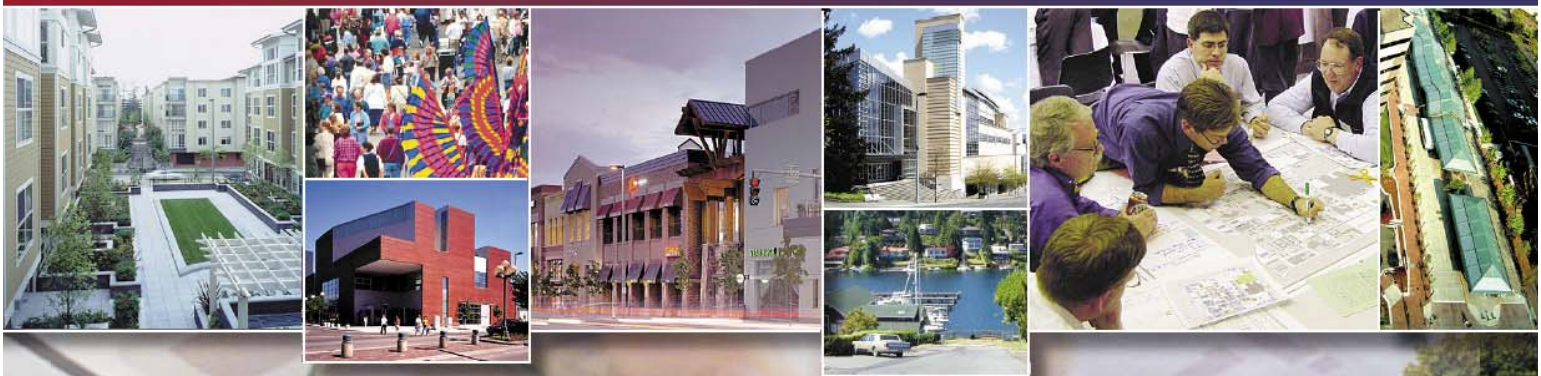
CITY OF BELLEVUE WASHINGTON

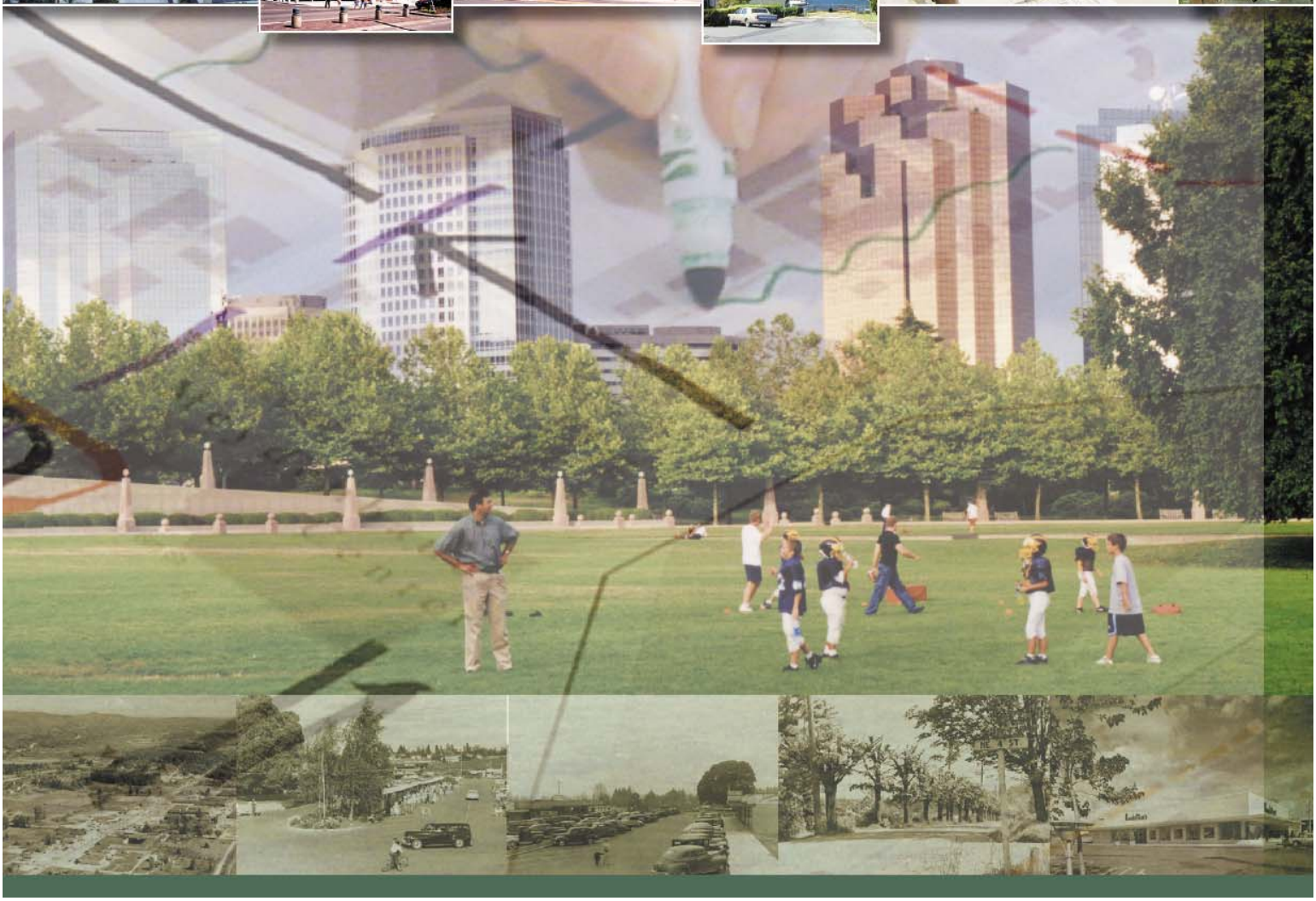
Downtown Bellevue
Implementing the Vision

