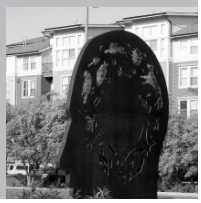
Downtown Livability Initiative

Citizen Advisory Committee

Final Report

October 13, 2014



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Introduction and Overview

The Downtown Livability Initiative Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is pleased to present this report of its work on the Downtown Livability Initiative. The CAC began work on the Downtown Livability Initiative in May 2013 and completed its charge in June 2014. Our focus has been to evaluate and identify Downtown Land Use Code amendments to implement the vision of Downtown Bellevue as a viable, livable and memorable place.

In this transmittal report we provide background information on the Downtown Livability Initiative and our recommendations. Specifically, we have considered and made recommendations in the following areas:

- Public Open Space
- Pedestrian Corridor
- Design Guidelines
- Amenity Incentive System
- Station Area Planning
- Building Height and Form
- Downtown Parking
- Other Topics

BACKGROUND

Downtown Subarea Plan

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2040 and King County's Countywide Planning Policies identify Downtown Bellevue as a regional growth center—a place where growth should be focused if the region is to further growth management goals such as reducing sprawl and retaining open space. Downtown Bellevue, with 2 percent of the City's land area, is expected to accommodate most of the City's future employment and residential growth.

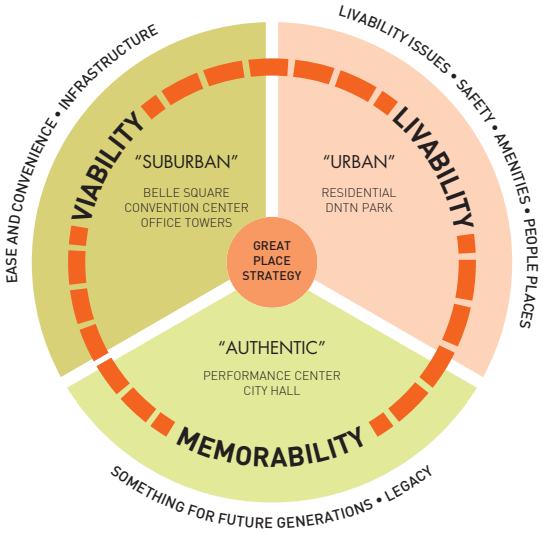
Bellevue's Downtown Subarea Plan establishes the vision and policy guidance that support development of Downtown as the primary urban center of the Eastside, consistent with regional, metropolitan and county-wide plans. The Downtown Subarea Plan describes a *Great Place Strategy* for Downtown:

> **Goal: The Great Place Strategy**
>
> To remain competitive in the next generation, Downtown Bellevue must be viable, livable, memorable, and accessible. It must become the symbolic as well as functional heart of the Eastside Region through the continued location of cultural, entertainment, residential, and regional uses located in distinct, mixed-use neighborhoods connected by a variety of public places and great public infrastructure.

The Downtown Subarea Plan is implemented through regulations (Land Use Code, Building/ Sidewalk Design Guidelines, Pedestrian Corridor Guidelines), public investments (transportation network, utilities infrastructure, parks, visitor and cultural facilities), and private-sector development and investment.

What is Livability?

While the CAC did not arrive at a consensus definition of livability, Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan states that "Livability is about quality; about weaving an urban fabric rich in resources and quality of life. Livable cities provide welcoming places to eat and sources of entertainment. Livable cities develop parks and open space. Truly great cities are also memorable. Memorable cities impart an unforgettable experience from having visited there. Memorable cities have strong, clear identities." The Plan notes that livability is developed through a dynamic process in which cities are relatively more viable, livable or memorable during different stages of growth.



Source: City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan.

Collectively, these factors work together to create a great place. The Plan notes that while Downtown Bellevue should work to make progress on all three of these dimensions, it is important to focus extra attention on graduating to a higher level of livability.

What is a 21st Century Urban Center?

The CAC looked at a variety of factors that define urban centers in the 21st century. These include a distinctive public realm, multiple overlapping activities, culture, mobility choices, a green and sustainable character and memorability. It can be summed up as a great place to live and a place that lives up to the desires to "live first and work second."

Why is livablity important?

Downtown Bellevue has been one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in Bellevue over the past couple of decades with the number of housing units increasing tenfold and the population following suit. In 1990, Downtown Bellevue had 703 housing units and 1,192 people. In 2012, Downtown had over 7,500 housing units and over 10,500 people. Importantly, it is anticipated that Downtown will play a major role in accommodating future population, with projected population expected to reach 19,000 by 2035.

Similarly, Downtown Bellevue is a major employment center for the city and the region. In 2000, Downtown had about 34,000 employees; that number has grown to 44,855 in 2013. In the future, it is anticipated that Downtown will continue its role as a major employment center, with projected growth to 70,300 jobs by 2030.

Based on historic and anticipated growth trends, it is clear that Downtown is well on its way to becoming a true urban center, attracting more and more people to live, work, shop and visit. In order to be successful in this important role, it is essential that Downtown continue to establish itself for its distinctive public realm, culture, vibrant character and sustainable environment—in short, a livable place. The importance of livability in retaining and attracting residents and workers is a key element of Downtown's future success.

Specific objectives of the Downtown Livability Initiative include:

- Better achieve the vision for downtown as a vibrant, mixed-use center
- Enhance the pedestrian environment
- Improve the area as a residential setting
- Enhance the identity and character of downtown neighborhoods
- Incorporate elements from Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link design work

The over-arching purpose of the Downtown Livability Initiative is to advance implementation of the Downtown Subarea Plan, in particular the Plan's central theme of making Downtown more Viable, Livable, and Memorable.

Council Principles for Downtown Livability Initiative

Project principles approved by the City Council.

Change	Principle
After several development cycles since the original Code adoption, it has become increasingly clear what is working and not working with development incentives.	1. Refine the incentive system to develop the appropriate balance between private return on investment and public benefit.
Downtown Bellevue has experienced a massive influx of new residents. This has helped create long hoped-for urban qualities, but also led to increased frictions that occur in a dense, mixed use environment.	2. Promote elements that make Downtown a great urban environment while also softening undesirable side effects on Downtown residents.
Downtown has seen a significant increase in pedestrians and street-level activity.	3. Increase Downtown's liveliness, street presence, and the overall quality of the pedestrian environment.
Through new development, Downtown has an opportunity to create more memorable places, as well as a distinctive skyline.	4. Promote a distinctive and memorable skyline that sets Downtown apart from other cities, and likewise create more memorable streets, public spaces, and opportunities for activities and events.
Environmental rules and strategies have evolved over the past decades since the Downtown Code was adopted.	5. Encourage sustainability and green building innovation in Downtown development. Enable design that promotes water, resource, and energy conservation, and that advances ecological function and integrity.
Downtown is attracting a younger and more diverse demographic mix, of workers, visitors, and residents.	6. Respond to Downtown's changing demographics by meeting the needs of a wide range of ages and backgrounds for an enlivening, safe and supportive environment.
As Downtown has become a more mature urban center, it is experiencing an increase in visitors and more interest in tourism.	7. Promote elements that will create a great visitor experience and a more vital tourism sector for Downtown.
We live in an increasingly global economy, with flows of goods and services, capital and people transcending state and national boundaries.	8. Strengthen Downtown's competitive position in the global and regional economy, while reinforcing local roots and local approaches.
Downtown's relationship with adjacent residential neighborhoods has evolved. It remains important to achieve a transition in building form and intensity between Downtown and adjacent residents, but nearby neighborhoods are also seeking the attractions that the city center brings.	9. Maintain graceful transitions with adjoining residential neighborhoods, while integrating these neighborhoods through linkages to Downtown attractions.
The development arena is becoming increasingly competitive, as Downtown continues to seek quality investments that implement the Subarea Plan vision.	10. Refine the Code to provide a good balance between predictability and flexibility, in the continuing effort to attract high quality development that is economically feasible and enhances value for all users.
As Downtown has matured and filled in, opportunities for quality development are becoming limited, and expectations have grown as to how each development contributes to the greater whole.	11. Promote through each development an environment that is aesthetically beautiful and of high quality in design, form and materials; and that reinforces the identity and sense of place for Downtown and for distinct districts.
Bellevue's park and open space system has dramatically evolved, for example with acquisition and planning for Meydenbauer Bay Park, development of the Downtown Park, and the nearby Botanical Garden on Wilburton Hill.	12. Advance the theme of "City in a Park" for Downtown, creating more green features, public open space, trees and landscaping; and promoting connections to the rest of the park and open space system.

DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

In spring 2013, the 15 members of the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee were appointed and confirmed by the Mayor and City Council. CAC membership included representation from the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Parks & Community Services Board, Human Services Commission, Environmental Services Commission, Arts Commission, Bellevue Downtown Association, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, small business, and nearby neighborhoods, as well as an architect, a Downtown resident, a City-wide representative, and a Downtown employer.

Charge to the Downtown Livability CAC

The City Council directed the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee to provide guidance to City staff in developing recommendations to update the Downtown Land Use Code. Guidance for the Committee's work was provided by the vision set forth in the existing Downtown Subarea Plan and by the Project Principles approved by the City Council on January 22, 2013 for this initiative, listed on the facing page.

The outcome of the Committee's work was expected to be a set of recommendations for Land Use Code updates to reflect changes in the evolution of Downtown Bellevue since the original code was adopted in 1981and to make Downtown a more livable and memorable place.

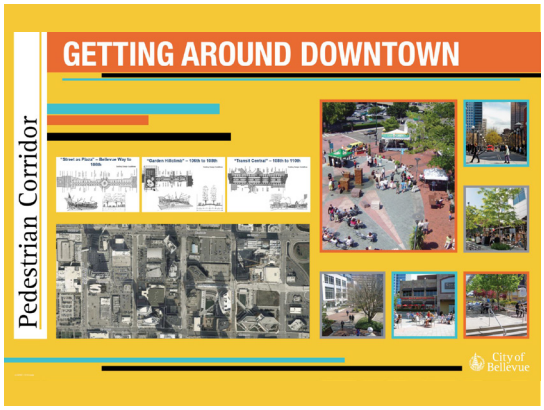
Integration with Downtown Transportation Plan Update

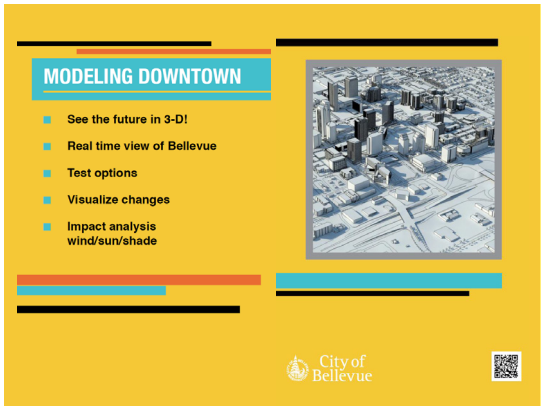
In addition to the consideration of recommended changes to the Land Use Code, the Project Scope included strong coordination with the companion Downtown Transportation Plan update that occured in this same timeframe. By accommodating anticipated significant increases in Downtown activity, the comprehensive set of improvements to facilities for both motorized and non-motorized travel proposed by the Downtown Transportation Plan will enhance Downtown vitality and economic development, improve sustainability, and support livability and public health. This work is compatible with and has been coordinated with the Downtown Livability Initiative. Downtown Transportation Plan recommendations were transmitted by the Transportation Commission to the City Council on September 23, 2013.

Downtown Land Use Code Audits

As part of the Downtown Livability Initiative, a series of Draft Land Use Code "audits" were developed in spring 2013 and published on June 19, 2013. The audits summarized existing code provisions and policies and described results on the ground, then drawing observations about where codes and policies are working well and where they could be improved. The purpose of the audits was to ensure that the Land Use Code features that are working well are retained and to focus changes on items needing improvement and new opportunities. The code audits provided an important foundation for considering potential Downtown Land Use Code changes

Boards from the November 2012 open house.





and are referred to in the discussion of recommendations in Chapter 2 of this report.

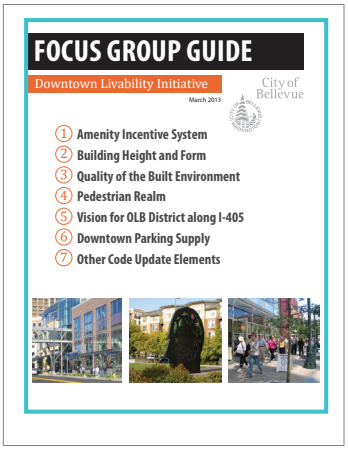
The topics addressed in the audits included:

- Building Height and Form
- Amenity Incentive System Design Guidelines
- Pedestrian Corridor and Public Open Spaces
- Vision for DT-OLB District
- Light Rail Interface/Station Area Planning
- Downtown Parking
- Mechanical Equipment Screening
- Vacant Sites and Buildings
- Recycling and Solid Waste
- Vendor Carts/Mobile Food Trucks
- Permitted Uses

The full audit report can be found on the project web site at: **www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm**, and a copy is available in the Council office.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

An important element of the charge to the CAC was to provide many opportunities for public input. To meet that charge, and to provide a wide range of ways to participate in the process, public outreach included traditional open houses, walking tours, focus group discussions, website review, and participation in CAC meetings. These are summarized below. Materials and supporting documents from these events are included on the project website at: http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/downtown-livability.htm.

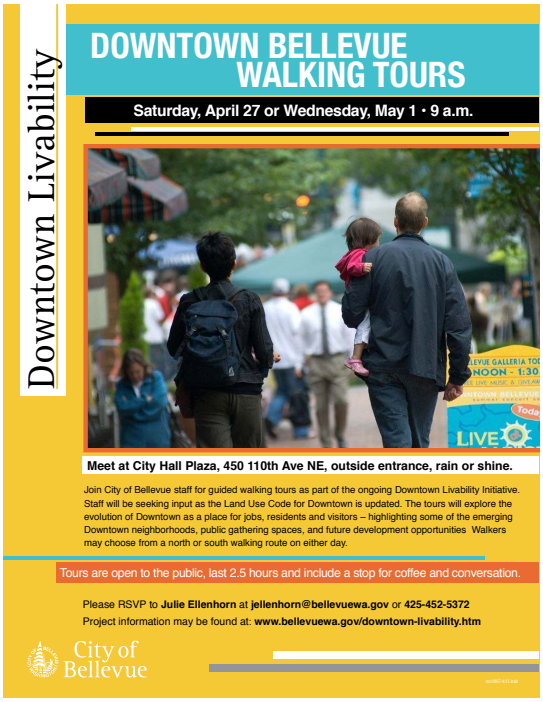


Pages from the March 2013 focus group topic discussion guide.

Open Houses

Open houses were held at three key points over the course of the project.

- **November 2012.** A project scoping and kick-off meeting provided a project overview and introduction and invited comment on the project scope and approach.
- **July 2013.** In order to provide multiple opportunities to participate, open houses covering the same information were held on two different days and times. The open houses provided an update on the project and to invited comment on the draft Land Use Code audits.
- **June 2014.** A public open house provided a project update and invited comment on the CAC's preliminary recommendations.



Walking tour flyer announcement.

Focus Groups

To gain targeted input from specific stakeholders, focus group meeting were held in March 2013, July 2013. and June 2014.

In March 2013, focus group meetings were held over the course of eight days. 140 persons representing architects and planners, property owners and developers, brokers, companies and retailers, the former Downtown Plan Advisory Body, institutions and visionaries, residents and employees participated in 18 different focus groups. Topics for focus group discussion included the amenity incentive system, building height and form, quality of the built environment, pedestrian realm, vision for the OLB District along I-405, Downtown parking supply and other code issues. For each topical area, participants were asked what is

Downtown Bellevue Residents Association meeting flyer.

working well and not so well, what are the key considerations and what suggestions could be provided. Meeting summaries were used to help inform the CAC, staff and public consideration of issues.

In July 2013, two focus group opportunities were provided in conjunction with the two open houses described above. These meetings provided an update on project progress and specifically on the draft Land Use Code Audits conducted as part of the project. Focus group discussions considered issues related to Downtown design, Downtown connectivity and miscellaneous topics.

The June 2014 focus groups followed an open house that provided a status report on the project and opportunities to comment on the CAC formation of recommendations. Following the open house, small groups of 10-12 participated in a facilitated discussion, with a full set of meeting notes from these meetings provided to the CAC prior to their final meeting.

Walking Tours

To provide firsthand experience of the Downtown environment, walking tours open to the public were conducted on April 27 and May 1, 2013. Each day featured two tours of Downtown focused on either north or south Downtown. A total of about 45 persons participated in the tours. The CAC was also given the opportunity to do a walking tour with City staff prior to their first formal meeting for orientation.

Community Meetings

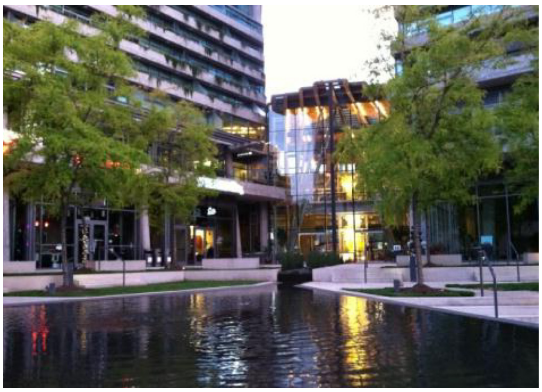
On January 16, 2014, City staff provided an updated on the Downtown Livability Initiative, focused on interests of Downtown residents to the the Downtown Bellevue Residents Association.

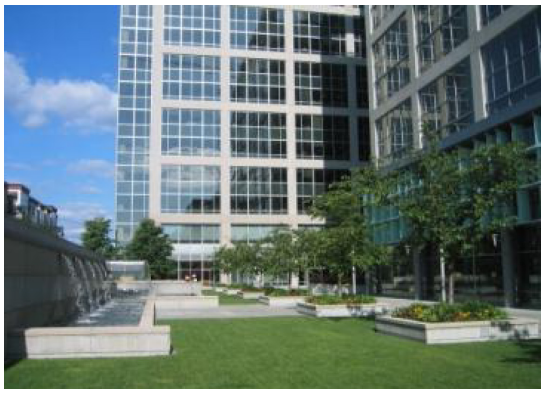
Website

The City provided updated project information on a project website to describe the project, invite sign-ups for email/text messages regarding project progress, announce workshops and community meetings, announce Citizen Advisory Committee meetings and provide background information and project reports.

