” of the plan. “Bellevue 2025” is located in the Introduction section of the Comprehensive Plan, along with information about how the plan is used and the City’s historical context. One thing to address in the update is to make the Vision easy to find both within the plan and when searching online.

Process for Updating the Vision

A solid Community Vision has authentic and strong roots in the community. It builds from an existing legacy of city development. It differentiates the community from other cities, identifying and celebrating the unique qualities of this place that set it apart from others. It is not a simple reflection of current conditions but rather an aspirational statement that requires energy and effort to attain.

Since the beginning of the year, the City conducted public outreach and engagement that has helped set a foundation for reviewing the Vision. The joint board/commission forum and the public event at Crossroads both focused on asking the community about what they value and

their vision for the future of Bellevue. These events asked citizens what their vision is for Bellevue's communities, businesses, environment, and families.

The Comprehensive Plan update is proceeding with a series of community activities that will continue to help inform the Vision update. This includes experimenting with some new tools to help widen community engagement:

- Soliciting “best ideas” from the community using a Web tool called *Ideascale* that allows ideas to be sorted, rated, and commented on. “Best ideas” can be submitted for a number of topic areas, which correlate closely to the Vision statements and are consistent with several of the themes that we’ve heard from early public comment: quality neighborhoods, improved mobility, environmental stewardship, economic development, arts and culture, community health, parks and recreation, diverse community, and partnerships and collaboration. Already, more than 70 users have submitted more than 40 ideas and voted nearly 500 times. To encourage participation, the Best Ideas campaign is sponsored by Microsoft and Crossroads. It will continue through July 4 and will be promoted on BTV and other invents.
- An on-line survey
- The ongoing series of Comprehensive Plan update public events
- Continued discussions with City boards and commissions

The information we have heard so far and that the City will collect through these steps will serve to evaluate the current Vision. We heard some Council members note that the Vision update needs to occur early enough in the process to help guide the update of the plan's goals and policies. Using public comment and the submitted “best ideas,” staff proposes a public work shop hosted by the Planning Commission that categorizes ideas, audits the current Vision, and transforms groups of individual ideas into major themes. The outcome of this workshop would return to Council for further consideration at Study Session in the fall before the Planning Commission takes major steps toward drafting policy changes.

Interestingly, much of what we have heard so far reflects similar themes to the current Community Vision. That is, many see the economic opportunities of a city with a strong, growing Downtown and commercial areas, but want to preserve the natural areas and open spaces that make Bellevue a “City in a Park.” People love their neighborhoods, schools and community gathering areas. Many talk about the value of the increased diversity of the community and its cultural riches. The feedback so far confirms that updating the Vision should not start over “from scratch.” There is much that should be retained to ensure the Vision

continues to be rooted in the community's legacy, but the Vision should be updated to address community change, emergent issues and new opportunities.

It is recognized that updating the Vision in the Comprehensive Plan is different from, yet related to, the Council's interest in developing a strategic vision that would help guide upcoming budget discussions.

Bellevue Subarea Plan Update Process
(Revised after the May 13 Study Session)

Forming our Future – Updating the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

Bellevue is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan, the policy document that provides overall guidance for the growth and development of the City. The Comprehensive Plan includes 14 subarea plans, which provide direction for smaller geographic areas of the City. The subarea plans were developed over many years with extensive community participation, and today are in various conditions. Some, like the Downtown Subarea Plan and the Bel-Red Subarea Plan, have been updated in recent years and are in relatively good shape. Others have not been updated for over a decade and have major gaps in coverage and/or they have policies that are no longer relevant. This paper presents several options for processes to update the subarea plans, recognizing that this can be a very time-intensive process.

What is included in a Subarea Plan?

Subarea plans include descriptive text setting forth a brief history and character of a subarea, sometimes a Vision statement, and then geographic-specific policies that cover some combination of Land Use, Urban Design, Housing, Environment, Parks and Open Space, and Transportation. All subarea plans include a map of Comprehensive Plan land use designations for the subarea, a key feature given that GMA requires zoning to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Recent subarea plans have also included lists of transportation and other capital projects that link subarea planning to the city's long-range capital needs.

How are the subarea plans used?

Subarea plans are used in a variety of ways:

- **Comprehensive Plan Amendments**
The final decision criteria for Comprehensive Plan amendments, as set forth in the Land Use Code, require a finding that the proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. As part of the overall Comprehensive Plan, subarea policies are part of this analysis.
- **Land Use Approvals**
The decision criteria for many types of land use approvals, such as rezones, conditional use permits, and planned unit developments, require a finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Subarea plans are part of this analysis, and are often used to evaluate projects and make a judgment as to whether a project is compatible.