BELLEVUE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

Final Report on the Downtown Plan Update

June 2003





Downtown Bellevue
Implementing the Vision

Contents

Final Report on the Downtown Plan Update

City of Bellevue

Downtown Implementation Plan Update

and Downtown Subarea Review

June 2003

Executive Summary

Section 1 Background

Section 2 The Planning Process

Section 3 Transportation Alternatives Examination and Recommendation

Section 4 An Urban Design Plan for Downtown Bellevue

Section 5 Subarea Recommendations

Section 6 Implementation

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(Past and Present)

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Executive Summary

In the last century, Bellevue has transformed itself from a sleepy agricultural community to the center of Eastside commerce and the fifth largest city in the state. Much of this growth has taken place within the last 15 years, straining a transportation infrastructure that was built in the 1950s; the "superblocks" that make up the city's traffic grid also pose challenges for urban design. Guided by the 1989 Downtown Implementation Plan and the Downtown Subarea Plan, the City has made a number of transportation and planning changes to address the pressures of growth, but continued development throughout the 1990s has prompted the exploration of new options for the new century. This report describes the planning process undertaken by the City of Bellevue to update its Downtown Implementation Plan and Subarea Plan to help guide and support the City's future growth.

Growth forecasts for downtown Bellevue in the year 2020 show that, if no new actions are taken, the anticipated increase in housing and employment within downtown will result in substantial traffic congestion for the downtown area. In 2000, to address this challenge, the City began developing an update to the Downtown Implementation Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan (referred to throughout this report as the Plan Update). In addition, the City initiated a process to develop an Urban Design Plan that would guide the look and feel of future downtown growth and development. A Downtown Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), representing a broad cross-section of community and business interests, was formed to play a key role in guiding the Plan Update. Between late 2000 and Spring 2003, the CAC worked with City staff, a consultant team, and the public to form recommendations on transportation, urban design, and Subarea Plan solutions. Sections 1 and 2 of this report frame the issues raised by Bellevue's growth, the history of downtown planning, and the work performed during the Plan Update.

Transportation alternatives—described in Section 3 of the report—were first identified as three "themed" packages, where each theme focused on a different type of transportation solution. Each package contained a different array of transportation elements, including roadway improvements, transit enhancements, parking, and pedestrian and bike

improvements. The three alternatives were evaluated for performance and impacts, and based on those results, a hybrid alternative was created, combining the best features of the three alternatives. The hybrid alternative was then evaluated again for performance and impacts. At the same time, the City revised the 2020 employment projections to reflect changing economic conditions. Through this evaluation, a fifth and final alternative was developed, based on the revised employment projections. This fifth alternative, known as the Preferred Alternative, was selected by the CAC as the recommended set of transportation solutions to be included in the Plan Update.

In addition to transportation recommendations, subcommittees of the CAC were tasked with developing recommendations for other downtown issues. The Urban Design Task Group worked with City staff and consultants to develop an urban design vision for downtown Bellevue. The resulting Urban Design Plan, presented in Section 4, calls for downtown Bellevue to become "the symbolic as well as functional heart of the Eastside Region" by continuing to develop viable, livable, memorable, and accessible mixed-use neighborhoods combining cultural, entertainment, and regional uses. The Subarea Task Group was charged with making recommendations on three specific areas related to the Downtown Subarea Plan: affordable housing, historic resources, and the "south transition." Section 5 of this report describes the task group's findings and recommendations.

The transportation, urban design, and subarea recommendations included in this report comprise the final recommended Downtown Implementation Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan Update. The Plan Update has strengthened the community's vision and defined specific projects and principles to guide downtown Bellevue over the next 20 years. For downtown to continue its evolution as a mature urban center, implementation of these ideas must continue with policy revisions, short and long-term projects funded by the City and private sector, and coordination with regional partners. Section 7—Implementation Recommendations—describes the next steps that the City will take in moving the planning process from vision into reality.

The photo above, taken in 2002 and looking east toward the Cascades, shows the Lake Washington waterfront and grid of superblocks that make up downtown Bellevue.

Section 1
Background

This report serves as the City of Bellevue staff summary of the downtown Bellevue planning process to update the Downtown Implementation Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan. This process, which began in late 2000, evaluated transportation and urban design solutions to manage the future growth of downtown Bellevue. City staff worked closely with a Citizen Advisory Committee to identify concepts and strategies for making the downtown a viable, livable, and memorable place as it develops and changes over the next 20 years.

Downtown Bellevue: The Context

Downtown Bellevue is the hub of activity for the City of Bellevue, as well as the greater Eastside, providing office and residential concentrations and retail and cultural services. Extending from NE 12th Street south to the Main Street area and from 100th Avenue NE to Interstate 405, downtown Bellevue covers nearly 410 acres and includes over three million square feet of retail and entertainment uses and more than six million square feet of Class A office space. There are 35,000 workers and over 4,000 residents housed in downtown.