Citizen Advisory Committee

The CAC convened thirteen times over the life of the project. CAC meetings were announced on the project webpage and noticed to the project mailing list. An opportunity for the public to comment was provided at each CAC meeting. Following each meeting, meeting minutes were provided on the project website.





Active and green spaces in Downtown Bellevue.

MAJOR THEMES

Consistent with its charge to provide guidance to City staff in developing recommendations to update the Downtown Land Use Code, the CAC has prepared recommendations in several major areas, including:

- Public Open Space
- Pedestrian Corridor
- Design Guidelines
- Amenity Incentive System
- Station Area Planning
- Building Height and Form
- Downtown Parking
- Other Topics

For each of these topics, the CAC developed one or more code-related recommendations and, in some cases, additional non-code recommendations. While each recommendation is specific to its topic area, there are a number of key themes that thread the recommendations together. These are briefly described below.

The Great Place Strategy is working. Downtown Bellevue is well on its way to becoming the vibrant and lively urban center envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. The CAC recommendations are consistent with and intended to help further progress toward this vision.

Recommendations are inter-related. While individual recommendations each address specific issues and topics, they have been considered in an integrated manner and designed to work together as a package that promotes Downtown livability.

Land use and transportation recommendations are integrated and consistent. The Downtown Livability Initiative and Downtown Transportation Plan have been considered in an integrated process. Working in concert, these two planning initiatives recommend a land use regulatory framework and comprehensive set of transportation improvements that will accommodate future growth and enhance Downtown vitality, sustainability, livability and health.

Walkability contributes to livability. Walkable places are often described as thriving, livable, and sustainable places. Through its recommendations for public open space, the Pedestrian Corridor, design guidelines, building height and form, and other topics, the CAC has focused on a walkable downtown. In order to promote long-term livability, a strong focus on walkability should continue to guide future decision-making.

Recommendations support station area planning. While Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan includes many policies supportive of transit use and transit-oriented development, the Land Use Code does not currently contain specific provisions stemming from station area planning. Recommended areas of focus include integration of the Downtown station area with the Pedestrian Corridor and revising the DT-OLB portions of the code to increase its compatibility with transit-oriented development.

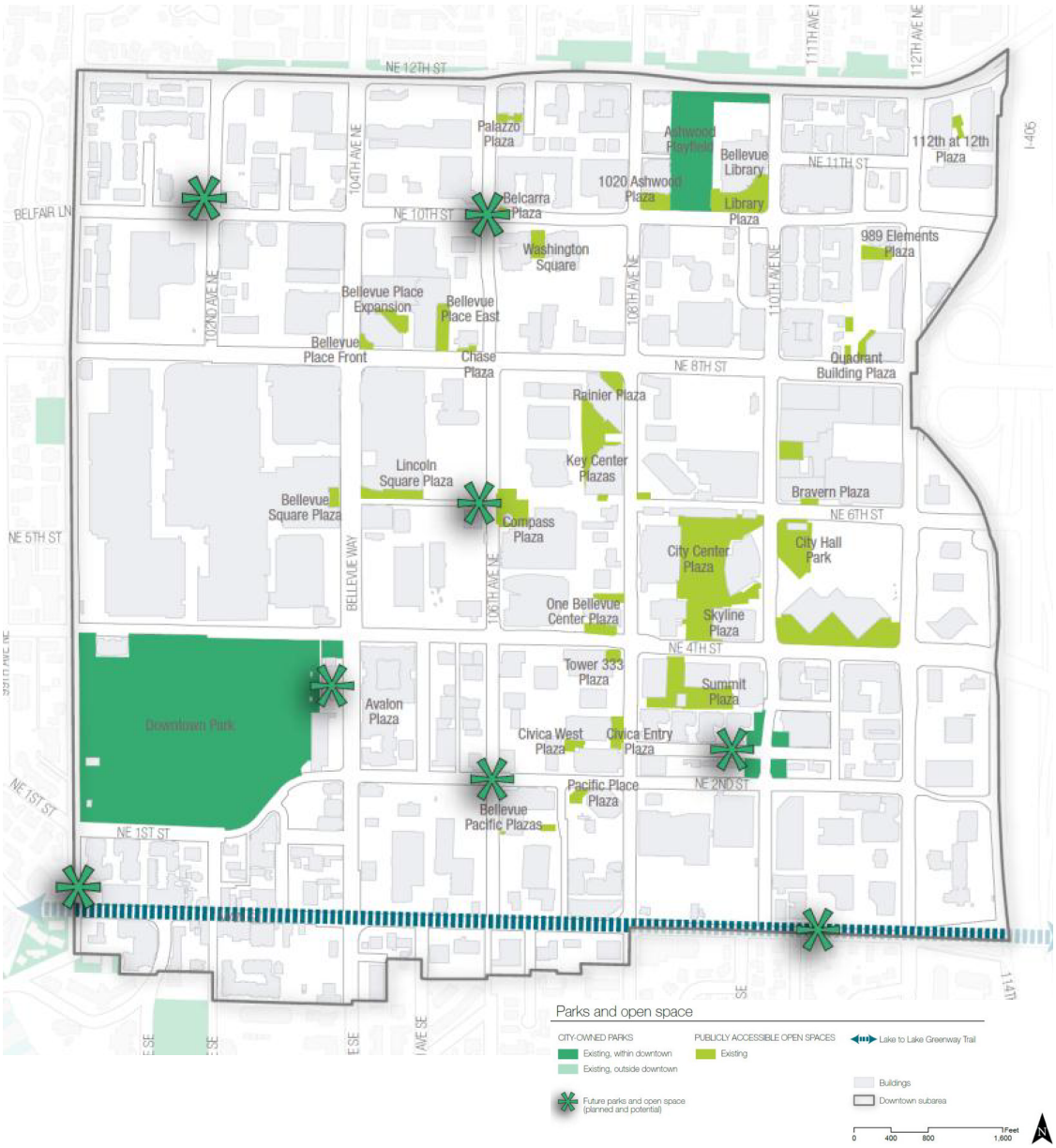
[02]

Committee Recommendations

The City Council convened the Downtown Citizen's Advisory Committee with the charge of identifying specific elements of the Land Use Code that should be amended in order to implement the vision set forth in the Downtown Plan. Within this context, the major focus areas for the CAC were:

- Public Open Space
- Pedestrian Corridor
- Design Guidelines
- Amenity Incentive System
- Station Area Planning
- Building Height and Form
- Downtown Parking
- Other Topics

The balance of this section describes the recommendations for each of these areas.



Public parks and open space.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Background

The Downtown Subarea Plan recognizes open space as a key component of a livable place and promotes its provision through the combined efforts of the City and private developers. The Plan encourages creation of both active and passive open spaces throughout Downtown.

Publicly provided open space includes the Downtown Park, Ashwood Park, City Hall and King County Library plazas and connections to the new Meydenbauer Park on Lake Washington.

Public open spaces provided by private development include plazas and "mini-parks" open to the general public. The Land Use Code Audit identifies 30 publicly accessible plazas and other public open space constructed by private development over the past three decades. The Land Use Code audit assessed the publicly accessible plazas from the perspective

How does public open space relate to livability?

- Provides recreation, and open space for all
- Increased "greening" of Downtown
- Presents opportunities for social interaction, places for families, and a healthy community
- Promotes a walkable and safe healthy community
- Will reinforce neighborhood identity

Compass Plaza during a summer lunchtime concert.

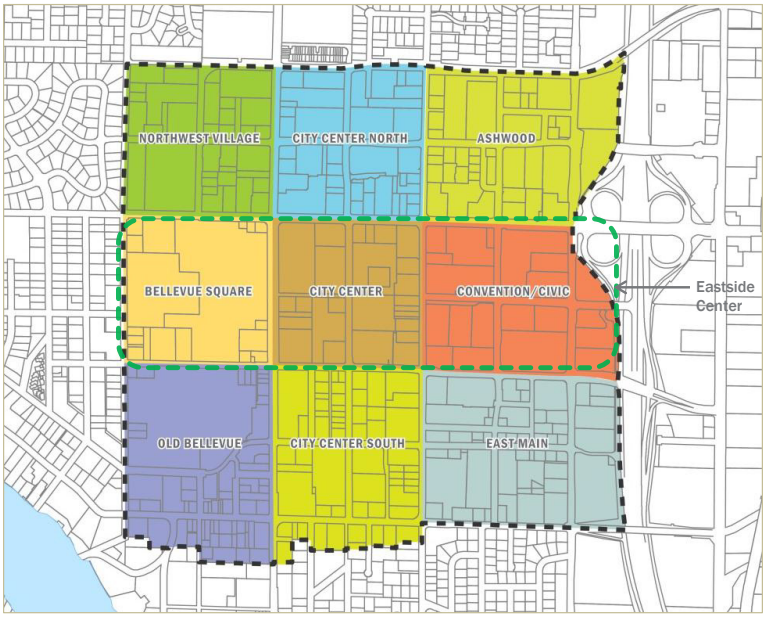
of four key themes: 1) access, linkages and information; 2) comfort and image; 3) uses and activities; and 4) sociability. While the majority of plazas scored well on the first two themes, most scored poorly in terms of uses and activities, and sociability. Many plazas were not busy at times other than the lunch hour, with little to draw people to the space throughout the day. Most plazas do not seem to attract a cross-section of Downtown demographics and in most cases, observations are that users do not seem to be fully utilizing, enjoying and socializing in the space. Most plazas were rated mediocre, with a few rated poor and two "great" spaces: Compass Plaza and the King County Library Plaza.

CAC Discussion

CAC discussion of public open space focused on the following key points:

- Open space is highly valued by the community and a key component of Downtown livability. While there are a number of outstanding parks and plazas, more will be needed as Downtown continues to evolve.
- The amount of open space needed for each district should be based on projected density.
- Downtown is becoming more attractive to younger residents and families with children. The parks and open space system should provide family-appropriate amenities.
- Focus on a collection of smaller parks in needed to serve Downtown areas instead of aggregating property to create another large park.
- Open space should be inviting to a wide range of ages and abilities, with programmable areas, green elements, benches, moveable seating, shade, weather protection and other similar features.
- Public open space, including publicly-accessible upper level plazas, need to be designed, accessed, and signed in a way that feels like part of the public realm.
- Implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for public open spaces. Require as part of development.
- Open space suitable for dogs is a current need for Downtown residents that will continue to grow.
- A community/recreation center would benefit Downtown Bellevue and could be part of a park facility or within the base of a high-rise building.

Downtown Park



Downtown Districts.

Recommendations

Code-Related

Open Space Strategy 1: Identify and incentivize different open space expressions for each neighborhood to help address each neighborhood's needs and enhance character.

To encourage distinct open space expressions and meet the districts' differing needs, this recommendation is to prioritize different types of open spaces in different districts. Bellevue's Downtown Subarea Plan, Downtown Design Charrette, and Streetscape Design Guidelines (Great Streets) highlight unique characteristics and goals for each district. See the district map and desired new open spaces for each district on this and the following page. Additional information about each district is provided in Appendix 1. The district profiles capture the

EXAMPLES OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS BY DISTRICT

Use/function/feature	Northwest Village	City Center North	Ashwood	Eastside Center	Old Bellevue	City Center South	East Main
New neighborhood park (city-owned)	●						●
Large plaza/mini park—min. sixe 4,000 SF	●	●(1)	◖	●(2)		◖	◖
Small plaza with active edges min. size 1,000 SF, max 4,000 SF	◖	◖		◖(4)		◖	◖
Internal corridors / alleys with addresses	●					●	●
Streetscape /open space with landscape amenities	◖	◖	◖	◖	●(3)	●(3)	●(3)
Community garden/pea patch	◖	◖	◖			◖	◖
Outdoor pet area	◖	◖	◖	◖	◖	◖	◖
Improvements made to city-owned parks	●		◖		◖		●
Recreational activities (e.g., children's play area, climbing wall, sports court)	◖	◖	◖	◖	◖	◖	◖
Major bicycle facility (e.g., repair stations storage, showers)				●(5)	●(5)	●(5)	●(5)

● = High priority, may be provided as part of development, city-initiated, or implemented through a public-private partnership

◖ = Priority, incentivized or developed through a public-private partnership

Notes

1. Intent: a plaza ringed with dining and drinking businesses near Tateuchi Performing Arts Center to foster entertainment activities.
2. Part of continued Pedestrian Corridor development.
3. Open spaces and amenities should support the Lake-to-Lake Trail and NE 1st Street.
4. These are encouraged along the internal connections to the Pedestrian Corridor, not necessarily on the Corridor itself. Some may be implemented on rooftops.
5. Bicycle amenities required as part of new development along the Pedestrian Corridor, Lake-to-Lake Trail, and 108th Ave NE. City adds features where needed.

essence of those plans and studies as well as Committee and stakeholder comments and form the basis for the table above.

Depending on priority and type of space, the implementation of the open space may be led by the City, the developer, or both. Specific actions include:

- Update the development amenity and bonus system including potential fee-in-lieu opportunities to capture prioritized open spaces. Note that the existing amenity incentive system may already contain some of the use/function/features proposed in the open space expression priorities.
- Update design standards and guidelines to incorporate district identity elements and priorities below.

Figure ground plan of Downtown with existing (solid line) and potential (dashed line) through-block

Open Space Strategy 2: Strengthen requirements and guidelines for integrating through-block connections internal to superblocks.

Through-block connections are required under existing code, but more guidance is needed on how they should be implemented. This approach suggests strengthening the design standards to achieve a high-quality network of human-scale spaces. The through-block connections should be a network of small streets and pedestrian paths that offer routes through Downtown off of the main arterials. Their purpose is to break down the scale of the superblocks by providing beautiful, comfortable and accessible paths. In some cases, they would act as linear parks that connect open spaces.

Design standards would focus on the following:

Create a smaller block pattern for pedestrians. By providing walking routes that cut through superblocks and provide access to adjacent properties, through-block connections create a finer-grained network for pedestrian mobility. Through-block connections also provide a walking environment that is quieter, and in some cases, more comfortable than sidewalks along busy arterials. The figure ground plan of Downtown indicates the ideal

network of paths. Ultimate alignment will depend on development patterns.

Activate edges. Through-block connections create more edges or surface area for building fronts to face a pedestrian route. In some cases these edges provide locations for small-scale retail uses, ground-floor residential entries, and overall, more interaction between the passerby and the building. "Alleys with addresses" is a term coined to describe these types of active through-block connections, which may be activated by some retail, restaurant, and other commercial entries. Ground floor live/work units, residential use, and office space can also help to bring life to the paths with multiple entrances and meaningful transparency along a building frontage.

However, "alleys with addresses" will be the exception rather than the rule, and many through-block connections will have lower levels of activating uses. In this case, the path itself, rather than the building interior, must provide the interest and comfort needed. Programming "dead" spaces, as well as installing creative lighting, interesting paving materials, seasonal landscaping and captivating art can help with activation.

Connect open spaces. Through-block connections should integrate with and connect the open space network. In many cases, the through-block connections themselves should be treated as open spaces with seating, landscaping, bicycle racks, art, and other elements that welcome people. Also, their design should respond to adjacent open spaces. Some through-block connections linking open spaces may act as open spaces themselves.

Maximize sunlight. Generally, the north south through-block connections will have an easier time obtaining day-time sunlight. East-west connections may receive more evening and morning sunlight in the summer, but direct sunlight during the day for most of the year will be difficult to ensure. Thus, considering ambient sunlight from reflective surfaces may be important. Also, the type and placement of trees in the through-block connections should maximize winter sunlight and summer shade. Seating should be placed where sunlight can warm surfaces in winter and where shade can provide a respite from summer heat.

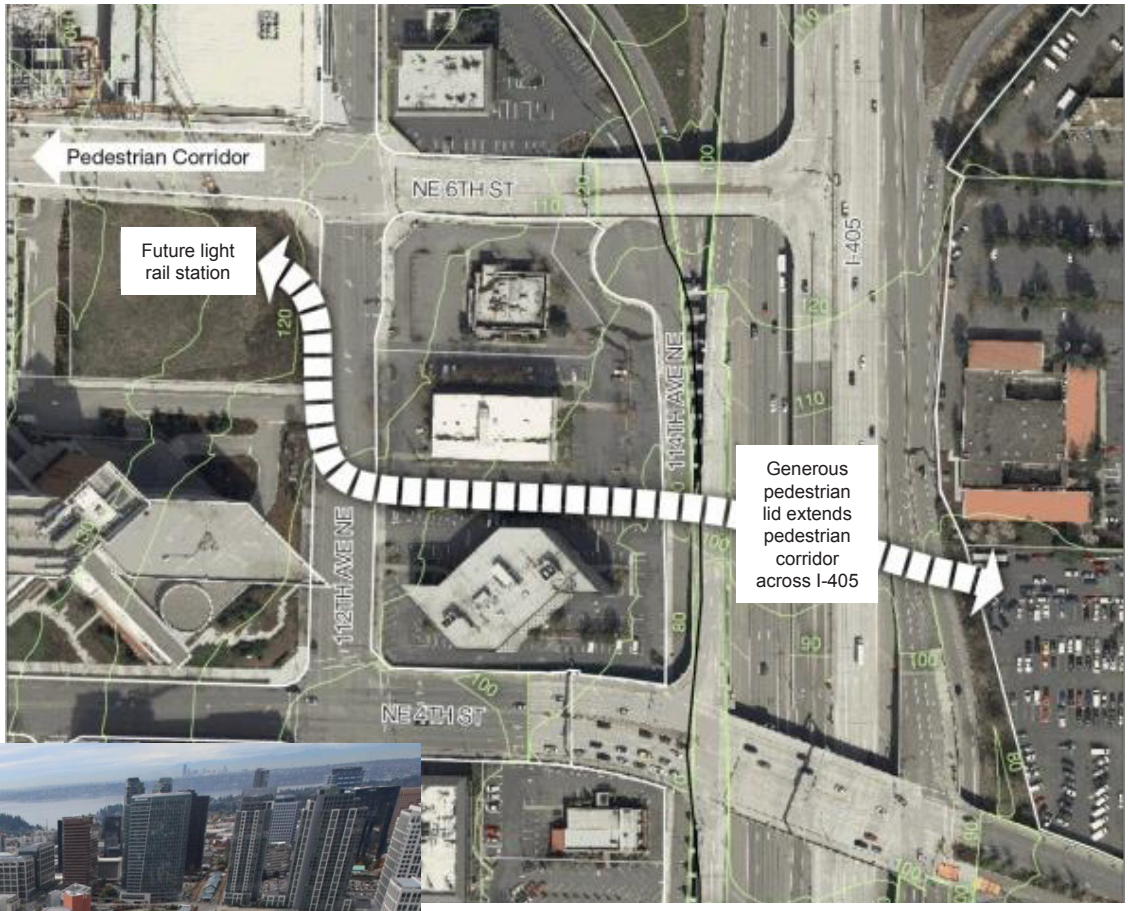
Accommodate bicycles, pedestrians, and motor vehicles. Many paths will be non-motorized, but when a through-block connection also provides for vehicular access, the priority should be given to pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort using an approach in which the street is informally shared among a variety of users. Landscaping, seating, lighting, and infrastructure should all serve as elements that reinforce that the human is the most important user of the space.