- **Capital Investment**

Some of the subarea plans include specific direction on public infrastructure. This is particularly the case for newer plans like BelRed that have integrated public facilities with other facets of subarea planning. In these cases, the subarea plans provide input into decisions on capital investment.

What is the value of subarea plans?

While subarea plans are an optional Comprehensive Plan element under GMA, they are commonly included in jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, and have been part of Bellevue's planning regime since well before GMA. Subarea plans must be consistent with the overall Comprehensive Plan, but they can address elements that are unique to different neighborhoods within the city. They add value by portraying the character and vision for different areas, creating policy direction relevant to specific needs of each area, focusing the Land Use Map for each area, and in some cases integrating the City's planned capital facilities with other subarea policy direction. Downtown and Bridle Trails are two examples of very different areas that have benefited from area-specific policy direction of their respective subarea plans.

What are some of the issues with our existing subarea plans?

Some years ago, the City ceased the practice of periodically updating subarea plans on a regular schedule. At the time, this was a deliberate decision to focus limited resources on strategic issues that were most critical to address, rather than simply updating whichever plan was next in rotation. Today a number of the plans are significantly out of date. They have not evolved with changes in demographics, the market, the maturation of neighborhoods, and newer issues that are of interest to neighborhoods.

A second issue is that existing subarea plans show a wide variation in the format and approach to policies, and some may be over-reaching for a policy document. Some policies are written as "quasi-code," creating detailed requirements that only apply in a very specific instance. This creates a lack of clarity on matters covered by the Land Use Code, may put the City at risk of "spot zoning" through plans, and departs from the premise that policies in subarea plans provide policy-level guidance and not regulatory standards.

Third, the subarea boundaries have not been updated in many years, and in some instances no longer reflect the neighborhood geographies recognized by Bellevue residents. For example, many residents of Somerset might be surprised to discover they are part of our current "Factoria" Subarea, and residents of the recent Eastgate annexation are part of our "Newcastle" Subarea. Since the area character and vision are important elements of an effective subarea plan, it may be overdue to re-calibrate these subarea boundaries to be ones recognized by and meaningful to area residents.

How have the plans been updated in the past, and what is the current procedure?

At one time the City conducted a regular program of periodic updates to subarea plans, based on a rotating schedule to ensure that all plans would remain reasonably current. The practice at that time was to form a citizens advisory committee for each subarea and work with staff over a period of 18 to 24 months to craft each update.

That approach was later abandoned and replaced by opening up subareas only to respond to significant major issues. Even then the geographic focus has not necessarily been aligned with subarea boundaries. The Bel-Red Plan for example encompassed parts of multiple subareas, and ultimately resulted in a new subarea boundary being carved out to follow the new planning area. The recent Eastgate commercial CAC focused on a commercial corridor that includes portions of four different subareas.

The current Land Use Code is consistent with the newer approach, that subareas are reviewed on a case-by-case basis when the Council determines a need, per the Code excerpt below:

LUC 20.30I.130.B.3. Subarea Plan Review. The City Council may initiate a review of a Subarea Plan in accordance with the procedure specified in subsection B.1 of this section when it concludes that the issues arising in a Subarea are of sufficient magnitude and complexity to merit review through a Subarea Plan review process.

Prior to review of a Subarea Plan, the Council shall approve a public involvement program that has the goal of effectively and efficiently soliciting a broad spectrum of public viewpoints.

OPTIONS

Following are some subarea update options for Council consideration, broken out by two major categories: update process and revising subarea boundaries. Developing a subarea update approach is an important consideration for the 2014 major Comprehensive Plan update. Community engagement during the Comprehensive Plan update will be a key opportunity to ask neighborhoods about their subarea plans and whether they feel that changes are needed. However, the actual work and community process to update the individual subarea plans would require additional time and resources that would stretch beyond the 2014 time period, and would not be part of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan work program.

A. Update Process

Routine updating of all subareas in the past was a fairly time-intensive and resource-intensive process. The following options are alternative approaches that reduce resources and time but provide for the Subarea Plans to be updated in a more timely way, with significant community engagement.

Option 1. Update subarea plans as needed, based on an initial sorting of their current condition. Sort may include: no update needed, limited update, or entire re-do of plan.

Option 2. Update all subareas in groups; e.g. Factoria+Newport Hills+Somerset as a single update process, while retaining individual subarea plans within the group. This would reduce the amount of time and effort going into the updates, but may provide less individual attention to each sub area.