In the mid- to late 1990s, downtown Bellevue experienced phenomenal growth. Housing came into its own as a major downtown land use, with many new multifamily developments springing up in the northeast and southeast corners of the area. New office buildings were constructed; major civic projects, including the library, Meydenbauer Convention Center, and the Bellevue Art Museum, came into being. At the same time, Bellevue Square, a regional retail destination, was expanding. Throughout the area, lower-density land uses were redeveloped, or planned for redevelopment, with higher intensities of residential, retail, commercial, and office space.

Along with this growth in density and vitality came a new set of pressures. In particular, the transportation infrastructure was becoming inadequate to meet increased demands. The street grid of "superblocks," along which the downtown was laid out in the 1950s, posed challenges for the circulation of vehicle traffic as well as bicycles and pedestrians. As more residents, workers, and shoppers congregated in the same amount of space, access to and from downtown and between downtown and the regional highway system became increasingly problematic. In addition to these purely physical problems, City planners and residents voiced the desire for a more cohesive and "livable" downtown environment that was designed around humans rather than cars.

In order to plan effectively for accommodating growth within a coherent framework, the City first needed to determine how much growth was likely to occur in the coming years. Next, it needed to predict the effects of this level of growth on the existing transportation system to identify where future bottlenecks would occur. The results of this analysis define the challenges that the Downtown Plan Update must address.

Courtesy of Bellevue Square

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These photographs, looking west across downtown toward Lake Washington, show the tremendous growth that has taken place in downtown Bellevue since the 1970s.

Downtown Growth Forecasts

In Spring 2000, the City engaged two local firms that specialize in economic analysis to undertake separate studies to reassess downtown Bellevue's 20-year employment and housing forecasts. At the time, the City's forecast was based on the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) 2020 forecast of 52,000 jobs and 10,600 housing units by the year 2020, compared with 35,000 jobs and 2,064 housing units in the year 2000.

When the forecasts were analyzed in 2000, downtown Bellevue was in the midst of the dot-com boom. Office vacancy rates had been below 2.5 percent for three years. There were many projects underway and many more that were in the development "pipeline." The result of the economic analysis was a market-based forecast of 79,000 jobs by 2020 that was higher than the PSRC forecast of 52,000 jobs, and a housing forecast of 10,600 units that was consistent with the PSRC forecast. These numbers were used in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), published in October 2002. The forecast was aggressive because under-representing future job growth would not have provided an effective planning framework for developing implementation strategies for the next 20 years of market-driven growth.

Work on the Plan Update proceeded through 2001 and into 2002. During this period, there were unprecedented changes to the underlying assumptions that were used to help form the Spring 2000 forecasts used in the DEIS. A number of factors, including the national economic downturn, Boeing layoffs, the dot-com bust, and September 11, led to major downtown projects being stalled or cancelled and to downtown office vacancy rates nearing 30 percent. In less than two years, the speed and depth of the change turned one of the tightest office markets in the country into one with over a fourth of its office space empty.

In Fall 2002, the City Council decided that the changes to the economic assumptions should be taken into account and the employment forecast should be revised downward to 63,000 jobs by 2020.

Downtown Bellevue Housing and Employment Forecasts

	Existing 2000	DEIS Forecast	FEIS Forecast
Housing Units	2,064	10,600	10,600
Employment	35,000	79,000	63,000

No change was proposed to the earlier housing forecast. The new forecast, which was used for the final environmental impact statement (FEIS), provided for 28,000 new jobs in addition to downtown Bellevue's

current employment of 35,000. This represented a reduction of 16,000 new jobs over the 20-year period compared with the DEIS forecast. However, it still represented an 11,000-job increase above the PSRC's 52,000-job forecast that was in place at the beginning of 2000. The table on page 1-2 compares the DEIS and FEIS forecasts.

While the DEIS employment numbers may eventually be reached, this level of growth will more likely occur over a period of 30 or 35 years, as compared to the 20 years previously predicted. City staff will continue to monitor the economic assumptions and market trends that drive the forecasts, and will report to the City Council on a periodic basis as to whether or not revisions are needed.

Framing the Problem: The Implications of No Action

In order to decide which improvements would be of most benefit to downtown, it was necessary first to characterize the results of future development with no new improvements. To accomplish this, the City developed a "baseline analysis" of traffic conditions in 2020 with only committed changes in the existing transportation system. Because of the revisions in the growth projections, two baseline analyses were prepared: one using the DEIS growth forecasts and one using the FEIS forecasts. Both analyses indicated that downtown Bellevue's growth will present serious challenges to the existing transportation infrastructure, creating levels of traffic that cannot be accommodated with already planned and programmed roadway system improvements.

In order to provide meaningful comparisons between future transportation conditions with and without the Preferred Alternative, the baseline analysis was evaluated as the No Action Alternative in the EIS. It includes all current transportation infrastructure, plus the projects identified in the City's current Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP). These include the current **Access Downtown** project with its improvements at the NE 8th, NE 4th, and SE 8th Street I-405 interchanges, and the new I-405 direct HOV ramps at NE 6th Street. Although both population and employment forecasts were used, as noted above, this discussion focuses on the results using the FEIS forecasts, which more accurately reflect current economic and growth projections.