Reinforce district identity. The through-block connections create an opportunity to build on the character of each distinct neighborhood. For example, "alleys with addresses," meaning ground-floor retail along the through-block connections, is emphasized as a defining characteristic of Northwest Village. For Old Bellevue, through-block connections that feel like extending arms from Downtown Park are important. City Center South and East Main's through-block connections may focus on green infrastructure and a water flow theme to tie to the Lake-to-Lake Trail. Also, neighborhoods may use through-block connections as open space, using them for social gathering and perhaps closing them to vehicles for events.

Other Recommendations

Open Space Strategy 3: Explore potential for significant open space/park investment with a lid over I-405 from Downtown to Wilburton along roughly a NE 5th alignment.

This approach suggests acquiring land or easements and designing and constructing a generous open space connection over I-405 to provide a significant pedestrian/bike pathway and open space from Downtown to Wilburton. The lid would take advantage of



Potential alignment of pedestrian path over I-405 from Downtown to Wilburton.

Downtown Bellevue and I-405 between NE 4th and 6th Streets looking west.

the activity on the Pedestrian Corridor and in the Civic Center District and extend the light rail station service area to major new uses in the Wilburton District. The alignment over I-405 would roughly follow NE 5th Street to avoid the on and off ramps at NE 6th and 8th Streets while staying as level as possible and making it more inviting to a wide variety of users. The lid would be wide enough (min. 100 ft) to create a major open space and place-making opportunity.

Open Space Strategy 4: Explore methods for helping to fund Downtown open space acquisition and improvement

The CAC recognizes the critical importance of open space to the future livability and character of Downtown. While private development will result in some new amenities, in order to achieve the full open space vision for Downtown, additional public investment is essential. The City should investigate other funding sources to realize the vision.

PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR

Background

The Pedestrian Corridor is the pedestrian-focused east/west spine through Downtown that forms connections between the retail district anchored on Bellevue Way, the entertainment street of 106th Avenue NE, the commerce street of 108th Avenue NE, and the Bellevue Transit Center, currently terminating at 110th Avenue NE with City Hall Plaza and a plaza at the Bravern. The Corridor is intended to present a coordinated design of continuous pedestrian-oriented frontage, plazas, walkways, landscaping, and enclosed plazas for its entire length. It is made up of three unique segments:

1. Street at Plaza: a mix of vehicles and pedestrians running from Bellevue Way to 106th Ave NE. Activities are encouraged to reach out into the street. It may be closed to vehicular traffic periodically for special events, festivals, and street fairs.
2. Garden Hillclimb: running from 106th Ave NE to 108th Ave NE. This is a pedestrian-only segment with a garden-like character in contrast to the hardscape of the other segments.
3. Transit Central: running from 108th Ave NE to 110th Ave NE. This is a pedestrian and transit focused segment with increased area devoted to pedestrians and access to the Bellevue Transit Center. In the future its connection to the East Link NE 6th Station will pull this activity to the east.

The Pedestrian Corridor also includes a series of open spaces called "Major Public Open Spaces." These spaces provide a sense of gateway, and focal points for activity. The Corridor and the Major Public Open Spaces are constructed as part of new development using common design elements. Only 50% of the property along the Corridor has been developed, providing the uses and spaces that activate the Corridor as envisioned. The Pedestrian Corridor will become increasingly important as new development occurs along the corridor and light rail becomes an anchor destination on the east end. Sections of the corridor are difficult for wheeled users to navigate due to narrow passages, steep sections, tight turns and poor sightlines.

Through community outreach for the Downtown Transportation Plan, the City learned that the Pedestrian Corridor is a high priority route for both walking and bicycling—yet the design does not meet the mobility needs of all users, particularly bicycles and other wheeled users.

As a "handoff" to the Downtown Livability Initiative, the Downtown Transportation Plan developed a Pedestrian Corridor concept design whose goal was, to paraphrase a community comment: "welcome bicyclists, but don't scare the pedestrians." Using

How do enhancements to the Pedestrian Corridor relate to livability?

- Creating a must-see Downtown attraction
- Adding character and memorability to Downtown
- Creating a more green Pedestrian Corridor
- Creating a more walkable, safe, and comfortable Downtown
- Encouraging multi-modal travel
- Opportunities for more programmed events in Downtown
- Responding to emerging changes, including the NE 6th Street light rail station

designs that indicate the preferred bicycle route and incorporate traffic-calming techniques for bicyclists, the corridor can be more accommodating to all users. Design components could consist of special paving treatments, wayfinding and widening. The preliminary Pedestrian Corridor design concepts were refined through the Downtown Livability Initiative and will be implemented as development occurs or as a City project.

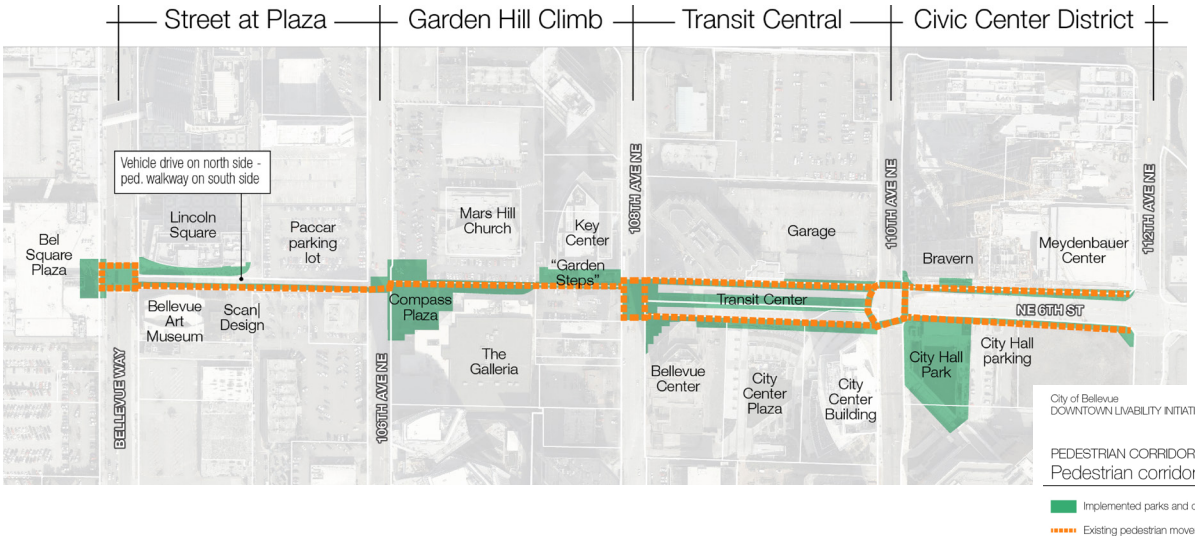
CAC Discussion

At a workshop in January 2014, the CAC made a number of observations about the current design and function of the Pedestrian Corridor. The key points of the discussion are summarized below.

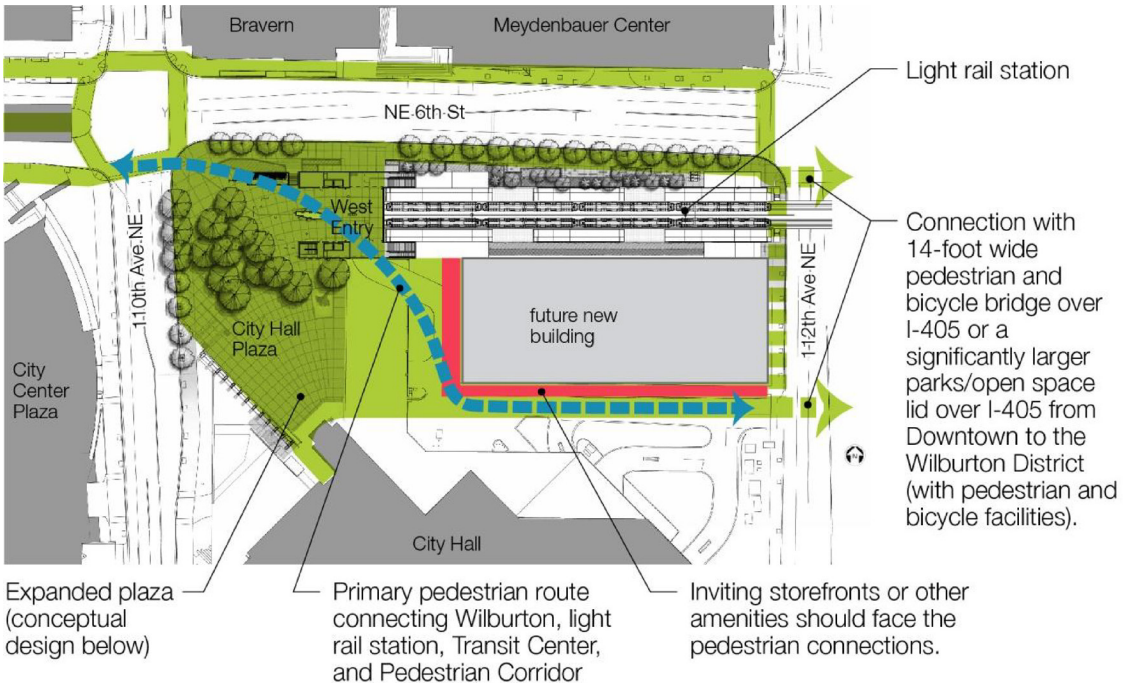
- The Pedestrian Corridor has not yet realized its full potential, in part, because it is not complete and the uses and activities intended in the design guidelines are not implemented consistently. Differences of opinion exist on whether or not changes are needed regarding the design of the Corridor or if interventions are necessary to develop some of the missing pieces.
- Any Code impediments or other restrictions that are making it difficult to have outdoor dining, activated storefronts, green elements, or an art walk, should be removed. Allow developers to earn credits for improvements or enhancements for portions of the Corridor not directly adjacent to their property, or allow for public-private partnerships to accomplish improvements in the near term.
- The Pedestrian Corridor should be thought of as a linear town square with "rooms" or segments along the way that foster different activities. More green elements, programmable spaces, opportunities for experimentation, better weather protection, and signage/ wayfinding should be added to the Corridor to make it a place for all seasons and for people of all ages.
- The Pedestrian Corridor should be better managed, possibly by the City Parks Department, the combined efforts of the adjacent property owners, or another entity.
- The name "Pedestrian Corridor" is not very intriguing; consider renaming and/ or rebranding.
- There was interest from a few CAC members in exploring whether it is necessary to retain auto lanes in the segment of the Pedestrian Corridor between 106th Avenue NE and 105th Avenue NE.

The CAC used the following criteria to evaluate potential recommendations for the Pedestrian Corridor:

- Effectiveness in enhancing the Pedestrian Corridor's character and memorability through:
  - » Creation of an interesting and varied pedestrian travel sequence
  - » Human scale
  - » Attractiveness
  - » Comfort, safety, and amenities
  - » Adjacent building design and interface
  - » Activities and programming
- Responsiveness to emerging changes, including the NE 6th Street light rail station.
- Interim, incremental improvement versus permanent conditions.



Pedestrian corridor segments.



Basic principles for the Pedestrian Corridor's Civic Center District.

Recommendations

Code-Related

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 1: Extend the Pedestrian Corridor to the east to be more integrated with the Civic Center District and the future light rail station.

The proposed approach is to add a fourth segment to the Pedestrian Corridor named "Civic Center District", extending east from 110th Ave NE to 112th Ave NE. The alignment of this section of the Corridor will follow NE 6th Street as well as a route through the City Hall superblock. The extension will facilitate connection to the future light rail station and the transit-oriented development

View looking southwest of redesigned City Hall Plaza to accommodate light rail

South side of NE 6th Street at 112th looking west at light rail station.

planned for the station area, and would integrate with the redesign of City Hall Plaza. It would also support a unified Civic Center campus that connects back to the rest of Downtown. In addition, it could connect to a potential future open space connection across I-405, as described in the previous section. The following design objectives are intended to guide the corridor's design in the Civic Center District:

- Provide an attractive, comfortable and safe Pedestrian Corridor that links the Transit Center, light rail station, Meydenbauer Center, City Hall, Metro site, and the future pedestrian/bicycle bridge to Wilburton. Two alignments will be followed: along NE 6th Street and a meandering route through the City Hall superblock.
- Provide pedestrian-oriented uses and other pedestrian activation wherever new buildings abut the Pedestrian Corridor in this segment.
- Integrate the Corridor's design with the reconfigured City Hall Plaza/Campus, and conceptual direction for the Metro site.
- If at all possible, provide for a direct pedestrian connection between City Hall and Meydenbauer Center. This may be in the form of a pedestrian bridge over the light rail system.

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 2: Provide for mostly continuous weather protection along the Corridor.

Under the current Pedestrian Corridor guidelines, weather protection is optional, and no design guidelines are specified. In practice, the extent and placement of weather protection on the frontages of new development has resulted in an overall Pedestrian Corridor with significant gaps. While the Transit Center provides continuous weather protection between 108th Ave NE and 110th Ave NE (primarily for transit users), the weather protection along the rest of the Corridor is generally not effective in providing a comfortable experience in bad weather.

The proposed approach is to provide a more pleasant pedestrian experience and covered areas for pedestrian movement,

outdoor dining and other activities along the Pedestrian Corridor by increasing the amount and continuity of weather protection. The following guidelines would be used for the design and implementation of weather protection.

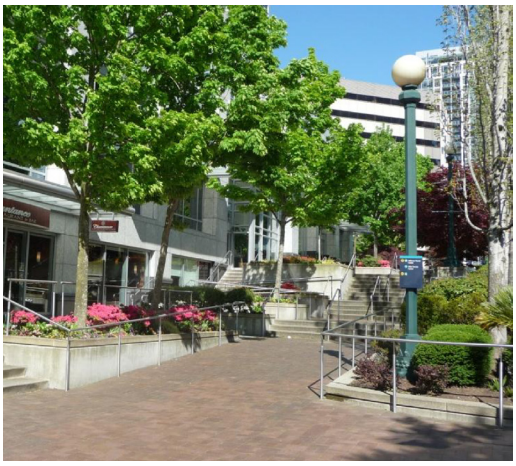
- All new development would be required to provide at least one of the following.
  - » Building front weather protection (e.g. canopy over at least 75 percent of building frontage on the Corridor). The weather protection must be wide enough to cover a pedestrian walking area, and be between roughly 8 feet and 15 feet above grade.
  - » Self-supporting weather protection along at least 75 percent of the building frontage. The weather protection must be at least 12 feet wide to accommodate two small groups passing. (This would need to be coordinated with the opportunity for other freestanding weather protection either publicly or privately constructed in each section of the Pedestrian Corridor.)
  - » Other means of weather protection as approved by the City.
- Weather protection would be provided at "refuge" points at all street intersections along the Corridor in one of two ways: incorporated into buildings at the corner (if canopy on marquees can be within 20 feet of the intersection), or as a freestanding element adjacent to the intersection.
- In addition, there may be opportunities to provide larger weather protection structures in certain areas of the Pedestrian Corridor. A potential location could be a portion of the "Garden Hillclimb", between 107th to 108th Ave NE.

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 3: Identify methods to better activate the Corridor (including identification of existing Code barriers inhibiting activation).

Given the basic parameters of human sight and movement, research has shown an engaging pedestrian environment provides points of interest at regular intervals. While there are currently no major code barriers to greater activation of the Pedestrian Corridor, there are steps that could be taken to further enhance the level of activity, character, and memorability of the Corridor. The proposed approach is to amend the design guidelines to produce a sequence of stimulating major and minor points of interest and opportunities for diverse activities and engagement as pedestrians move through and linger in the Corridor. Many of the suggested elements are on buildings or associated with the public space fronting them. The elements are intended to stimulate informal activity for individuals or small groups. It is envisioned that these elements will change over time and can be added with new development.

This portion of the Corridor currently lacks any significant activation (left).

Building entrances and outdoor seating help activate this portion of the Garden



Green areas incorporated with informal seating (left).

Outdoor restaurant seating in a "garden setting" (right).

Major Points of Interest: To occur every 60-90 feet along Pedestrian Corridor, or about 15-20 seconds at walking speed. Examples include large landscape features, such as a water feature/fountain/rain garden/ tree group; an area designated for programmed events; a gateway structure, such as an archway or a significant piece of artwork; a change in building façade; or a view or vista.

Minor Points of Interest: To occur every 12-18 feet along Pedestrian Corridor, or 4-second intervals at walking speed. Examples include permanent artwork; wayfinding kiosks; areas for temporary use (e.g. flower stand, newsstand); special walkway treatments (e.g. inlaid art, pavement mosaic); benches, picnic tables, outdoor eating areas, moveable seating; or special architectural elements (e.g. sundial, green wall).

Additional Programming Opportunities

Scheduling formal and informal events is an important part of most great public spaces. Currently, programmed events and activities along the Corridor are intermittent with most occurring in the summer months including the Bellevue Downtown Association's "Live at Lunch" series, Bellevue Arts Fair, and Bellevue Farmers Market. In addition, Snowflake Lane occurs along Bellevue Way during the holiday season. Additional planned and spontaneous activities should be encouraged to bring life to the Corridor for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Organized through an "Activity Overlay", there may also be opportunities to encourage more temporary activities that would change by time of day and season. In examples from elsewhere, having a centralized organizer has helped in

the continuity and proliferation of events. The range of events might include farmers' markets, outdoor coffee carts or food trucks, temporary art shows, small performance areas, and play and game areas for children and adults.