Option 3. Only update the most needy subarea plans, leaving others as is.

Option 4. Resume regular, systematic updating of all subarea plans, on an individual basis. In the past, this was seen to have additional benefits beyond the Plan itself, in terms of community engagement and problem-solving, leadership development, etc.

B. Revising Subarea Boundaries

As noted above, in a number of cases the existing Subarea boundaries have lost touch with the affiliations actually recognized by Bellevue residents. Comprehensive Planning and Neighborhood Outreach staff have worked together to identify boundaries that better reflect current neighborhood groupings. As a starting point, these boundaries build from the Bellevue School District elementary school “catchment areas,” in that we’ve found this is a geography recognized by many residents, with and without children in the household. They are further refined to reflect “on the ground” realities, with input from an informal residents’ focus group. These boundaries will likely be used in the future for neighborhood programs. An option is to use the same boundaries for subarea planning.

Option 1. Realign subarea plan boundaries consistent with Attachment 2. This would require a strategy to transition from the existing subarea boundaries to the new boundaries as subarea plans are updated.

Option 2. Retain existing subarea plan boundaries.

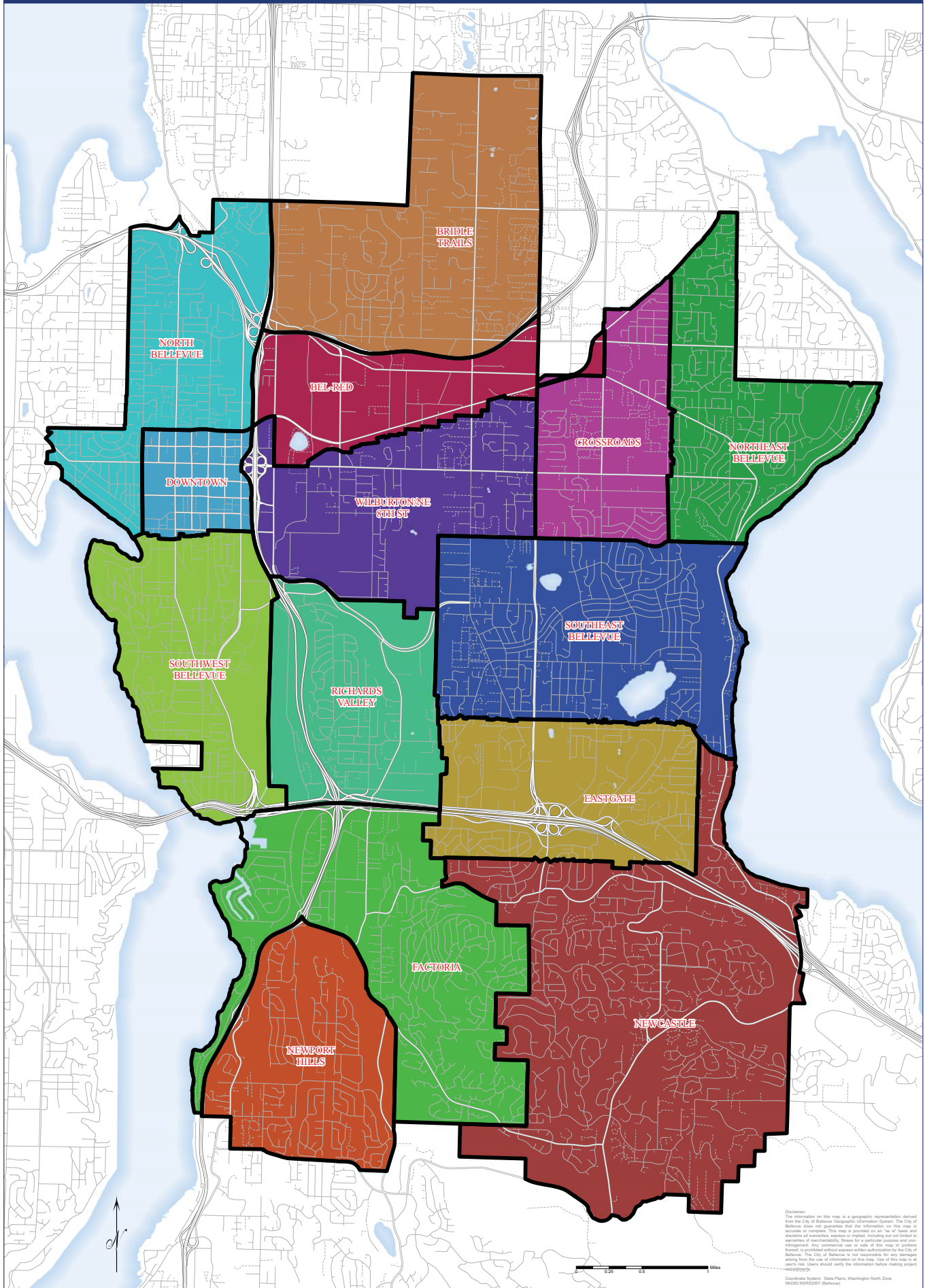
ATTACHMENTS

6A. Map of existing subarea plan boundaries

6B. Map of potential neighborhood areas

6C. Crossover between existing subareas and potential neighborhood areas

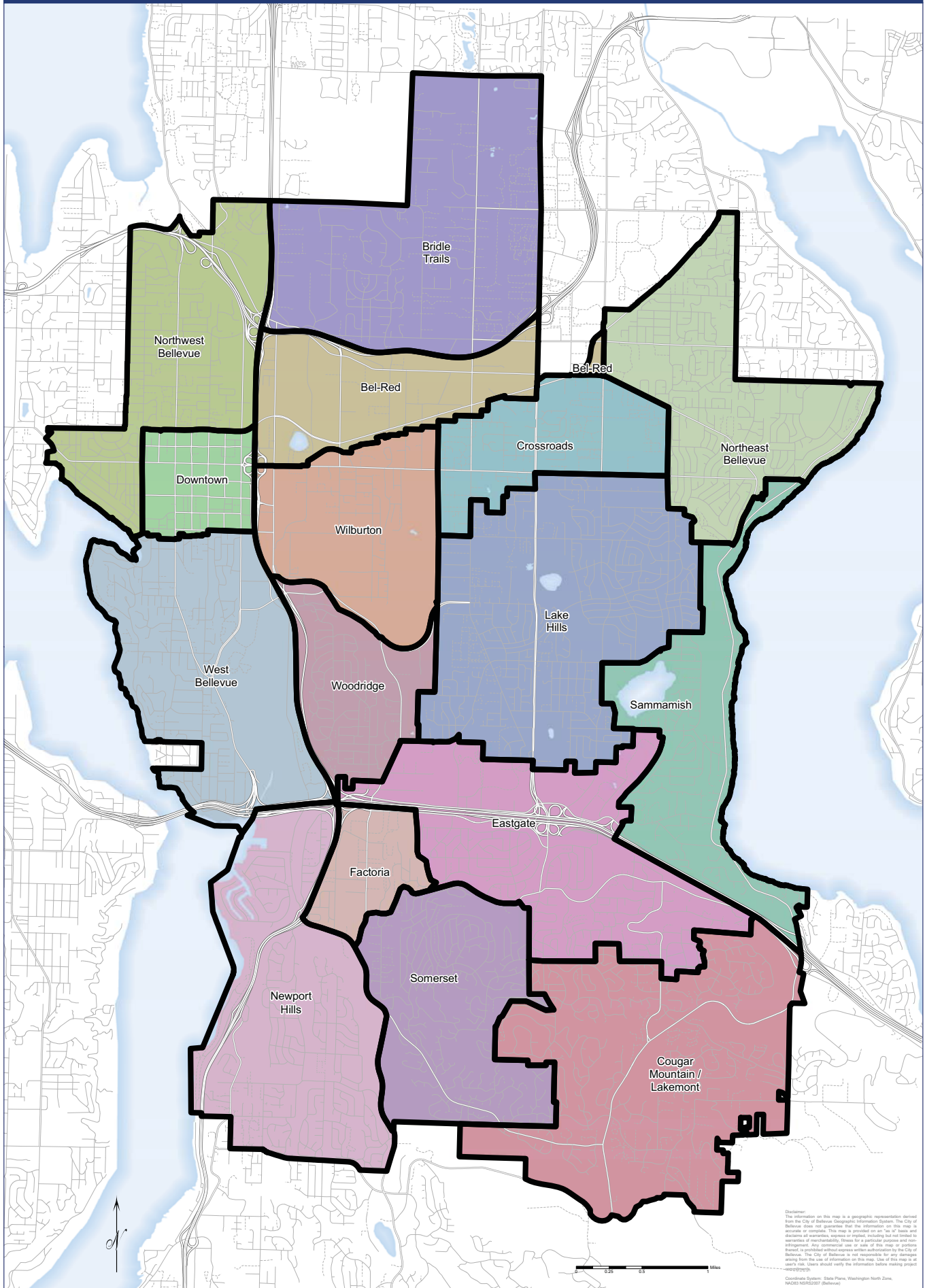
Existing Subarea Boundaries



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Coordinate System: State Plane, Washington North Zone, NAD83 NORS2007 (Bellevue)