The modeling results indicate that, without any additional improvements, there will be substantial traffic congestion in the future. Total peak hour person-trips to, from, or within downtown Bellevue are projected to grow by 107 percent between 1999 and 2020—a greater rate than the projected employment and population increase within downtown over this period. The levels of forecasted growth would result in an 85 percent increase in vehicle trips within downtown, as well as into and out of the area. The additional trips cannot be accommodated by currently programmed transportation improvements, and therefore would contribute to increased congestion over existing conditions throughout downtown.

Intersections with Predicted Unacceptable Traffic Delays

The figure above depicts the future baseline intersection levels of service within downtown Bellevue under the "No Action" scenario. A total of 11 intersections would operate at level of service F, which represents a degree of delay unacceptable to most motorists. Congestion would be widespread throughout the downtown, with the greatest congestion experienced on Bellevue Way; 106th, 108th, and 110th Avenues; and NE 2nd, NE 4th, NE 6th, and NE 8th Streets. Because of the pressures on these major streets, congestion would spread to lower-volume streets and would expand to cover longer periods of the day. In addition to internal congestion in downtown, access to and from downtown would be restricted under the forecast 2020 conditions. Key access to the north, south, and east of downtown would be severely restricted, with demand exceeding capacity.

From agricultural beginnings and rural dirt roads (Bellevue Way is shown in the undated photo at right), downtown Bellevue has transformed into a hub of office, residential, retail, and cultural activity for the City of Bellevue and the greater Eastside.

Courtesy of Bellevue Square

Although urban design-related issues are more difficult to quantify, the City's work on the Urban Design Plan also suggested that maintaining the status quo would not be an acceptable solution to addressing further growth. The Urban Design Plan noted that Bellevue's existing urban strategy of "regionally scaled, single-use developments" would not be effective in the future, due to the City's physical constraints and the pressures of Eastside growth patterns. Future development along the same lines, the plan concluded, would reinforce the downtown's current lack of cohesiveness, exacerbate its auto-oriented character, and deprive it of a center. This would conflict with the City's desire, expressed in the Urban Design Plan, to "become the symbolic as well as functional heart of the Eastside Region through the continued location of cultural, entertainment and retail uses located in distinct, mixed-use neighborhoods connected by a variety of unique public places and great public infrastructure."

The Downtown Plan Update was developed with the objective of addressing these challenges in planning for downtown Bellevue's future. The following sections of this report describe the process used to develop the Plan Update; the alternatives examined to enhance traffic circulation and downtown livability; recommendations for transportation, urban design, and downtown subarea planning; and steps to be taken to transform those recommendations into reality as the downtown grows and changes over the next 20 years.

Section 2
The Planning Process

Background of Downtown Bellevue Planning

Bellevue's Downtown Subarea Plan and Downtown Implementation Plan provide the guidelines that enable development of downtown Bellevue as the primary urban center of the Eastside, consistent with regional, metropolitan and county-wide plans. Downtown Bellevue plays a key role in the region's growth management strategy. The Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) **Vision 2020** and King County's Countywide Planning Policies identify downtown Bellevue as an urban 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 only 2 percent of this City's land area, is working to accommodate the vast majority of the City's future employment and residential growth.

The Downtown Subarea Plan is one of fifteen subarea plans that are part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. These subarea plans work in harmony with the general elements of the Comprehensive Plan (land use, housing, transportation, etc.) while providing a focus on unique planning circumstances that exist in each subarea. The Downtown Subarea Plan has not had any significant revision since 1989.

The Downtown Subarea Plan sets the policy vision for the future of downtown Bellevue. It 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 investments (vision and predictability for a stable investment climate, incentives).

The Downtown Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) is the "functional plan" that furthers the downtown vision. Originally adopted in 1989 with a horizon year of 2000, the first plan included needed transportation investments, as well as pedestrian improvements, creation of open space, and ways to finance these improvements. The Implementation Plan has largely been accomplished, culminating in funding of the $164 million **Access Downtown** project now underway.