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 4: Provide opportunities to add landscaping and green elements.

The proposed approach is to include a "landscape concept" in the updated Pedestrian Corridor Design Guidelines that identifies landscape objectives and general principles for each block and the Corridor as a whole. Proposed development projects along the Corridor would then be prepared to demonstrate how the landscaping elements proposed for their development meet the landscape concept for that block. This provision will give the proponents a good deal of flexibility but still provide the basic guidance necessary to achieve the Corridor objectives. Sustainability in landscape and infrastructure design can also be encouraged. The landscape concept will address:

- A strategy for providing both unity and variety along the corridor. Some elements, such as distinctive canopy trees might be used to provide a sense of continuity while others, such as seasonal floral displays could add variety and special interest at key points.
- A landscape palette of plant species and fixtures that will contribute to a desirable pedestrian experience in the Pedestrian Corridor.
- An appropriate ratio of evergreen to deciduous plants and trees, including consideration of those that provide habitat and food for birds and wildlife.
- Fixtures that display attention to design, materials, and craftsmanship.
- Consideration of green infrastructure, including naturalized storm water management techniques through features such as swales, runnels, grates, downspouts, or splash pads used in an artistic or expressive way, along with measures such as permeable pavements and stormwater capture. And, providing
- Options for a wide variety of landscape types including greenwalls, publically accessible roof gardens, and artistic trellises.
- Other Pedestrian Corridor objectives such as those for pedestrian use and activity, safety, opportunities for art, etc.

Sustainability features incorporated into a pedestrian area.

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 5: Integrate bicycles and other wheeled users to coexist with pedestrians.

ADA Accessibility

There are ADA accessible routes in place for the full length of the Corridor from Bellevue Way to City Hall Plaza. It is, however, important to note that accessibility standards have changed over time and will likely continue to evolve in the future. With about 50 percent of the frontages along the Corridor yet to redevelop consistent with the Pedestrian Corridor guidelines, the proposed approach is to have future portions add to ADA accessibility through increased seating and resting areas, enhanced wayfinding, and otherwise meeting barrier-free standards in place at the time of development.

Current use of the north side of the Pedestrian Corridor for bicycle use near the Transit Center.

"Bike to Work" month is held each May in the Puget Sound Region—cyclists near the Rider Services Building.

Bicycle Accommodation

The 2009 Bellevue Pedestrian & Bicycle Transportation Plan calls for an off-street path along NE 6th Street (Pedestrian Corridor) from Bellevue Way to 110th Ave NE to be developed consistent with design guidelines, and for interim improvements to be pursued where appropriate. No City capital investment or interim improvements have been completed since the plan's adoption. The only mention of bicycles in the current Pedestrian Corridor guidelines is that bicycle parking racks should be encouraged near adjacent streets. The recent work on the Downtown Transportation Plan identified the need to better accommodate bicycles in the NE 6th Street Corridor in response to increasing demand, limited existing east-west bicycle routes, and the need for connectivity across I-405 via the planned pedestrian-bicycle bridge.

The proposed approach to be implemented in conjunction with future development of the Pedestrian Corridor is to allow for safe, low-speed bicycle accommodation of various types, while not disrupting pedestrian movement, safety or comfort. Strategies by segment are as follows:

- Between Bellevue Way and 106th Ave NE: Sign this two-lane portion of NE 6th Street (not fully developed at this time) as a shared facility for bicycle use. This section of NE 6th Street is relatively flat, has low-speed, low-volume auto traffic, and few driveways or intersections.
- Between 106th Ave NE and 108th Ave NE: Accommodate bicycle use of the Pedestrian Corridor in this segment with signage that provides directions and that clearly communicates that pedestrians have the right of way. Because of the topography, explore the feasibility of a signed route that bicyclists can use to safely navigate the grade between 106th Ave and 108th Ave NE.
- Between 108th Ave NE and 110th Ave NE: Use the wide sidewalk on the north side of NE 6th Street adjacent to the Rider Services Building for a bicycle route, accomplished with signage and special surface treatments. This could be done to enhance transit/light rail station access in advance of redevelopment or incorporated into a redevelopment of property to the north.
- Between 110th Ave NE and 112th Ave NE: Use the sidewalk on the south side of NE 6th Street for the bicycle route. The bicycle route will connect west at the 110th Ave NE/NE 6th Street intersection and east to the planned pedestrian/bicycle crossing of I-405.

The rationale for the approach presented

above is that the Pedestrian Corridor is first and foremost for pedestrian movement and activity, with an increasing variety of uses and activity as Downtown continues to develop and light rail opens. Sharing a fairly limited amount of space presents challenges relating to potential pedestrian-bicycle conflicts that need to be addressed Guidelines for the design and implementation of improvements relating to bicycles mixing well with pedestrians could include:

- Maintain pedestrian priority throughout the Corridor, and mark designated lanes or paths for bicycles only in special circumstances to increase pedestrian safety.
- When incorporating bicycle provisions in the Corridor, allow for a 10-foot wide two-way operating path.
- Avoid locating a bicycle route where the likelihood exists of heavy pedestrian traffic or known or planned gathering places.
- Install measures (signage, design elements) as appropriate to keep bicycle speeds below 10 mph (up to 15 mph for the in-street bicycle facility between Bellevue Way and 106th Ave NE).

Other Recommendations

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 6: Invest in key segments of the Corridor.

Develop a plan for public investment in key sections of the corridor (e.g. Garden Hillclimb, segment between 110th and 112th, bottleneck west of 108th)

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 7: Develop amenities to make the Corridor inviting to pedestrians.

Design and develop measures to provide wayfinding, overall weather protection, lighting, upgraded pedestrian crosswalks, and other features to make the corridor more inviting.

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 8: Investigate opportunities for public/private partnerships.

Seek opportunities to build and expand upon partnerships between the City, Corridor property owners/tenants, and others to support richer array of events and activities along the corridor

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 9: Seek creative funding for a grand design.

Explore creative funding to help design and implement a City-sponsored "grand" design for the corridor

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy 10: Consider the potential for a new identity for the Corridor.

Explore the potential benefits of changing the corridor's name and/or "re-branding" it to increase its appeal.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Background

The Downtown Subarea Plan and the Urban Design Element include extensive direction on the design qualities expected of new development. This policy direction is implemented through the design guidelines established in the Land Use Code and the administrative design review process. In particular, new development is to be aesthetically attractive and pedestrian-friendly, and is to minimize or mitigate its impacts on the public realm. This helps ensure that new development will contribute to the urban environment and create an increasingly vibrant city center.

An important distinction of design guidelines is that in many instances, their implementation is open to some degree of flexibility (i.e., in contrast to a rigid numerical standard, the design guidelines may be applied differently by individual developments). The Code includes design guidelines that apply to the entire Downtown, as well as district-specific guidelines that reinforce the character of the various Downtown neighborhoods. Updated design guidelines can incorporate newer urban design ideas that have emerged about the future of Downtown, further reinforce the pedestrian vitality of the area, and promote the unique character of neighborhoods within Downtown and establish a more streamlined and accessible review process.

Under current code, design guidelines are applied through the Land Use Administrative Design Review Process. All new development and major remodels are subject to the guidelines. Design Guidelines are found in multiple code sections and based on where an individual development is located, multiple set of guidelines apply. For example development in the Core would be regulated by 1) Core Design District, 2) Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Guidelines, and 3) Building/Sidewalk Relationship Guidelines.

How do design guidelines relate to livability?

- Design Guidelines influence development to create a functional, safe, aesthetically pleasing and sustainable Downtown.
- More beautiful, interesting, memorable Downtown
- Promotes walkability, and a healthy community
- Strengthens neighborhood character

Multiple sections of design guidelines can apply to a single development, in some cases creating repetition and/or confusion.

The Land Use Code audit assessed development character in Downtown. The audit noted that, in some cases, the relationship between buildings and the sidewalk is poor and includes narrow sidewalks along key streets, discontinuous weather protection, blank walls and lack of detailing, detracting from the overall pedestrian experience. In addition, some recently constructed building facades are lacking in human-scaled details that can add character to the building and the streetscape. While many recent developments have successfully executed facades to add character and visual interest, a number would have benefitted from additional guidance. Last, some existing buildings have used façade materials that may not convey a sense of quality, durability, and permanence; or may be challenging to install correctly.

Major benefits of updated design guidelines include:

- Reinforcement of the sense of unique, memorable and distinctive Downtown neighborhoods.
- Increased pedestrian connectivity and permeability between Downtown and its neighbors.

- More guidance and specificity on view protection from public spaces is needed, including distant views for drivers and pedestrians.
- Greater potential for creating attractive rooftops that contribute to Downtown's skyline, are attractive when seen from other nearby taller buildings, gracefully screen rooftop mechanical equipment, integrate sustainable design features and incorporate useable space on rooftops.
- Use of materials that help express each neighborhood's context and character.
- Through-block connections that provide pedestrian connectivity, reinforce the character and identity of individual districts and Downtown as a whole.

CAC Discussion

CAC discussion of design guidelines focused on the following key points:

- Design guidelines should be used to help reinforce neighborhood character and identity within Downtown. Each of the districts in the Downtown has a different personality and serves a different purpose. Going forward it will be important to preserve the differences among the districts.
- Refinement and calibration of the Amenity Incentive System should be used to help reinforce neighborhood identify and character.
- Old Bellevue is a good example of where design guidelines and specific standards have helped reinforce a unique character. There are areas that do not as yet have strong identifiable characters and some guidance modifications would be appropriate.
- Some new buildings have interesting rooftop designs, but there is still room for improvement relating to incorporation of gathering spaces, green elements and screening of mechanical equipment.
- The pedestrian environment and street right-of-way should incorporate ideas from the Great Streets document, Downtown Design Charrette, and recommendations from the Transportation Commission. Important elements include where to focus retail activity, open space and green elements, connectivity through superblocks, weather protection, and accommodations for mobility impaired users.
- The City should explore potential process modifications that allow developers some flexibility through design departures to encourage creativity and unique architecture. Consider inclusion of more public meetings where input from the public can be considered.

Recommendations

Code-Related

Design Guidelines Strategy 1: Improve Code Clarity and Readability.

Consolidate and reformat the Downtown design guidelines for improved clarity and readability around the following major elements:

- Intent: An initial concise statement of the objective of the guideline
- Guideline: Explanatory text describing the details of the guideline
- Examples of recommended treatment: Textual and graphic examples of recommended development consistent with the intent of the guideline
- Examples of non-recommended treatment: Textual and graphic examples of development that does not meet the intent of the guideline

Visual examples will be included. These are models to illustrate successful treatments and Code intent rather than a precise design to be replicated.

Design Guidelines Strategy 2: Refine content of design guidelines.

Update the content of the design guidelines in the following areas:

a) Building frontages/sidewalk relationships
b) Pedestrian circulation/through-block connections
c) Building and public realm materials
d) Façade treatments
e) Rooftop design
f) Public views
g) Reinforcing neighborhood character
h) Transition to adjacent neighborhoods

a) Building frontages/sidewalk relationships

Amend building/sidewalk right-of-way designations to better depict where the highest levels of pedestrian activity are to be concentrated—along Main Street in Old Bellevue, the Bellevue Way shopping-theme street, and the Pedestrian Corridor. Clarify expectations about frontage treatments on other street types, providing added flexibility where appropriate. Continue to ensure that all building frontages are pedestrian-friendly. The maps and charts below and on the following pages summarize the recommended approach.

BUILDING/SIDEWALK RIGHT-OF-WAY DESIGNATIONS - EXAMPLES REVIEWED BY COMMITTEE

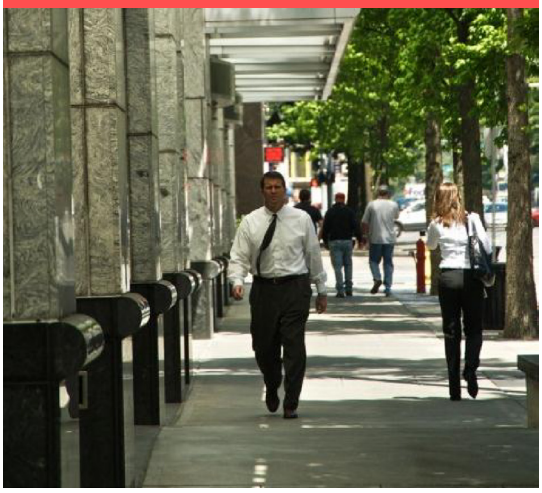
Right-of-Way Designation	Ground Floor Frontage	Visual & physical access	Weather protection[3]	Entry or other major points of interest[4]	Sidewalk Standards	Vehicular Access
Pedestrian Corridor/ High Streets Most intensely pedestrian activated streets	100% PAF[1]; 13-15'min. grnd flr ceiling ht.	75% min.	75% min.	Every 60' max.	Undeveloped parcels implement recommendations from the Downtown Transportation Plan Update for sidewalk widths. Curbside planting w/street trees on all streets without on-street parking.	None, except where no other option available
Commercial Streets Streets in the core with a balance of retail and other uses	50% PAF[1] min; 50% service [2] max; 13-15' min. grnd flr ceiling ht	75% min.	75% min.	Every 75' max.		Yes with limitations
Mixed Streets Streets outside the core that accommodate a variety of uses	Developer choice – mix of PAF[1], service[2], office, residential, and green walls; 13-15' min. grnd flr ceiling ht	75% min.	75% min.	Every 90' max.		Yes with limitations
Neighborhood Streets Streets outside the core with a residential and neighborhood services focus		50% min.	50 % min.	Every 90' max.		Yes with limitations
Perimeter Streets Streets with a neighborhood focus, scale, and transition to adjacent single family neighborhoods. Includes a 20 ft landscape buffer between sidewalk and building	Developer choice – mix of PAF[1], service[2], office, residential, and green walls; 13-15' min. grnd flr ceiling ht Parking permitted with special conditions	50% min.	50% min.			Yes with limitations. Primary access off streets not facing residential neighborhoods

1 Pedestrian-Activate Frontage (PAF): Retail and personal services that generate pedestrian activity including retail stores, groceries, drug stores, shoe repair, cleaning, floral, barber, and beauty shops, art galleries, travel agencies, restaurants, and theaters
2 Service: A range of personal and professional service uses including, finance, insurance, real estate, and business services. Designs for these uses are intended to be pedestrian-attracting in nature.
3 Weather protection required at all entries - included in required minimum. Portions of projects with townhouses or live/work units may require reduced weather protection.
4 Major Points of Interest: An element such as a large landscape feature, event space, art, water feature, open space, and through-block connection.

Pedestrian Corridor/High Streets

Pedestrian Corridor/High Streets

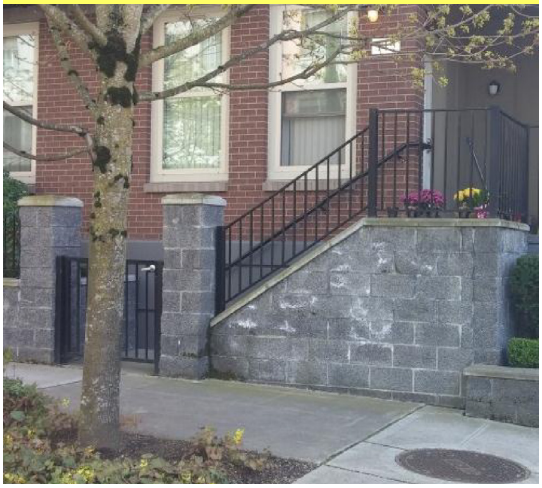
Commercial Streets



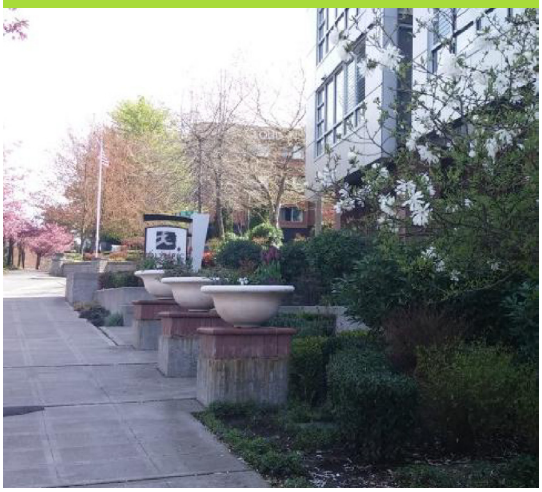
Mixed Streets

Prototypical examples of each of the proposed right-of-way designations.