Potential Neighborhood Areas

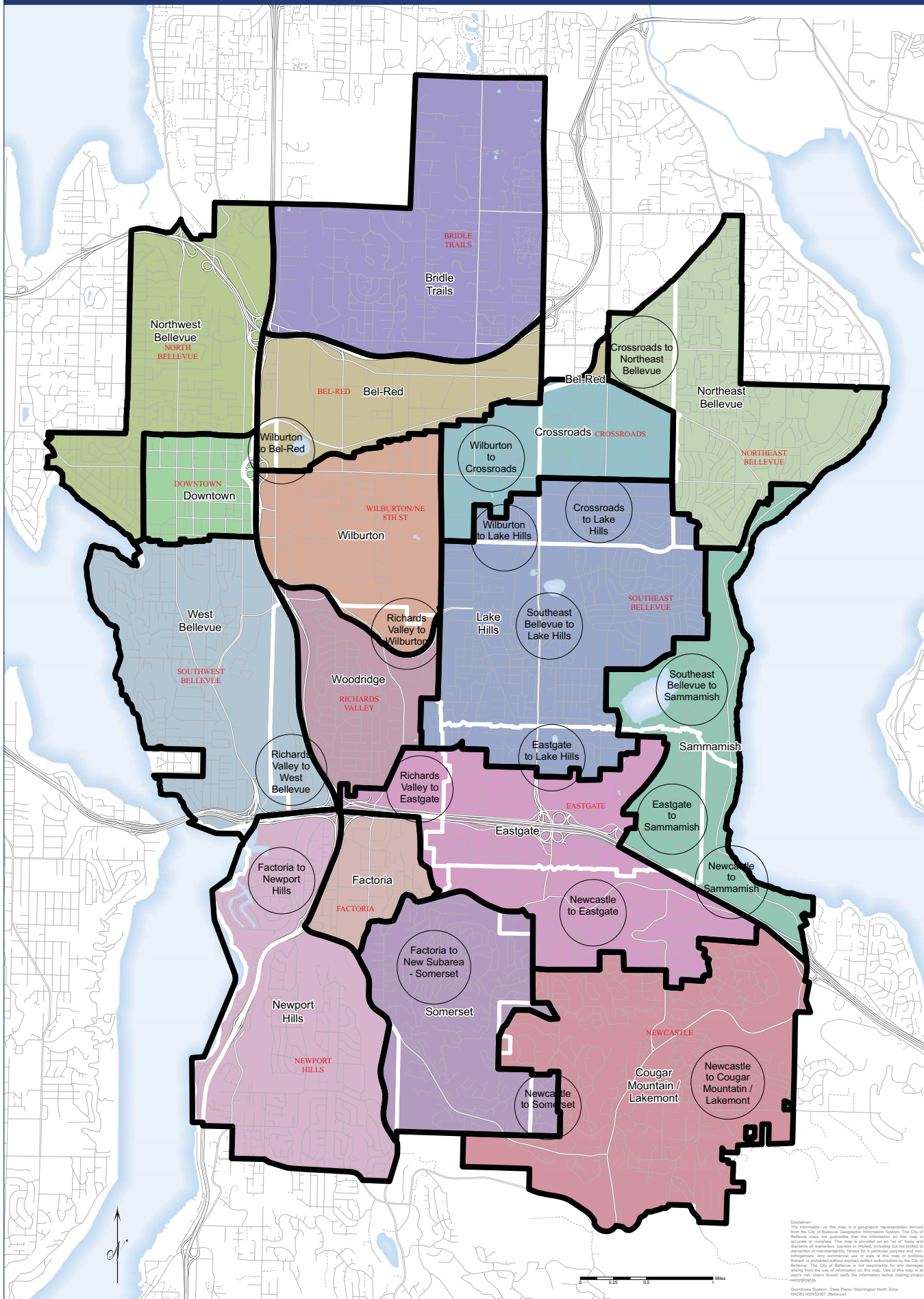


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Coordinate System: State Plane, Washington North Zone, NAD83 NORS2007 (Bellevue)

Potential Neighborhood Areas

With Current Subarea Boundaries



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Coordinate System: State Plane, Washington North Zone, NAD83 NORS2007 (Bellevue)