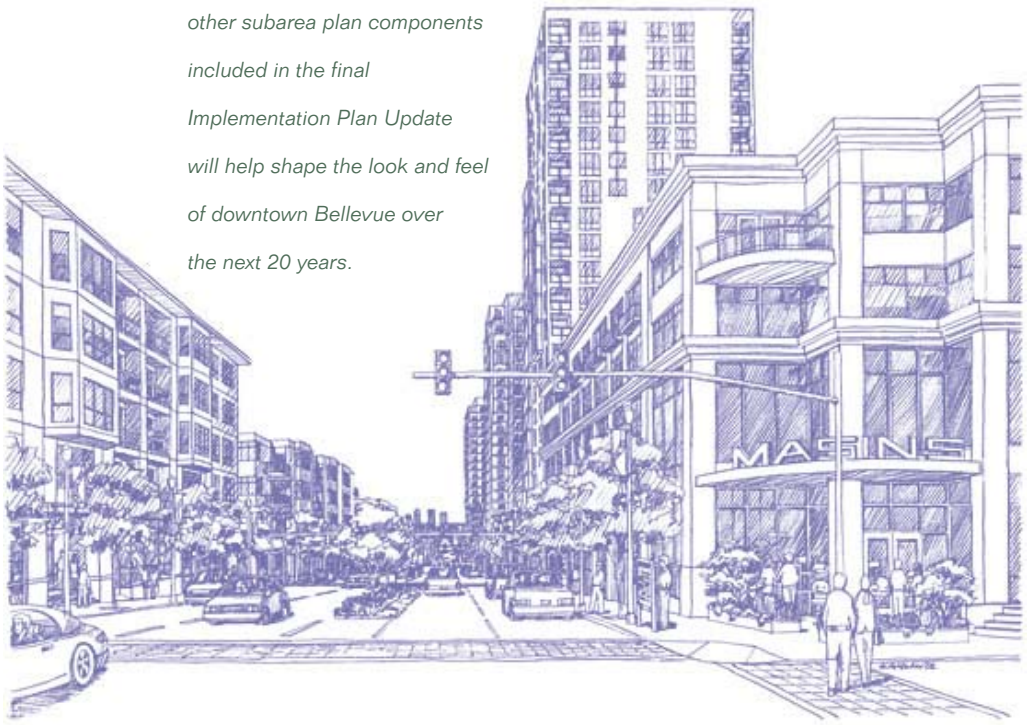
The Plan Update

Much has been accomplished by the original Downtown Subarea Plan and Downtown Implementation Plan, such as important arterial and intersection improvements. However, the existing plans are in need of updating to reflect the City's current development, as well as the next two decades of projected downtown development and associated population and employment growth. Thus, the City initiated the Downtown Plan Update to continue the work begun earlier, while embracing the desire to develop a stronger cultural and entertainment focus and ensure adequate infrastructure to support the next 20 years of growth.

The Plan Update consists of transportation improvements designed to support the adopted land use plan for the Downtown Subarea and urban design measures to further downtown Bellevue's livability. The objective of the transportation improvements is to maintain convenient access to downtown Bellevue via regional transportation systems, mobility between downtown and other parts of the community, and circulation within downtown as subarea population and employment increase over time. The objective of the urban design measures is to create a vision and a strategy for downtown's future development as a "Great Place"—viable, livable, memorable, and accessible.

The current planning process coincides with several major regional transportation enhancement projects, such as the I-405 and I-90 Corridor Programs, the Trans-Lake Washington Project, and Sound Transit's Sound Move plan, all of which will have major benefits for and impacts on downtown Bellevue. The relationship between these 20- to 30-year transportation planning efforts and the Implementation Plan's objectives has been considered in the development of elements of this Plan Update because of the importance of regional accessibility for a major commercial employment center like downtown Bellevue.

The transportation improvements, urban design measures, and other subarea plan components included in the final Implementation Plan Update will help shape the look and feel of downtown Bellevue over the next 20 years.



The CAC

To reflect the diverse interests of the downtown community, the Bellevue City Council established a Downtown Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to play a key role in developing the Plan Update and the Urban Plan. The CAC is a group of volunteers, like the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, and Parks & Community Services Board. Citizen applications were one of the methods used by the City Council in appointing the CAC. (The City Council is responsible for appointment of all CACs used in Bellevue's planning processes.) Meetings of the CAC were scheduled around key decision points in the planning process.

The Downtown CAC represented a wide range of interests. Its membership included three Bellevue Council members; representatives from City Commissions; residents of downtown; residents of adjoining neighborhoods and the City at large; downtown property owners and developers; and representatives from other organizations such as hotels and tourism, and arts and cultural groups. It should be noted that some representatives from groups such as the downtown property owners, developers, and tourism organizations also reside in the areas surrounding downtown Bellevue. The members of the CAC are listed at the beginning of this report.

Between late 2000 and Spring 2003, the CAC worked with City staff and consultants to identify transportation and urban design solutions, review the Plan Update and Downtown Subarea Plan, and make recommendations on preferred solutions. The group acted in an advisory capacity to the City Council and the Transportation and Planning Commissions, and in June 2003 will present to Council its recommendations. The City Council will ultimately approve changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Transportation and Facilities Plan, and Capital Investment Program based on the Implementation Plan Update and the updated Downtown Subarea Plan.

Public Involvement

A wide range of opportunities for extensive and continuous community input is vital to an effective planning effort. The following outreach techniques were used to engage a diverse group of stakeholders, public agencies, and Bellevue residents at large in developing the Plan Update.

Scoping Meetings

Two formal scoping meetings were used at the outset of the Plan Update to set the parameters of what would be studied. The information gathered included problems to be solved, potential solutions, and key environmental issues.

Web Site

The City utilized a project web site for the Plan Update to announce public meetings and to provide document downloads of technical memos, environmental reports, newsletters, and meeting minutes.

CAC Meetings

The full CAC convened 12 times over the life of the project. CAC Task Groups met an additional 17 times. CAC meetings were announced on the project web page and in City publications, and noticed to the project mailing list. An opportunity for the public to verbally address the advisory committee was provided at each full CAC meeting. The CAC also reviewed all written comments received by staff regarding the Plan Update over the past 2 ½ years.

Open Houses

Three large open houses (with over 250 attendees at the two largest) were used during key points of the planning process to share project information and to solicit public feedback. The final open house included a formal public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Newsletters and It's Your City

Three project newsletters were used to inform the public on the status of the Plan Update and to advertise upcoming open houses. Newsletters were mailed out to 14,500 Bellevue addresses west of I-405. The quarterly publication It's Your City was used to reach the entire City at periodic times to summarize Plan development and outline opportunities for public comment.