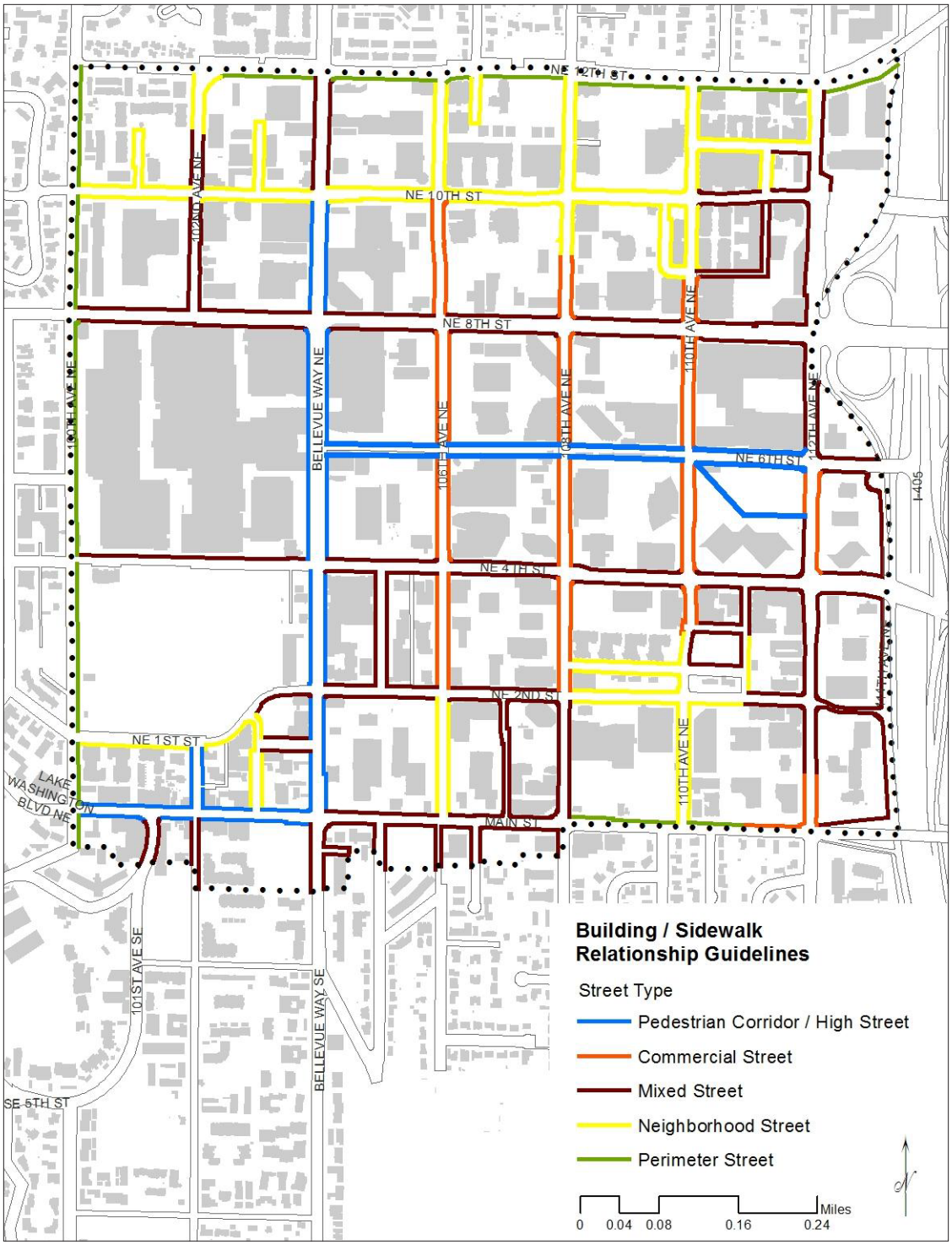
Neighborhood Streets



Perimeter Streets



Proposed Right-of-Way Designations: Building/Sidewalk Relationships.



b) Pedestrian circulation/through-block connections

- Add a map to the Guidelines that identifies existing through-block connections and desired locations for new ones. The locations for new connections will be conceptual in nature—allowing the flexibility for development to make adjustments based on proposed uses and unique site conditions. Existing guidelines require that through-block connections form logical routes from origins and destinations. The proposed concept emphasizes that such connections are well-integrated with the proposed and surrounding development, and that they are safe and pedestrian-friendly.
- Create options for design of through-block connections. To help ensure that these connections are integrated with the development, applicants would choose among four types of frontages (combinations are acceptable). The guidelines will include provisions for through-block connection location based on conceptual Downtown-wide master plan, ADA accessibility, common wayfinding installed at the intersection with a public sidewalk, documentation of CPTED principles, recommended dimensions, as shown in the table on the following page.

c) Building and public realm materials

Emphasize the use of high quality materials that enhance the street environment while maintaining compatibility with adjacent buildings. Recommended materials and finishes will convey a sense of depth, quality and durability, and not artificial, thin "stage sets" applied only to the building's surface. Rather than prohibit certain materials that have been problematic, the approach will include special conditions on their use to ensure they convey a sense of quality. In addition, the revised guidelines should include a menu of recommended materials and scale, to convey district character. These recommendations would be used to describe the desired character and quality of materials, not to predetermine options. Architectural diversity, rich layering of design elements, and fine grain character are encouraged.

d) Façade treatments

Provide additional direction on building massing and articulation. Guidelines will emphasize that buildings have a distinct top, middle and bottom. For buildings with wider facades (>120-140'), require more substantial articulation to reduce perceived scale and add visual interest. At the street level, continue to place strong emphasis on ground-level differentiation and the use of building articulation, windows, materials, textures, colors and unique site characteristics that create a quality and inviting public realm, and a human scale.

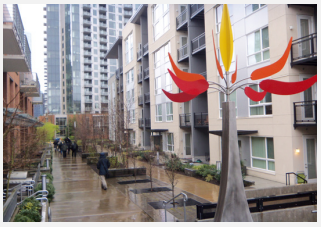
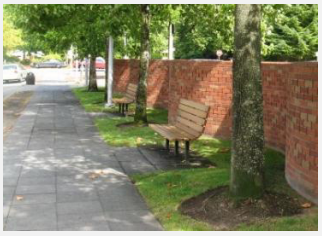
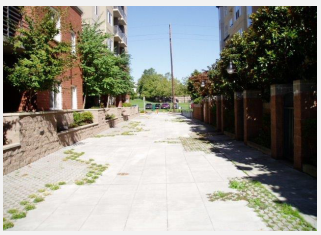
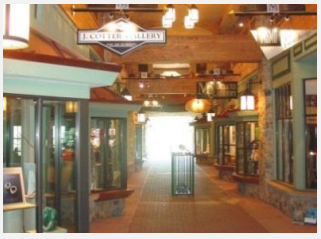
e) Rooftop design

Strengthen the current guidelines relating to rooftop design, including providing elements that contribute to a more memorable skyline, good and bad examples of rooftop mechanical equipment screening, and suggested treatments for large flat areas. Utilize appropriate incentives:

- Building off the existing 15'/15% allowance, allow departure for increased building height if the additional height is needed to accommodate architecturally integrated mechanical equipment and/or interesting roof forms.
- As an incentive to encourage use of rooftops for recreational open space for building occupants, allow rooftops or enclosed top stories (penthouses) to be used as non-leasable common areas without counting against FAR calculations. Also promote green roofs and rooftop solar panels.

Options for design of through-block connections.

OPTIONS FOR DESIGN OF THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

Frontage	Description	Examples
A. Retail Connection (12 ft. clear minimum – consistent with existing guidelines)	Retail storefronts with generous window transparency, pedestrian entries, weather protection, and outdoor seating/dining areas.	
B. Residential Activation (6 ft. clear minimum)	Stoops or similar residential frontages with private individual entries, private individual patio frontages, lobbies/ common residential entries or other common facilities with generous transparency/activation elements.	
C. Passive/Walk-through (6 ft. clear minimum)	Passive corridors that connect uses and open spaces and featuring landscaping, lighting, human scaled details, and other pedestrian amenities.	
D. Vehicular plus Pedestrian Access (6 ft. clear pedestrian access vehicular access TBD)	Connections could take the form of a low traffic route where autos and pedestrians share space) or separated access. Lighting, landscaping, and or other design element separates autos from pedestrians to create a safe and attractive pedestrian route. Frontages along the sides may be landscaped or building walls with transparency and human scaled details that add visual interest.	
E. Through-building connection (project specific)	Some building types lend themselves to through-block connections open to the public during business hours. Hotels, shopping, office buildings, and community uses may provide a safe and weather protected route through a block or large scale development.	

f) Public views

Emphasis will continue to be placed on views from public spaces, such as the Downtown Park, Pedestrian Corridor, and major rights of way. Important views will be identified, described, and, where possible, mapped. Design guidelines will be developed to preserve those views to the extent feasible.

g) Reinforce neighborhood character

The seven major Downtown neighborhoods are shown in the figure on page 14. The updated design guidelines will emphasize opportunities to reinforce the character and distinctiveness of these neighborhoods. This theme will be "woven" into each of the major design guidelines topics. This will build off the related open space and building frontage elements discussed earlier in this document.

h) Transition to adjacent neighborhoods

- Make changes to Perimeter Area and DT-OLB bulk and height dimensional standards described in the Building Height and Form recommendations. As part of this change, review and refine design guidelines to ensure that building facades and landscaping elements continue to present an appropriate "face" to adjoining neighborhoods. Tower spacing and preservation of views from public spaces should also be addressed.
- Design guidelines will promote the presence of through-block pedestrian connections and neighborhood-tailored open spaces that create improved permeability for adjoining neighborhoods.
- In the DT-OLB District between 112th Ave NE and I-405, streetscape guidelines will apply for the first time; in the past this area has not been subject to streetscape (Building/Sidewalk) Design Guidelines.

Design Guidelines Strategy 3: Update review procedures.

Maintain the current administrative design review process and allow greater flexibility for departures.

Administration and Review Process. With the goal of fast and predictable application of Design Guidelines Standards and Guidelines will continue to be through the Administrative Design Review Process; a process managed by the Land Use staff of Development Services and incorporating expertise from all departments in the city.

Departure Criteria. To further encourage exceptional design, additional flexibility is proposed. Guidelines for which a departure is available are noted in the section above. Proposed decision criteria include:

- The departure would result in a development that better meets the intent of the adopted design guidelines and statements of intent.
- A public benefit is derived from the departure.

Examples of departure opportunities:

- Entry and points of interest spacing
- Percent weather protection and windows and entries
- Design criteria for features in the amenity incentive system
- Ground floor frontage
- Landscaping
- Sidewalk widths

AMENITY INCENTIVE SYSTEM

Background

A key tool for achieving the Downtown vision has been the Amenity Incentive System, which provides for buildings to earn "bonus" intensity (increased floor area ratio (FAR)) and height in return for providing public amenities. The Downtown Subarea Plan, adopted in 2004, and consistent with the Plan in place since 1979, promotes this bonus system as a way to accomplish the public objectives set forth in the Plan. It directly calls out incentives for certain features, such as residential uses, development of themed streets, and reinforcing the unique characteristics of Downtown neighborhoods.

The current list of amenities eligible for bonus FAR and height is quite extensive. It includes 23 amenities, each with specific design criteria and a bonus rate used to calculate the amount of added floor area earned. When first adopted in the early 1980s, the bonus rates were based on the developer's cost to deliver a given amenity, converted to the value of extra development rights (FAR) received. These rates have not been recalibrated for many years

Floor area ratio is the ratio of the total square feet of a building to the total square feet of the property on which it is located.

Several incentives have been identified as noteworthy:

- Development of the Major Pedestrian Corridor and its related Major Public Open Spaces receives a "super-bonus" of height in the Core Design District above what can be earned for any other amenity.
- First and second levels of retail are highly incentivized by being "free" FAR; i.e. they are not counted against the FAR maximums and can allow a building to include significantly more floor area than the stated code maximums.
- "Basic Floor Area Requirements" ensure that all developments meet a minimum threshold of amenities, typically at the ground level and oriented to a public right of way. Qualifying basic amenities are a subset of the larger whole, and include pedestrian-oriented frontage, weather protection (arcades, marquees and awnings), some open space features and others.
- Pedestrian-oriented frontage is required in many cases, and is also eligible for incentive.

How does the amenity incentive system relate to livability?

» Opportunities for amenities to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity

» Potential to focus bonuses on the most important amenities

» Addition of new amenities that focus on livability and the future of Downtown

» Opportunities to encourage creative design

» Potential for added "lift" to incentive system through additional height and FAR

Changes to the Amenity Incentive System should consider such factors as:

- The amenities most important to achieving livability and desired future for Downtown.

- What features need to be incentivized versus what development will do without incentives.
- The economics of development, to ensure that the modified incentive system is feasible and acts as a real incentive.

CAC Discussion

CAC discussion of the Amenity Incentive System focused on the following key points:

- Focus on the factors that would ultimately make Downtown more livable; should be tangible and give back to the community.
- Strong interest in how the incentive system and design guidelines can be used to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity (i.e. a district by district approach).
- Potentially modify some of the existing amenity definitions and more clearly direct where they happen within Downtown.
- Some amenities could potentially shift to be requirements (such as weather protection) rather than a bonused amenity.
- The structure of the bonus rates should clearly reflect the most desired amenities.
- A "superbonus" might apply to extraordinary or iconic design features; special design review would be needed.
- The incentive system should be efficient, predictable, not overly complex, and encourage creative design.
- The incentive system should be economically viable; it should act as a real incentive and not deter development. Changes to the current incentive system may necessitate an increase in base density/height.
- The system should be updated more frequently and have the ability to address Downtown needs as they change; creative, new concepts may arise that make sense to bonus in some way.
- Fee-in-lieu collection through an amenity system should relate to the area where the project occurs.

Recommendations

Amenity Incentive System Strategy 1: Update amenities to be included in the Amenity Incentive System.

The CAC has identified the following overarching themes regarding amenities:

- Focus on amenities most important to achieving livability and desired future for Downtown.
- Consider what needs to be incentivized vs. what market will do without incentives.
- Provide flexibility to encourage creative design.
- Amenities should help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity.
- Modified incentive system must be feasible and act as a real incentive.

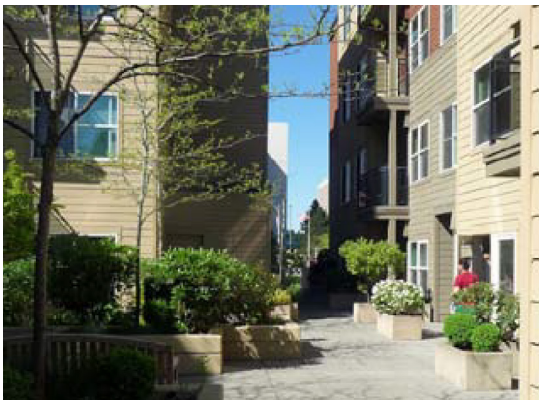
In the table on the following page, the CAC identified current and potential additional amenities that should be considered for the Amenity Incentive System. The CAC has specific direction on a few items as follows:

- The current amenities list includes underground and above-ground parking as well as residential uses. CAC discussion focused on whether these are still uses that are considered an amenity that a development should get bonus area for or whether they are uses that will be provided regardless of incentives.
- The CAC discussed the potential inclusion of affordable housing as a new item to add to the amenity system. The CAC provided direction

List of existing and potential new amenities

Existing Amenities	Potential New Amenities
Public Gathering Spaces/Placemaking	
Major Pedestrian Corridor	Signature Streets
Pedestrian Oriented Frontage	Third Places, gathering places
	Farmers Market Space
Neighborhood-Serving Uses	
Public Meeting Rooms	None
Child Care Services	
Retail Food	
Space for Non-profit Social Services	
Parks/Green/Open Space	
Outdoor Plaza	Upper Level Plaza
Landscape Feature	Green Space/Open Space
Landscape Area	Pocket Parks & Urban Courtyards
Donation of Park Property	Green Streets Concepts
Residential Entry Courtyard	Landmark Tree Preservation
Active Recreation Area	Significant Tree Planting
Enclosed Plaza	Activated Rooftops
Parking	
Underground Parking	None
Above Grade Parking	
Above Grade Parking in Residential Bldg	
Housing	
Residential Uses	Affordable Housing
Arts and Culture	
Performing Arts Space	Art Space
Sculpture	Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources
Water Feature	
Design	
None	Iconic Features (i.e. rooftop, tower, etc.)
	Increased Setbacks for Light/Air
	Small Lot Interesting Architecture
	Sustainable Features/Practices
	Freestanding Canopies at Corners
	Pedestrian Bridges

"Existing List" means from the current list of 23 bonusable amenities in the Land Use Code.
"New Idea" means a potential new amenity to be bonused through the incentive system.



Through-block connections can be intimate and designed to protect residents' privacy.

People enjoying the amenities of 106th Avenue NE, the entertainment street.

for additional evaluation of affordable housing regarding the nature of bonus, relationship to what market is delivering, and how it might tie in with multifamily tax exemption program being considered by Council.

Amenity Incentive System Strategy 2: Make weather protection a development requirement.

Shift "weather protection" from the amenity system to be a development requirement, implemented in appropriate locations through the updated design guidelines.

Amenity Incentive System Strategy 3: Consider neighborhood-specific weighting.

Recognizing that a common theme is to reinforce and promote the unique identify of each neighborhood in Downtown, the CAC discussed the potential to weight incentives differently depending on where the development is located and the unique character and needs of each neighborhood.

Amenity Incentive System Strategy 4: Develop method to consider alternative amenities.

The CAC was interested in having a method for developers to suggest amenities that were not on the formal list. There would be a process developed to review them and provide an appropriate bonus.

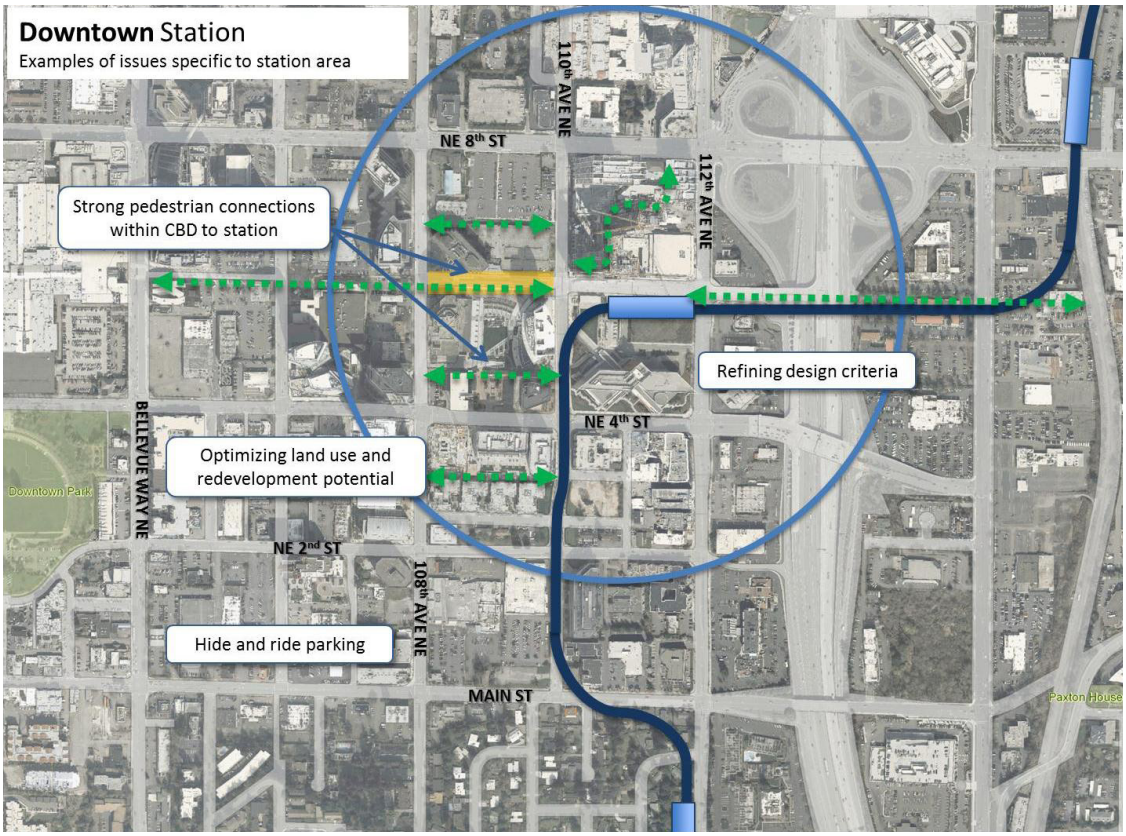
Amenity Incentive System Strategy 5: Recalibrate economics of amenity incentive system.