Local Media

The local media closely followed the planning process and increased awareness of the project. Numerous stories were written by the King County Journal, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Seattle Times, and the Daily Journal of Commerce that succinctly outlined key issues being addressed and helped advertise upcoming public meetings.

The public involvement process helped to create openness, trust, and participation while working to address opportunities and challenges for the next 20 years of downtown's evolution.

Concurrent Work on Transportation, Urban Design, and Other Subarea Plan Issues

The Downtown Implementation Plan Update and Downtown Subarea Review process focused on three main issues related to downtown Bellevue: transportation, urban design, and other Subarea Plan issues (affordable housing, the "south transition", historic resources, and fire and life safety). Each of these issues is described briefly below.

Transportation

The first focus of the Plan Update process was on transportation and mobility over the next 20 years. The CAC was tasked with developing a plan to provide convenient access to downtown via regional transportation systems; mobility between downtown and other parts of the community; and circulation within downtown as downtown population and employment increase over time. Specific transportation ideas for downtown Bellevue (such as adding lanes, reconfiguring intersections, adding parking facilities, etc.) were grouped into major alternatives, as described in Section 3 of this report.

Urban Design

Concurrent with the transportation alternatives development, urban design concepts were developed to complement the City's transportation objectives. The CAC evaluated different urban design concepts, such as a hierarchy of downtown streets, "signature" streets, new parks and open space, and unique downtown neighborhoods. These concepts were packaged together into the Urban Design Plan. The Urban Design Plan was evaluated with each of the transportation alternatives through the DEIS and FEIS processes.

Other Subarea Plan Issues

In addition to transportation and urban design issues, the public had expressed, through the EIS scoping process, other areas of concern relating to the Downtown Bellevue Subarea. The CAC formed a Subarea Plan Task Group to develop improvements to address south transition, affordable workforce housing, and historic resources issues in downtown. The recommendations of the Subarea Plan Task Group are described in Section 5 of this report.

In 2002, a report was released by the Bellevue Fire Department to address the fire and life safety concerns and issues associated with the projected growth and development of downtown Bellevue as depicted in the DEIS for the Plan Update. The projected increase in residential, office, retail, and entertainment activities in Bellevue's downtown would enlarge the population in downtown at all times of the day, thus creating increased demand on fire and safety services. Increased traffic congestion under the alternative scenarios could impact response times if additional services are not added.

Recommendations set forth in the 2002 fire protection and life safety report addressed issues in risk analysis, prevention, fire and emergency medical services (EMS) operations, deployment, support services, and use of technology. These recommendations were included in the FEIS as mitigation measures.

Alternatives Development and Evaluation

The Plan Update alternatives were developed in a multi-phased screening process. The process began with a preliminary analysis, then was refined through the DEIS and FEIS evaluations. As alternatives were defined, they were also evaluated for their performance and impacts. The results of the initial evaluations were used to develop better performing alternatives, as described below.

Prior to the development of alternatives, a 2020 Baseline Transportation Analysis was conducted to determine how the downtown transportation system with existing and committed (funded) infrastructure would function in 2020 (see implications of No Action, p. 1-3). The analysis indicated that one of the most significant transportation challenges would be getting people into and out of downtown. Therefore, three initial alternatives, each consisting of packages of potential transportation improvements, were formed. Each represented an alternative strategy to enhance downtown mobility and circulation. The initial three transportation packages were as follows:

- Major New Roadway Access Package (Alternative 1)
- Major Transit Package (Alternative 2)
- Major Intercept Package (Alternative 3)

After the three initial transportation packages were defined, a preliminary analysis was conducted to determine how each transportation package performed under the 2020 development scenario. Based on that preliminary analysis, the best performing transportation elements were selected and combined into a fourth package, called the Hybrid Package (Alternative 4). These four transportation packages became the four action alternatives evaluated in the DEIS in October 2002. Each of these alternatives is described in more detail in Section 3.

Preferred Alternative

The Hybrid Alternative (Alternative 4) from the DEIS was the starting point for development of the Preferred Alternative. City of Bellevue staff, with input from the CAC, used the transportation modeling with revised growth forecasts (as described in Section 1 of this report) to analyze the Hybrid Alternative. The CAC reviewed comments on the DEIS and suggested amendments to the Hybrid Alternative. On February 4th, 2003, they completed their deliberations and selected the components of the Preferred Alternative.

Several projects that were analyzed in the DEIS were recommended by the CAC for inclusion in the FEIS Preferred Alternative, but ultimately were not included at the direction of the Bellevue City Council. These are certain roadway widening projects proposed outside downtown, including widening of Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue. Except for these noted changes, the Preferred Alternative analyzed in the FEIS was consistent with the CAC's recommendation. A more detailed description of the Preferred Alternative is included in Section 3.

In addition to transportation projects, Alternatives 1 through 4 and the Preferred Alternative included urban design components. The Urban Design Plan details a "great place" strategy to guide downtown Bellevue toward becoming a more viable, livable, memorable, and accessible community. The Preferred Alternative also included CAC Task Group recommendations for the "south transition," affordable workforce housing, and downtown's historic resources.

Section 3

Transportation Alternatives Examination and Recommendation

Alternatives were evaluated, refined to improve performance and reduce impacts, then evaluated again to develop a set of recommendations to best meet downtown Bellevue's needs over the next 20 years.

Introduction

This section provides detailed descriptions of the transportation alternatives that were evaluated through the work of the CAC and the EIS process. It also describes the results of the analysis done for each alternative to assess its performance against the project objectives. As noted in Section 2, Alternatives 1 through 4 were evaluated in the DEIS, while the Preferred Alternative—a refinement of Alternative 4 based on the DEIS analysis and comments received on that analysis—was evaluated in the FEIS.

The section concludes by discussing the anticipated outcomes of the Preferred Alternative—in other words, how the implementation of the Plan Update will enhance various aspects of downtown Bellevue's transportation system in support of the City's planning goals.

Description of the Transportation Alternatives

Five action alternatives were evaluated through the SEPA DEIS and FEIS review process. The five alternatives share a core set of transportation elements, but also contain additional transportation elements that distinguish each alternative from the rest. Each alternative has a particular orientation or theme in addressing the access and mobility challenges presented by the 2020 development forecast.

Descriptions of the first four alternatives are included in this subsection. The fifth alternative (Preferred Alternative) is described in the following subsection. A complete list of all the transportation elements included in the five action alternatives is shown in Table 3-1.

Common Elements Among All Alternatives

Each of the five action alternatives includes a core set of transportation elements. These elements are considered essential aspects of the Plan Update, and they remain constant for each alternative.

Major Improvements of Local and Express Bus Service

The 2020 forecast of daily transit trips to or from downtown Bellevue represents roughly four times the estimated daily transit ridership to or from the downtown in 2000. To accommodate this increase in ridership, the core set of transportation elements includes a doubling of transit service frequency into and out of the downtown. On average, current transit service to the downtown operates at less than half of capacity during the commute peak and mid-day periods. In addition, roughly one-half of the ridership into or out of the downtown is either transferring to another route and bound for a destination outside of downtown or is staying on the bus and continuing through downtown. If this "through" ridership doubles proportional to the service increase of the next twenty years, the doubling of service frequency would provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the quadrupling of ridership to and from the downtown.

Expansion of Park-and-Ride Capacity

Achieving high levels of ridership on these new or expanded transit services would also depend on significant expansion of park-and-ride capacity at the origin ends of the trips bound for downtown Bellevue. Parking is already the most significant capacity constraint for transit service to the downtown. To accommodate the increase in transit demand for travel to downtown Bellevue, most of the increase in park-and-ride capacity would have to be in communities other than Bellevue, since over half of the increase in the ridership is expected to originate in these other communities.

Circulator Bus Service

Although the specific routing will have to be defined through further analysis, the circulator bus service would serve the retail core, the office core, the Bellevue Transit Center (BTC), and the other major transit stops. The circulator could also link the downtown with other activity centers on the fringe of downtown, such as the Overlake Hospital or City Hall. Service on the circulator would be provided at least every 10 minutes during the peak commute periods and mid-day.

Traffic Operational Changes

Traffic operational changes designed to improve traffic and freight flow on streets designated as principal arterials are also included in all alternatives. These include NE 8th Street, NE 4th Street, 112th Avenue NE, and Bellevue Way NE. The recommended operational changes include restriction of left turns, except at signalized intersections, in places where those turn restrictions do not already exist. In addition, selected intersection improvements are proposed to improve flow.

Mid-Block Connections

Mid-block connections are proposed to break up the large block faces and to provide parking garage and truck access without disrupting flow on the major arterial streets. Three segments are recommended on the 103rd, 105th, and 107th Avenues NE alignments and two segments on the NE 5th and NE 7th Streets alignments. These segments are likely to be implemented in conjunction with development projects.

Neighborhood Protection Programs

Two types of neighborhood-protection programs were included in the core set of transportation elements: a traffic management program to discourage cut-through traffic and speeding in residential neighborhoods, and a residential parking program to discourage commercial parking from spilling over into the residential neighborhoods. These programs would be implemented as needs arise, extending existing neighborhood traffic calming and residential permit parking programs.

Short-Term Parking, TDM, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The core set of transportation elements also includes a set of elements and/or policies for short-term parking facilities (for shared use, especially in retail areas), transportation demand management (TDM), and for enhancement of pedestrian and bicycling conditions.

Elements Considered But Not Included in the Alternatives

Based on the preliminary analysis of the first three alternatives, two transportation elements that were originally included in the alternative packages were omitted from the Hybrid and Preferred alternatives. They are described below.

Grade Separate Bellevue Way/ NE 8th Street Intersection

Additional improvements at the NE 8th Street/Bellevue Way intersection would allow the intersection to better accommodate the forecasted 2020 traffic volumes. However, right-of-way at the intersection is limited by the high density of retail development surrounding the intersection. Grade separation of movements to and from Bellevue Square would be costly, would have a significant impact on adjacent properties, and would likely require a direct connection to the upper floors of the Bellevue Square garage.

Extend 114th Avenue North of NE 2nd Street

Construction of the **Access Downtown** improvements will effectively terminate 114th Avenue at NE 2nd Street. Extending 114th Avenue NE north of NE 2nd Street would require significant additional right-of-way, which is limited as a result of the widening of I-405. The lack of clearance under NE 6th Street would require lowering of 114th Avenue NE below its existing grade, causing the relocation of existing utilities and impacts to abutting properties. Extending 114th Avenue NE north to NE 8th Street is not feasible because there is no space available to create a new intersection between the I-405 ramps and the 112th Avenue NE intersection. For these reasons, the extension of 114th Avenue NE is not considered feasible.