Conduct an economic analysis to consider how recommended changes to the amenity incentive system may affect development economics and ensure a good balance of public benefit and economic return. The economic analysis will include:

- Identification of the lift to the amenity system provided by any height and/or density increases.
- Evaluation if there is sufficient market demand in the near- and long-term to develop properties at various height and

density levels. The anticipated demand in excess of the base zoning will help inform the revisions to the incentive valuation.

- Analysis of how the base densities should be modified to take into account added development requirements or other changes to the current incentive system.
- Pro-forma analysis of development scenarios (office, residential, mixed-use) to determine project feasibility and ability to contribute to the incentive system.
- Develop incentive pricing and calibration (with fee-in-lieu provisions) based on the most desired amenities, cost to produce, and value derived from height and density increases.



NE 6th St Downtown Station with a ¼-mile "as the crow flies" radius.

Also shown are some examples of issues to be addressed through station area planning.

STATION AREA PLANNING

Background

The East Link light rail project, slated for completion in 2023, will include six stations in Bellevue that will provide connections within the City as well as to the greater Eastside, Seattle, and Sea-Tac Airport. In 2007-2008, the City undertook an effort that culminated in the Light Rail Best Practices Report. The report highlighted the importance of station area planning and provided policy direction that was subsequently adopted into the City's Comprehensive Plan. Now that the locations of all six light rail stations have been determined, the City is initiating station area planning efforts. The Downtown Livability Initiative and Downtown Transportation Plan Update processes were identified as the appropriate venues to plan for the Downtown light rail station at NE 6th Street.

The primary objectives of all station area plans are to:

- Engage the community in a planning process that establishes a clear vision and community goals for each station area.
- Identify and prioritize City-funded capital investments that enhance the community and help to integrate the station with the surrounding area.
- Optimize access to the station by pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons.
- Support the land use vision in Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan for each neighborhood adjacent to light rail and encourage appropriate redevelopment where consistent with the City's land use vision.

Station area planning is a new concept for Bellevue. While the Comprehensive Plan includes many policies that support transit use and transit-oriented development, there

is nothing specifically listed in the current Downtown Code relating to the light rail interface. A number of code implications related to station area planning have been addressed in other modules that are part of the Downtown Livability scope, such as the intensity of buildings and standards for sidewalks in the vicinity of the station. Through this effort, non-code-related investments were also be identified for inclusion in the Downtown Transportation Plan project list.

For Downtown, station area planning will help establish a collective vision for the station area, ensure a compatible fit of light rail within Downtown, capture the value of transit, and optimize Downtown and community connectivity to the station. Station area planning is distinct from issues that pertain to design, construction and mitigation of the light rail facilities themselves (e.g. stations, light rail guideway and related Sound Transit facilities). These are addressed through the City's design and mitigation permitting process, which is separate from station area planning.

CAC Discussion

The CAC's specific observations on station area planning addressed the following topics:

Desired character of station area.

- The NE 6th Station is located in the Civic/Convention District. The station will bring significant changes to the entire corner of NE 6th/110th and adjacent streetscapes.
- The character of streets such as 110th Avenue NE should reflect their proximity to the light rail station.

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit linkages.

- Crosswalks and intersections leading to the light rail stations for both pedestrians and bicyclists are important; safety and convenience should be key issues.
- Downtown Station has two points of access; one at NE 6th/110th and the other at NE 6th/112th. While the 112th Ave access will be secondary, it will still require pedestrian and bicycle access improvements.
- Planning needs to address the fact that bike access to the Bellevue Transit Center and future light rail stations is not convenient, thereby discouraging use of the facilities.
- The Pedestrian Corridor will become more important, because its the eastern end will be anchored by the light rail station.
- Weather protection along sidewalks and intersections is intermittent, and lack of it discourages pedestrians; additional weather protection will promote walking to transit.
- Through-block connections will provide convenient pathways to the Bellevue Transit Center and future light rail stations.

Transit-oriented development

- Downtown already has provisions for land use supportive densities in place in most areas (see DT-OLB bullet).
- While the primary Downtown station is located at NE 6th Street, a portion of the East Main station area has implications for the southeast portion of Downtown.
- The DT-OLB District is adjacent to the two station areas, and may be appropriate for additional transit-oriented development opportunities.
- There may be transit-supportive land uses directly adjacent to the Downtown light rail station.

Traffic and parking management

- Casual drop-off of riders frequently occurs in-lane on 110th with no apparent disruption of traffic flow.
- There may be implications for future parking demand in and around the station area.
- "Hide & ride" parking is a potential issue.

Coordination with East Link/Sound Transit

- The City should explore opportunities for use of remnant parcels and redevelopment of staging areas.
- Wayfinding is an important component of the light rail investment (coordination to occur between City and Sound Transit on design and placement).
- While design coordination and review of Sound Transit facilities will occur through the City's permit process, it will be important to consider the implications of these facilities on surrounding areas of the Downtown.

Recommendations

As indicated by the preceding discussion, many aspects of station area planning are intertwined with other topics studied for the Downtown Livability Initiative. Accordingly, the land use and design implications of the NE 6th Street and East Main light rail stations have been integrated into the recommendations for these other topic areas. Examples include:

- Recommendations for design guidelines call for activated areas and streetscape at entrances to the NE 6th station.
- Optimization of density and uses for transit-oriented development is addressed in an updated vision for the DT-OLB District.
- The importance of a strong connection between the pedestrian corridor and the NE 6th station is recognized in the Pedestrian Corridor recommendations.
- The Public Open Space recommendations call for evaluating a nonmotorized connection across I-405, which would increase connectivity to the station from areas east of I-405.

BUILDING HEIGHT & FORM

Background

Downtown Bellevue's urban form is often called a "wedding cake," with a layering of building intensities and heights. The most intense and highest buildings are planned for the central Core and transition outward toward the edges of Downtown, which adjoin older residential neighborhoods. This form was intended to create a strong and legible skyline, focus the most intense development where it can be served by multiple travel choices, and provide for a graceful transition between Downtown and adjoining neighborhoods.

In most zoning districts, residential buildings are permitted more intensity (expressed in floor area ratio (FAR) and height than nonresidential buildings, in part to incentivize residential uses and in part due to the smaller floorplates and more slender form of residential towers, as compared to more bulky office towers.

How do height, FAR and floorplate size relate to building form?

Height, floorplate and FAR standards work in conjunction with each other to define building form. For example, a hypothetical 40,000 sf site with a 5.0 FAR would allow 200,000 sf of building area. Depending on height and floorplate standards, this building area could be developed in a variety of forms; some examples are shown below.

Site Area	FAR	Buildable Area	Floorplate Area	Building Height
40,000 sf	5.0	200,000	10,000 sf	20 stories
			20,000 sf	10 stories
			25,000 sf	8 stores

How does building height and form relate to livability?

- Opportunity for more light and air between buildings by allowing additional height
- Opportunity for more ground-level open space
- Ability to promote variability in building heights
- Ability to reinforce district identity
- Potential for additional height or FAR to add "lift" to incentive system for more public amenities
- Opportunity to create a more distinctive skyline
- Encourage more interesting and memorable architecture
- Potential to add density around light rail transit investment

Building Heights

Zoning standards establish "basic" and "maximum" allowable building heights for both residential and nonresidential development. Maximum building heights may only be achieved by participation in the amenity incentive system. Building heights are highest towards the center of Downtown and generally taper down towards the edges. In the center of Downtown, an ultimate height limit of 450 feet is achievable. On the north, west,

and south edges of Downtown are Perimeter Design Districts, which provide for a transition to lower height and density.

Density/Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

Density provisions, expressed in floor area ratios (FAR) for Downtown Bellevue, follow a similar structure as building heights, where a "basic" and "maximum" allowable FAR are set for both residential and nonresidential development. Floor area ratio is defined as the gross floor area in square feet, excluding parking and mechanical floors or areas, divided by the site area in square feet. To obtain the basic FAR, development must provide a prescribed amount of amenities. To reach the maximum permitted FAR, development must participate in the FAR Amenity Incentive System.

Floorplates

Floorplate refers to the size of an individual floor in a building. There are maximum allowable floorplates for residential and nonresidential for each of the Downtown districts that apply to floors above 40 feet in height, with additional direction for floors above 80 feet in height. Nonresidential buildings are allowed larger floorplates than residential buildings. Office towers typically have 20,000 to 24,000 square foot floorplates, while residential towers typically have 8,000 to 13,000 square foot floorplates.

Principles

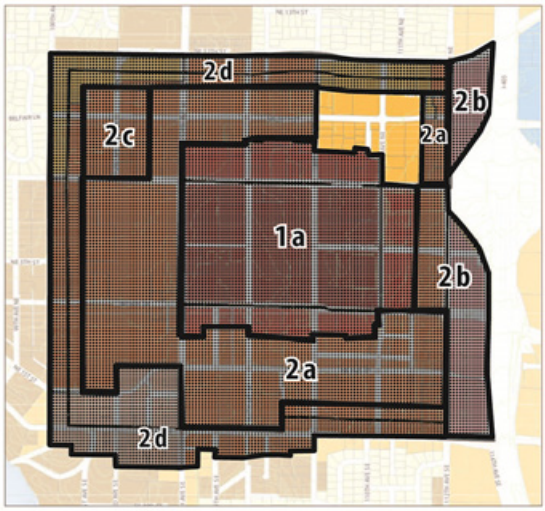
Building height and density are often sensitive subjects in any planning discussion. The CAC used the following principles to help guide their work on any potential changes.

- The additional height or density would result in a better urban design outcome than the status quo, adding to the architectural excellence, character and memorability of the city center.
- Continue to distinguish the special market niche played by Downtown.
- Help deliver additional amenities that enhance the livability and character of Downtown.
- Address any impacts that may result from the additional height or density (e,g. via design guidelines to address public views, shadows, tower spacing, and others).
- Continue to provide for appropriate transitions between Downtown and adjoining residential neighborhoods, while promoting better and more complementary linkages.

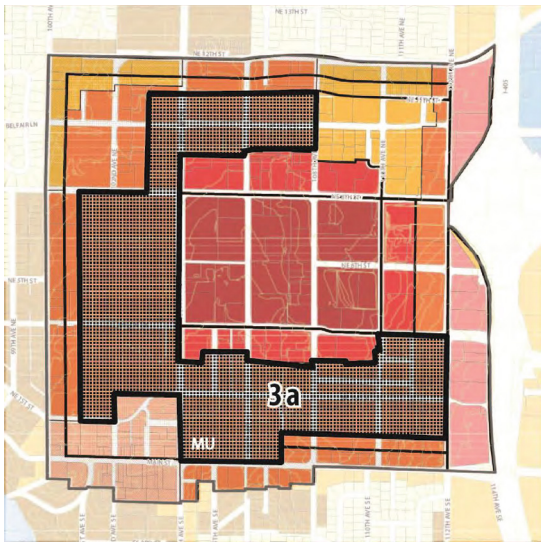
Analysis Areas

The CAC considered height and form options in six geographical areas of Downtown as listed below and described in more detail in the CAC recommendations section.

- **Area 1A** focused on the Downtown Core O-1 and O-2 districts: Included consideration of additional height alone; or additional height and density (through increased FAR), to help accentuate the "wedding cake"; or retention of current standards.
- **Area 2A** focused on the Mixed Use (MU) District: Included consideration of additional height alone; or additional height and density, or retention of current standards.
- **Area 2B** focused on the Office Limited Business (OLB) District: Included consideration of additional height and density; or retention of current standards.
- **Area 2C** focused on the "Deep B" portion of the Perimeter Design District in the northwest corner of Downtown: Included consideration of additional residential heights with no increase in FAR; or retention of current standards.
- **Area 2D** focused on the "A" and "B" areas of the Perimeter Design Districts: Included consideration of additional residential heights with no increase in FAR; or retention of current standards.
- **Area 3A** focused on the Mixed Use (MU) District: Included consideration of whether to raise allowable heights and densities for nonresidential (primarily office) development to equal those for residential development; or retention of the current standards where residential is allowed taller and higher density buildings.



Areas under consideration for 1A & 2A-2D



Area under consideration in 3A

CAC Discussion

CAC discussion of building height and form focused on the following key points:

- The wedding cake concept has generally been successful for Downtown Bellevue. Some modifications may be warranted, and should recognize that height and density are particularly sensitive issues in the Perimeter Areas on the edges of Downtown.
- Interest in how additional height might be used to achieve a more memorable, iconic Bellevue skyline.
- Interest in exploring potential height increases in the Downtown core where the current limit is 450 feet, in exchange for extraordinary amenities. Based on building blocks of 150 feet, 600 feet is the next logical step for maximum height.
- Explore height increases for iconic roof features (non-occupiable space) based on a set of design criteria.
- May be some opportunities to allow additional height in areas outside the Downtown core in exchange for extraordinary amenities, including more open space or pedestrian connections.
- The DT-OLB District in particular should be analyzed for potential height and density increases; given its proximity to the freeway and to light rail.
- Residential and nonresidential/office towers have different floorplate needs, and thus the same density results in different building heights. Residential typically has smaller floorplates to allow for light and air into units and to maximize use of each story. Office typically desires larger floorplates from a construction efficiency and tenant perspective.
- Members of the CAC had mixed opinions on equalizing residential and nonresidential height and density provisions in DT-MU district. Some felt residential should continue to be allowed to be taller and of higher density. There was some concern about allowing higher office towers in DT-MU district with significantly larger floorplates than residential towers, but also a sense that Downtown residential no longer "needs" a density/height incentive.

CAC Recommendations

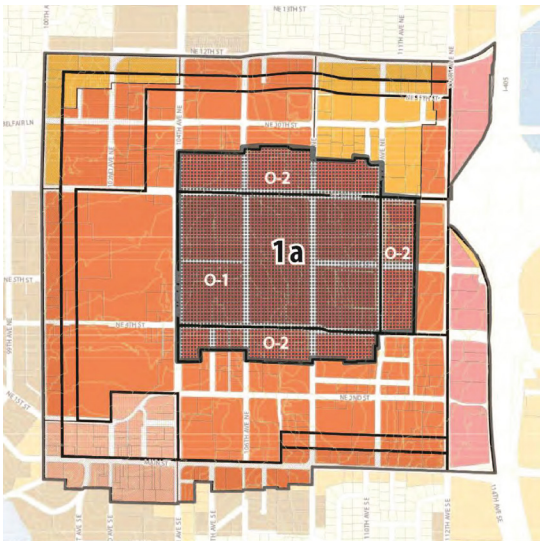
The CAC recommends further consideration of increased allowable building heights and density in portions of Downtown, in exchange for provision of exceptional amenities better urban design outcomes. While recommendations are being forwarded to the Council based on consensus of the CAC and 3D modeling of specific building heights and densities, more work is needed to flesh out a number of factors including: the precise increase in height and/or FAR, as applicable; tower design and separation; transition issues; effect of added FAR/height at pedestrian scale and larger scales; and mitigation of any localized traffic impacts in cases where added FAR is under consideration. Specific recommendations for each of the six geographical areas are described below.

Area 1A: Downtown O-1 & O-2 Districts (Core)

What was Considered

The CAC considered both additional height, and additional height and density in the O-1 and O-2 districts. For analysis purposes, heights up to 600 feet in O-1 and 400 feet in O-2 and a 20% increase in maximum FAR in both zones were considered.

An example of illustrated comparisons used during the CAC process of increased building height in the O-1 & O-2 districts compared with status quo (current zoning) are shown on the following page.



Area under consideration in 1A

CAC Recommendation

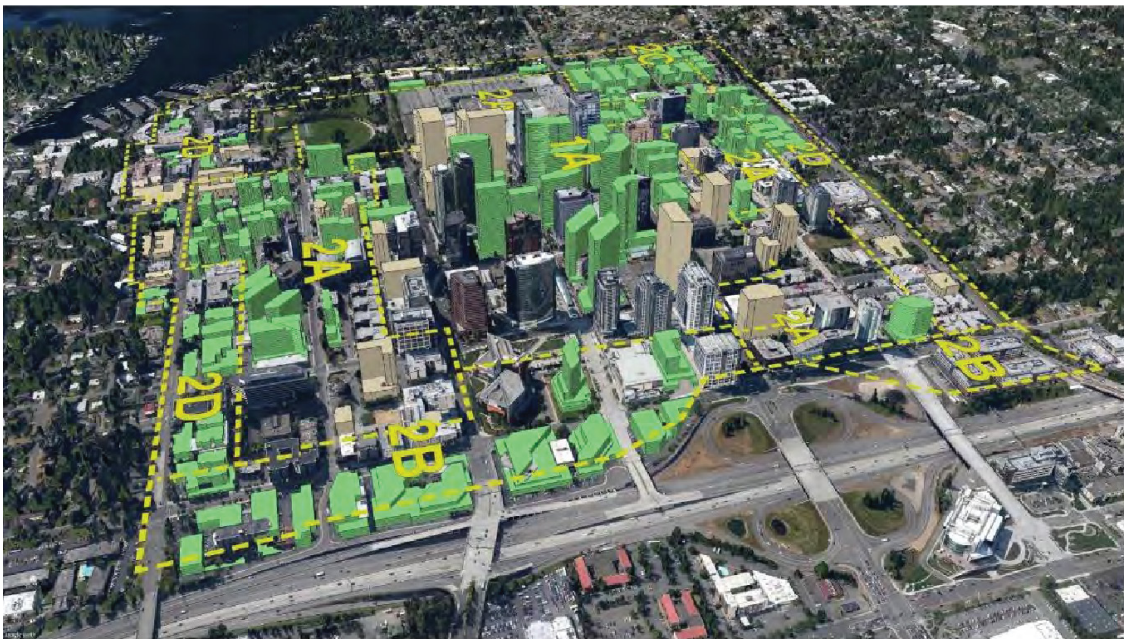
The CAC recommends further consideration of building heights of up to 600 feet in the O-1 district and up to 300 feet in the O-2 district to help accentuate the "wedding cake" form. No change to maximum FAR is recommended, provided residential FAR is currently unlimited in the O-1 district, but implications of this were not discussed in detail by the CAC.

The CAC felt that 600 feet would be a logical next step for building heights in O-1 (up from a current maximum of 450 feet), and that a modest increase from 250 feet to 300 feet was warranted in the O-2.

Increased height would be achieved through the amenity incentive system. Appropriate mitigation would be identified through the Planning Commission process to address tower design and separation, transition issues, and the effect of added FAR/height at pedestrian level and at a larger scale, as well as mitigation of any localized transportation impacts.

Recommendation for Area 1A

	Status Quo		CAC Recommendation of Additional Height	
Land Use District	Max Height	Max FAR	Max Height	Max FAR
Downtown 0-1				
Residential Building	450′	Unlimited	600′	Unlimited
Nonresidential Building	450′	8.0	600′	8.0
Downtown 0-2				
Residential Building	250′	6.0	300′	6.0
Nonresidential Building	250′	6.0	300′	6.0



Area 1A: Development per Current Code

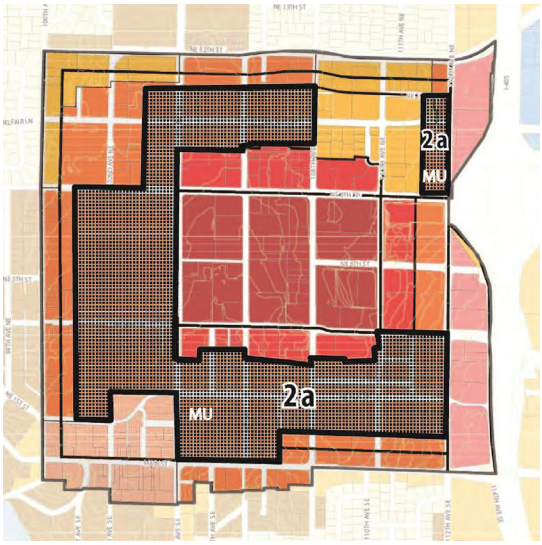
Area 1A: Examination of Additional Height in the Core (shown in blue)

Area 2A: Downtown Mixed Use (MU) District

What was Considered

The CAC considered additional height, and additional height and density, in the MU district. Analysis included residential heights up to 300 feet and a 20% increase in FAR (to 6.0) and nonresidential heights up to 200 feet and a 67% increase in FAR (to 5.0). The higher percentage increase in nonresidential FAR was modeled in order to provide a volume that was feasible for 200-foot tower heights.

An example of illustrated comparisons used during the CAC process of increased building height in the MU district compared with status quo (current zoning) are shown on the following page.



Area under consideration in 2A

Recommendation for Area 2A

The CAC recommends further consideration of building heights of up to 300 feet for residential buildings and up to 200 feet for nonresidential buildings in the MU district. This would help achieve greater district identity and provide character to emerging Downtown neighborhoods.

The increased height would be achieved through the amenity incentive system. Appropriate mitigation would be identified through the Planning Commission process to address tower design and separation, transition issues, and the effect of added height at pedestrian level and at a larger scale. Under a separate action for Area 3A, the CAC recommended that nonresidential FAR be increased in the MU district to equal that of residential. The end result is that both residential and nonresidential would have a maximum FAR of 5.0 in the MU district with heights as shown in the table below.

Recommendation for Area 2A

	Status Quo		CAC Recommendation	
Land Use District	Max Height	Max FAR	Max Height	Max FAR
Downtown MU				
Residential Building	200′	5.0	300′	5.0
Nonresidential Building	100′	3.0	200′	5.0 (based on Area 3A action)

Area 2A: Development per Current Code

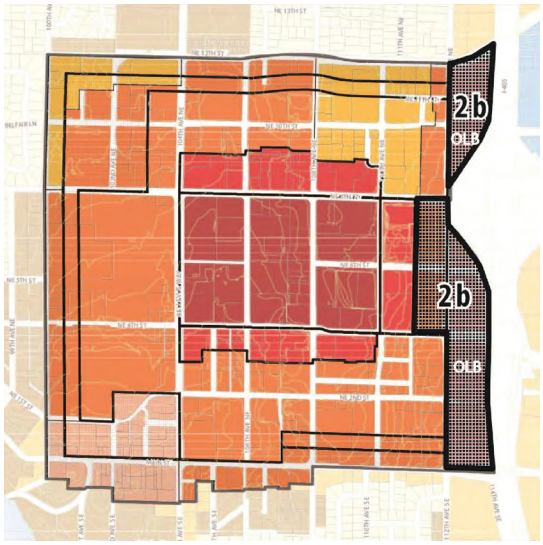
Area 2A: Examination of Additional Height (shown in blue)

Area 2B: Downtown Office Limited Business (OLB) District

What was Considered

The CAC considered additional height and density in the OLB district. Analysis included heights up to 350 feet and 6.0 FAR between NE 4th and NE 8th Streets, and up to 200 feet and 5.0 FAR south between NE 4th Street and Main Street.

An example of illustrated comparisons used during the CAC process of increased building height and density in the DT-OLB district compared with status quo (current zoning) are shown on the following page.



Area under consideration in 2B

Recommendation for Area 2B

The CAC recommends further consideration of building heights of up to 350 feet with a 6.0 FAR between NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street and up to 200 feet with a 5.0 FAR between NE 4th Street and Main Street. The CAC felt this was warranted to take advantage of the OLB district's freeway access and proximity to future light rail stations. The prime redevelopment potential for the OLB district is south of NE 8th Street, as the area to the north is already fully developed with an office project or being used for stormwater detention.

The CAC also felt there may be opportunities to expand floorplate allowances in the OLB district (particularly at lower heights) where the topography drops away from Downtown towards I-405.

The increased height and density would be achieved through the amenity incentive system. Appropriate mitigation would be identified through the Planning Commission process to address tower design and separation, permeability from the freeway, connectivity with Wilburton, the effect of added FAR/height at pedestrian level and at larger scale, as well as mitigation of any localized transportation impacts.

Recommendation for Area 2B

	Status Quo		CAC Recommendation of Additional Height and FAR	
Land Use District	Max Height	Max FAR	Max Height	Max FAR
DT-OLB (NE 4th to 8th)				
Residential Building	90′	3.0	350′	6.0
Nonresidential Building	75′	3.0	350′	6.0
DT-OLB (Main St to NE 4th)				
Residential Building	90′	3.0	200′	5.0
Nonresidential Building	75′	3.0	200′	5.0

Area 2B: Development per Current Code

Area 2B: Examination of Additional Height and FAR (shown in purple)

Area 2C: "Deep B" portion of the Perimeter Design District in the northwest corner of Downtown

What was Considered

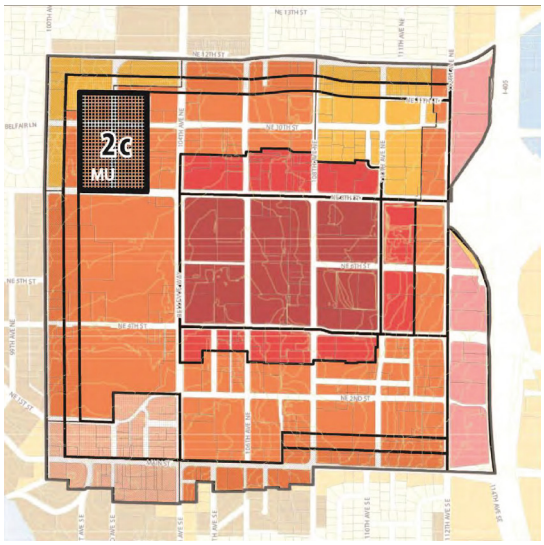
The CAC considered variable tower heights of 160-240 feet for residential buildings (with no added density) in the northwest corner of Downtown within the "Deep B" design district. In this area, the "B" perimeter design district extends an additional 600-900 horizontal feet beyond the typical extent for the "B" district in most other portions of Downtown.

An example of illustrated comparisons used during the CAC process of increased building height in the "Deep B" as compared with status quo (current zoning) are shown on the following page.

Recommendation for Area 2C

The CAC recommends further consideration of residential building heights up to 240 feet with an average tower height of 200 feet. The CAC felt that increased, variable tower heights as compared to a predominant pattern of 90-foot tall buildings as allowed by current zoning would be preferable. The variable tower heights could add significantly to district character and allow more public open space and "alleys with addresses" consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. No change to maximum FAR is recommended, so it is a matter of allowing a different form for the same development potential that already exists in the area.

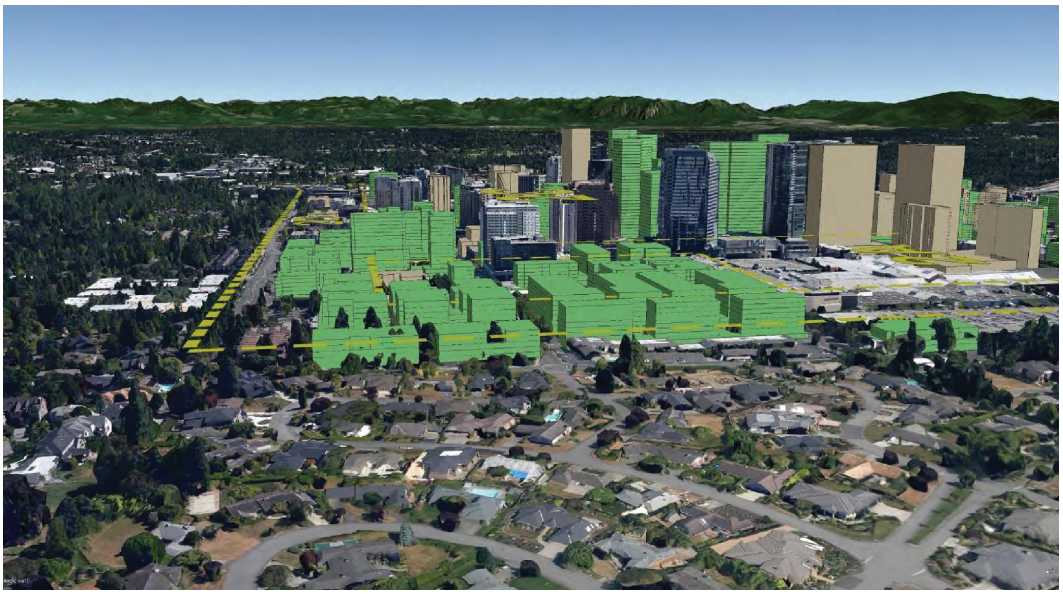
The increased height would be achieved through the amenity incentive system. Appropriate mitigation would be identified through the Planning Commission process to address tower design and separation, transition issues, and the effect of added height at pedestrian level and at larger scale.



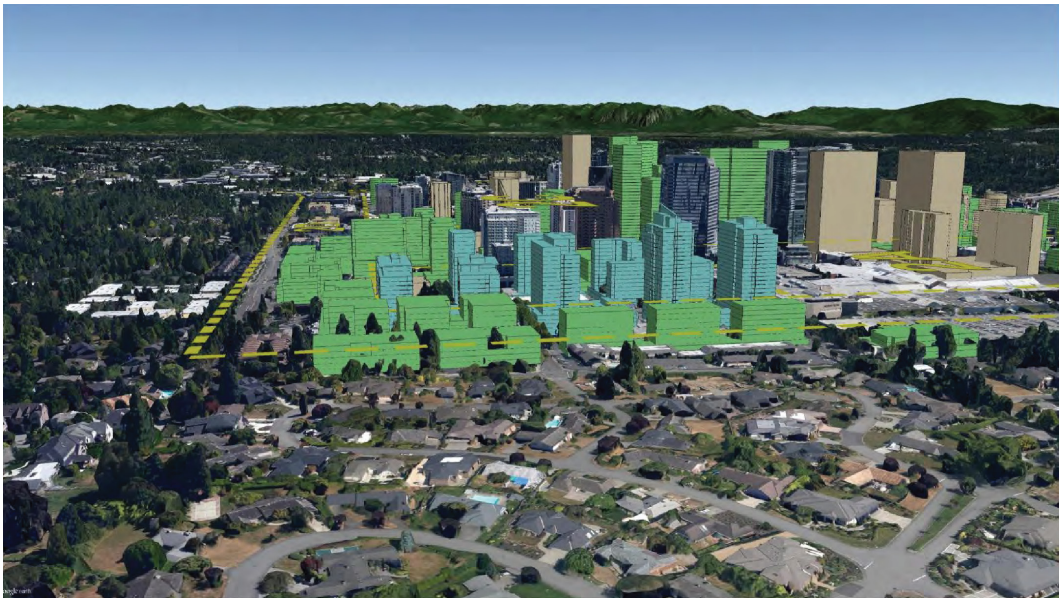
Area under consideration in 2C

Recommendation for Area 2C

Land Use District	Status Quo		CAC Recommendation of Additional Height (no added FAR)	
	Max Height	Max FAR	Max Height	Max FAR
Downtown MU in Northwest Village with "Deep B"				
Residential Building	90′	5.0	160′–240′ (avg. 200′)	5.0



Area 2C: Development per Current Code



Area 2C: Examination of Additional Height with No FAR Increase (shown in blue)

Area 2D: Perimeter Design Districts on the edges of Downtown

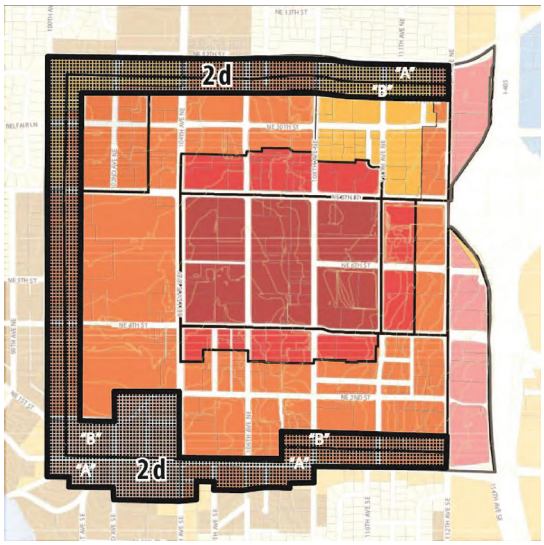
What was Considered

The CAC considered potential changes to allowable height in the "A" and "B" design districts, up to 70 feet in the "A" and 125 feet in the "B" for residential. These areas are generally along the first 300 horizontal feet from the edges of Downtown and also include the portion of Old Bellevue with "B" north of Main Street. The underlying zoning includes Old Bellevue (OB), Mixed Use (MU) and Residential (R).

An example of illustrated comparisons used during the CAC process of increased building height in the perimeter design districts compared with status quo (current zoning) are shown on the following page.

Recommendation for Area 2D

The CAC recommends further consideration of building heights of up to 70 feet in the "A" design district, from the current 55-foot limit, with no increase in FAR. The rationale is the 15-foot increase could result in better urban design outcomes for buildings of the 5 over 1 wood frame over concrete/steel construction type that typically occurs in this district, including more functional floor-to-ceiling heights, especially for the ground floor. This would also sync up the building code limit for 5 over 1 with the Land Use Code height limit in the "A" design district.



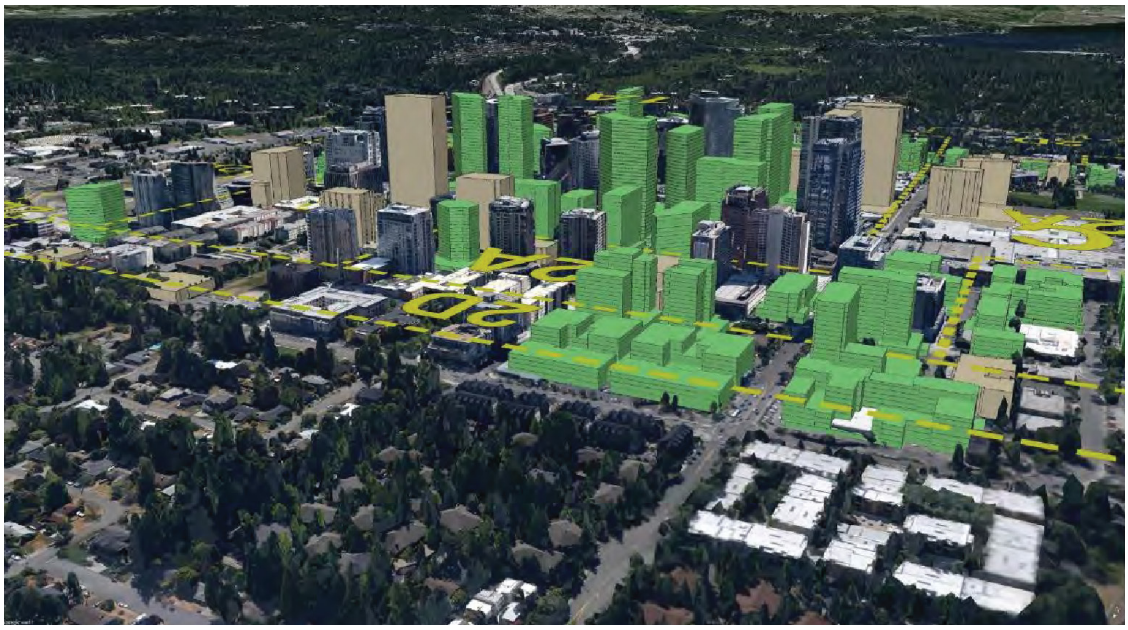
Area under consideration in 2D

The CAC did not feel a change in the "B" design district was warranted (provided the CAC did recommend a change in the "Deep B" as described earlier in this report).

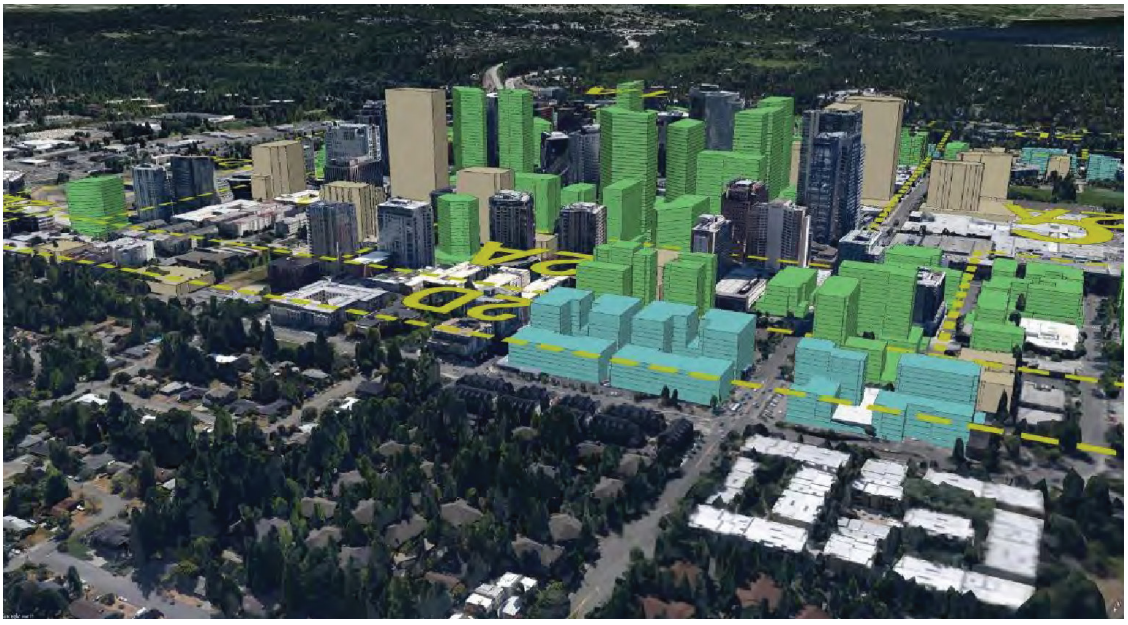
The Planning Commission process would be used to address transition issues with surrounding neighborhoods and develop guidelines that ensure buildings are oriented to minimize view blockage and prevent shading of residences, attractive streetscapes are developed along the edges of Downtown, comfortable pedestrian access into Downtown is provided, and new developments add amenities, such as public open space, that benefit the neighborhoods.

Recommendation for Area 2D

Land Use District	Status Quo		CAC Recommendation of Additional Height (no added FAR)	
	Max Height	Max FAR	Max Height	Max FAR
Downtown Perimeter A (MU, R, OB Underlying Zoning)				
Residential Building	55′	3.5	70′	3.5



Area 2D: Development per Current Code



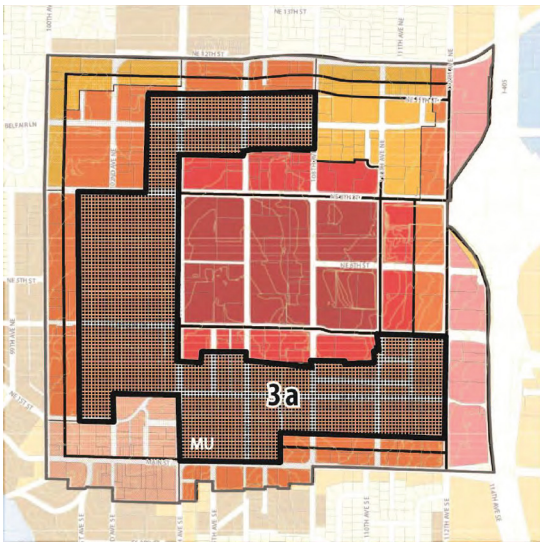
Area 2D: Examination of Heights to 70 feet in "A" and 125 feet in "B" (shown in blue). Committee recommended changes in "A", and not "B".

Area 3A: Equalization of nonresidential and residential heights and FAR in the Downtown Mixed Use (MU) District

What was Considered

The CAC considered raising the allowable nonresidential buildings height and density in the MU district to equal those for residential. Residential is currently allowed to go up to 200 feet and 5.0 FAR, while office is limited to 100 feet and 3.0 FAR. A change would increase nonresidential heights from 100 feet to 200 feet and 3.0 FAR to 5.0 FAR.

An illustrated comparison used during the CAC process of equalizing height and density standards in the MU district compared with status quo (current zoning) is shown on the following page.



Area under consideration in 3A

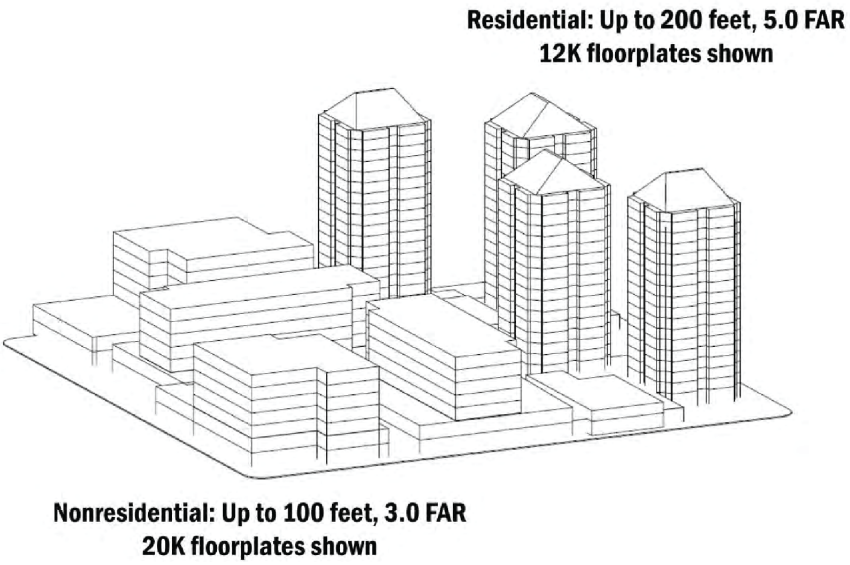
Recommendation for Area 3A

The CAC recommends further consideration of equalizing nonresidential and residential maximum densities in the MU district. This would increase nonresidential FAR to 5.0 (from a current maximum of 3.0). The CAC felt there has been a perceived shift in recent years of the competitive position of residential in the MU district and that residential may no longer need this development differential.

Appropriate mitigation would be identified through the Planning Commission process to address the fact that typical office tower floorplates are greater than residential towers and the effect it might have on superblock development that has a mix of both residential and nonresidential as well as on overall neighborhood character. Under a separate action for Area 2A, the CAC recommended building heights of up to 300 feet for residential buildings and up to 200 feet for nonresidential buildings in the MU district. Both would be allowed up to 5.0 FAR by this density equalization.

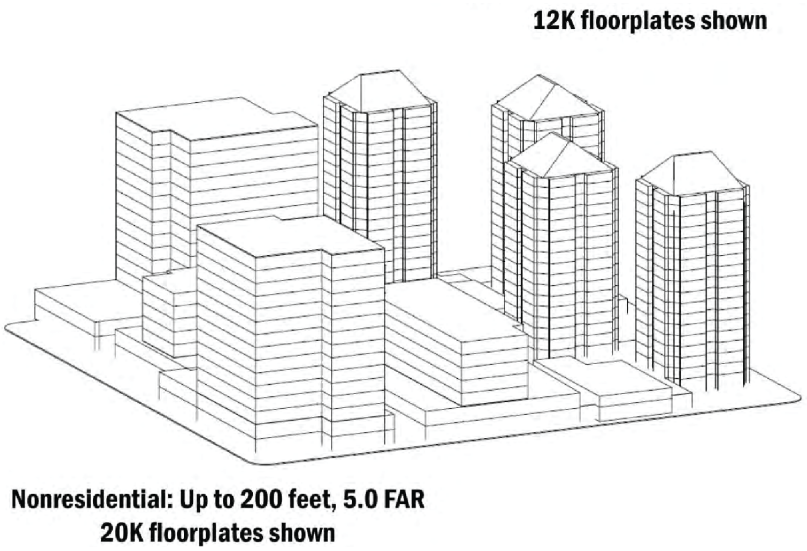
Recommendation for Area 3A

	Status Quo		CAC Recommendation of Equalizing FAR for Residential and Nonresidential	
Land Use District	Max Height	Max FAR	Max Height	Max FAR
Downtown MU				
Residential Building	200′	5.0	300′ (based on Area 2A action)	5.0
Nonresidential Building	100′	3.0	200′	5.0



Area 3A: Status Quo

» Prototypical Downtown MU Superblock built with 50% residential and 50% nonresidential/office



Area 3A: Alternative with Increased Nonresidential FAR and Height

» Allowing up to 200 feet and 5.0 FAR for residential and nonresidential
» Nonresidential/office uses: larger floorplates than residential and taller floor to ceiling per floor than residential

DOWNTOWN PARKING

Background

Parking affects downtown character in many ways. Not an end to itself, parking should be an element that supports and advances the larger Downtown vision. Wrapped up on parking strategy are questions such as:

- How pedestrian-friendly should Downtown be?
- How do we want to use scarce urban land?
- How do we avoid spillover impacts, while not burdening development with unnecessary costs?

The Downtown Subarea Plan calls for establishing parking requirements specific to different uses. Requirements are set for minimum required and maximum allowed stalls; these vary by use and by district. The Code provides for some reduction in required stalls where parking can be shared by mixed use development, but otherwise provides no room for departure from the required parking minimums. Current direction for major uses is summarized as follows:

Residential uses. No minimum/2.0 maximum stalls per unit in the Downtown Core and 1.0 minimum and 2.0 maximum in the rest of Downtown.

Retail and Restaurant uses. 3.3 minimum/5.0 maximum stalls per 1,000 sf of development in the Core; 4.0 minimum/5.0 maximum in the rest of Downtown. For restaurants no minimum/15 maximum stalls per 1,000 square feet of development in the Core; 10 minimum/20 maximum in the rest of Downtown. In Old Bellevue retail and restaurant uses are not required to provide parking for the first 1,500 square feet if they are located in a building constructed prior to 1998. Newer buildings must provide parking for all retail and restaurant space.

How does parking relate to livability?

» Adequate parking is a key component of mobility

» "Right-sizing" parking can help promote housing affordability

» Lower parking barrier for small restaurants promotes "mom and pops," small restaurants that enliven the Downtown

» Being able to "park once" helps promote a more walkable Downtown

Office/commuter uses. Code calls for 2.0 minimum/2.7 maximum stalls per thousand square feet of development in the Downtown Core; 2.5 minimum/3 maximum in the rest of Downtown. Existing Subarea Plan policy recognizes the relationship between commuter parking and travel behavior, and calls for revising parking and transportation management requirements as needed to achieve Comprehensive Plan mode split targets. Achieving these mode split targets is critical to supporting multiple travel alternatives and avoiding gridlock in a maturing Downtown.

CAC Discussion

- Parking is a complicated issue that influences development costs, ability to attract tenants, user convenience and access, and travel behavior.
- As Downtown continues to grow, it will create a dense urban environment with different parking needs. The key is how to anticipate these changes while not adversely impacting the development and vitality the community is hoping to see.

- Downtown Bellevue does not have nearly the amount of on-street parking, shared parking garages, or level of transit service as Downtown Seattle or Portland to alleviate some of the parking need within individual buildings. This makes it difficult to just compare code ratios from other cities to Downtown Bellevue.
- Concern about dramatic shifts in parking ratios that depend on better bus service, and on light rail transit well before it will be in place.
- Reducing minimum parking requirements for residential projects requires further analysis. The market has been shifting in past years in both Seattle and Bellevue. A benefit would be that the overall cost of housing could be reduced by including less parking. Some concern if residential parking requirements are reduced too much, residents and guests might park on the street displacing retail and restaurant traffic, or park in surrounding single family neighborhoods.
- Issue regarding lack of guest parking in residential projects is best addressed from a management stand-point based on the unique needs of each building, and not by a minimum required ratio for guest stalls.
- Some discussion of the underlying need for maximum parking ratios, and how the high cost of constructing parking in some ways reduces the need to reduce down maximum parking ratios.
- The use of Downtown office space has become more dense (more workers per 1,000 square feet of leasable area), which has led to increased need for commuter parking spaces.
- Some interest in exploring reductions to minimum required ratios for office parking, and that in the future, the City should explore how to incrementally reduce maximum ratios for office.
- Interest in exploring if small retail uses should be allowed to have no or very little required parking.
- Old Bellevue has a unique set of parking issues. More should be done to understand the dynamics of the area and how the current regulations are playing out.
- Interest in a public parking garage near Old Bellevue for short-term parking.
- Concern that providing a large supply of free, or heavily subsidized parking, in the future may contribute to environmental impacts, traffic congestion, and need to spend more on roadway solutions.

Workshop Alternatives

The January 2014 CAC Alternatives Workshop generated the following parking code alternatives and parking strategies to be considered.

- Residential development down to 0.5 stalls/unit (minimum currently zero stalls/unit in Core and 1.0/unit in rest of Downtown).
- The first 1,500 net square feet of existing or new restaurant space outside the Core be treated as retail (and with it a lower minimum parking requirement by district), with exception for Old Bellevue.
- Office development down to 1.5 stalls/1,000 net square feet in Core (minimum currently 2.0/1,000) and down to 2.0 stalls/1,000 net square feet in rest of Downtown (minimum currently 2.5/1,000). Note: This does not affect maximum office parking ratios.

Detailed discussion of these alternatives did not occur as the Committee agreed to that further information was needed.

Recommendations

Code-Related

Defer potential changes to parking until a comprehensive Downtown parking study can be done.

- Conduct a comprehensive parking study to include items such as on-street parking, potential for public garages, and opportunities for coordinated management of the parking supply such as valet or shared use, etc.
- Revisit Code to respond to changing needs of Downtown as East Link light rail nears completion (2021-23).
- Ensure Old Bellevue parking requirements are clear and applied consistently, and enforced.

Non-Code

Explore a potential shared public parking facility for short-term/retail/visitor use to serve the Old Bellevue area. This area has unique characteristics and associated needs that warrant a shared facility.

Other Topics

Background

The Downtown CAC was charged with a number of other topics to include in their work. These included:

- Sidewalk widths and landscaping
- Vacant sites and buildings
- Mechanical equipment screening
- Recycling and solid waste
- Range of permitted uses
- Downtown food trucks

All of these except food trucks were appropriate to include in the larger design guideline/code discussion.

Downtown food trucks was an item discussed at a number of the public events. The CAC was able to discuss the topic as part of the CAC's Alternatives Workshop in January 2014 and develop the following material.

Food trucks are not addressed in the Downtown Subarea Plan. Some people see food trucks as a desirable addition to the Downtown experience and vibrancy; others see them as an unfair competitor with traditional brick and mortar restaurants.

Bellevue's current approach is to address stationary food trucks under Land Use Code provisions for "Vendor Carts." Vendor cart criteria include factors such as avoiding pedestrian or traffic congestion, and ensuring compatibility with the character and quality of development in the immediate vicinity. Transitory food trucks (those present for only a few hours per day or one or two days per week) have not been required to obtain a Vendor Cart permit.

Many cities across the country have adopted specific food truck ordinances. Examples in the Pacific Northwest include Seattle, Portland and Vancouver B.C. Ordinances typically address

Food trucks

impacts such as visual clutter (signage), garbage disposal, and avoiding impedance of city right-of-way. Regulations may also address locational considerations to avoid unduly impacting existing brick and mortar restaurants.

CAC Discussion

- General support for continuing to allow food trucks.
- Consider better criteria regarding operations, including requirements for keeping pedestrian paths clear. Location in City right-of-way could be allowed with proper permits.
- Some felt that locational criteria could be overly restrictive.

Recommendations

Food Truck Strategy 1: Continue to allow food trucks with property owner's consent.

Allow food trucks with property owner permission. In addition, revise the Land Use Code to develop specific requirements that address issues such as: notification requirements; requirements to keep clear pedestrian paths; signage; trash disposal; and health department requirements.

[03]

Next Steps

The CAC work on the Downtown Livability Initiative is intended to further the vision and guidance set out for the Downtown Subarea Plan. Implementation of the recommended Land Use Code changes together with implementation of the recent Downtown Transportation Plan Update and appropriate local and regional investments will help ensure that Downtown continues to grow into the vibrant urban center envisioned in the Plan.

Downtown Land Use Code Amendments

In the near-term, City staff should begin work with the Planning Commission to address the CAC's Land Use Code amendment recommendations. Adoption of Code amendments consistent with recommendations will ensure that future development contributes to livability and the desired future Downtown character in a meaningful and positive way.

Other Actions

The CAC has focused primarily on updating the Downtown Land Use Code. Through the process, however, a number of our recommendations have delved into complementary non-code actions that should move forward as well. In addition, it is critical that the land use actions are matched with the right transportation infrastructure. Thus, it is also critical to move forward to implement the recent update to the Downtown Transportation Plan.

Together, a variety of actions and investments by both the public and private sector will ensure that Downtown Bellevue continues to become the livable heart of the Eastside.

Additional Analysis

The CAC recognizes that we have set a broad framework for moving forward, and that much additional work is needed to develop the fine-grain details needed for technical Code amendments. Particularly in the case of a zoning code, the devil really is in the details. The CAC urges the Council, Planning Commission and staff to move forward at the earliest opportunity with the technical work needed to translate our broad framework into Land Use Code updates for Downtown. The Code should be readable, well integrated, and forward-looking. We think we have developed a framework that will guide the additional work toward these ends.

View of Downtown Bellevue and Lake Washington.

Among the necessary tasks will be the following:

- Additional analysis of building heights and form to determine appropriate mitigation provisions noted above, such as tower separation, transitions, protection of public view corridors, and building form.
- Development of new design guidelines, with illustrations that help convey the desired design intention.
- Development of clear direction on allowable departures from design guidelines and/or the formal list of amenity bonuses.
- Development of new Code text, integrating the Downtown Code into a single well integrated document.
- Calibration of the updated amenity incentive system, with updated bonus ratios that balance the desired amenity costs and public benefit with the economic feasibility of development contributions.
- Completion of the environmental review process.
- Additional and robust stakeholder and general public engagement, to ensure that the updated Code considers and appropriately incorporates public input.
- The design guidelines and amenity incentive system must ensure that any additional building height and/or FAR results in a higher quality, more livable outcome than what is likely to be achieved under the existing Code.

[04]

References

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City of Bellevue Downtown Livability Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes:

- *May 15, 2013*
- *June 19, 2013*
- *July 18, 2013*
- *September 18, 2013*
- *October 16, 2013*
- *November 20, 2013*
- *December 18, 2013*
- *January 15, 2014*

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- *January 15, 2014*
- *February 19, 2104*
- *March 19, 2014*
- *April 16, 2014*
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- *June 18, 2014*

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