Alternative 1: Major New Roadway Access Package

The focus of Alternative 1 was on increasing the capacity of the roadway system that carries people to and from downtown by automobile. This alternative included options for increasing the capacity of I-405 and the ramps connecting it to downtown, such as the addition of ramps connecting NE 10th Street and NE 2nd Street to provide more points of access to the downtown. It also included consideration of improving arterial street connections to SR 520 and I-90, such as widening Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue SE. Many of the transportation elements in this alternative were outside of downtown Bellevue, but were included because they could substantially increase the capacity of roads providing access between downtown Bellevue and the regional transportation system. See Table 3-1 for a complete list of transportation elements included in Alternative 1.

Alternative 2: Major Transit Package

Alternative 2 was designed to address the major issues of access to and from downtown Bellevue by a significant increase in transit capacity and level of service. This would be accomplished by extending high-capacity transit (HCT) service from Seattle and significantly increasing bus service from Seattle and other Eastside locations into downtown Bellevue. This alternative assumed that HCT would be in a tunneled section through downtown Bellevue with two stations: one at the Transit Center and another in the southern part of downtown. See Table 3-1 for a full list of transportation elements in Alternative 2.

Table 3-1 Matrix of Implementation Elements by Alternative

	DEIS Alternatives				FEIS
	Alternative 1: Major New Roadway Access	Alternative 2: Major Transit	Alternative 3: Major Intercept	Alternative 4: Hybrid Alternative	Alternative 5: Preferred Alternative
Core Transportation Elements (Included in All DEIS Alternatives)					
Roadway					
Operations					
Restrict Left-turns on Principal Arterials	■	■	■	■	■
Enhanced Signal Optimization on Principal Arterials	■	■	■	■	■
Selected Intersection Improvements					
SE 8th/112th Ave NE – add southbound through lane	■	■	■	■	
I-405 and SR 520 Related Improvements					
HOV Facility Enhancements (consistent with State plans)	■	■	■	■	■
Mid-Block Connections					
105th Ave between NE 4th and NE 8th St	■	■	■	■	■
105th Ave between Main and NE 2nd St	■	■	■	■	■
NE 7th St between 108th and 110th Ave NE	■	■	■	■	■
Transit					
Major Expansion of Local Transit Service	■	■	■	■	■
Major Expansion of Express Bus Transit Service	■	■	■	■	■
Circulator Transit Service	■	■	■	■	■
Improved Transit Stop Facilities	■	■	■	■	■
Improved Transit Information	■	■	■	■	■
Parking					
Short-Term Parking Garages	■	■	■	■	■
Bellevue Way/Main St Area	■	■	■	■	■
Neighborhood Retail Clusters	■	■	■	■	■
Parking Guidance System	■	■	■	■	■
New/Expanded Park-and-Ride Lots Outside of Downtown	■	■	■	■	■
Transportation Demand Management					
Revision of City's TDM Program Increasing Non-SOV Goal	■	■	■	■	■
Improved Traveler Information	■	■	■	■	■
Pedestrian and Bicycles					
Enhanced Pedestrian Signals and Crosswalks	■	■	■	■	■
Sidewalk Widening/Pedestrian Enhancements (Development-related)	■	■	■	■	■
Designated Bicycle Routes					
Bicycle route on 112th Ave and 114th Ave	■	■	■	■	■
Bicycle route on NE 12th St	■	■	■	■	■
Bicycle route on 100th Ave NE	■	■	■	■	■
Bicycle route on NE 1st/2nd as part of Lake to Lake Trail	■	■	■	■	
Bicycle route on/adjacent to NE 6th St (110th Ave NE to 114th Ave NE)	■	■	■	■	
Provide Bicycle Storage Facilities	■	■	■	■	■
Neighborhood Traffic and Parking Management					
Expand to New Areas	■	■	■	■	■
Enhance Existing Programs	■	■	■	■	■
Transportation Elements Unique to Action Alternatives					
Roadway					
Operations					
One-way Couplet: 106th Ave NE and 108th Ave NE	■	■		■	■
One-way Couplet: NE 4th and NE 8th Streets		■			
Add Turn Lanes					
Eastbound Right-Turn Lane – NE 4th St/Bellevue Way	■			■	
Convert Eastbound Thru-Right to Right Only – NE 4th St/ Bellevue Way					■
Northbound Right-Turn Lane – Bellevue Way/Main St	■				
Westbound Left-Turn Lane – Bellevue Way/Main St	■			■	
Eastbound Right-Turn Lane – NE 10th St/112th Ave NE		■			
Northbound Left-Turn Lane – 112th Ave/NE 8th St		■			
Eastbound Right-Turn Lane – NE 4th St/112th Ave NE		■			
Westbound Right-Turn Lane – NE 4th St/112th Ave NE		■			
Westbound Left-Turn Lane – NE 4th St/112th Ave NE		■			
Dual Northbound Left-Turn Lanes – NE 4th St/Bellevue Way				■	
Westbound Right-Turn Lane – NE 4th St/Bellevue Way				■	
Dual Northbound and Southbound Left-Turn Lanes – NE 8th St/ 110th Ave NE				■	
Dual Eastbound Left-Turn Lanes – NE 12th St/116th Ave NE				■	
Add new left-turn lane – NE 2nd St/Bellevue Way					■
Configure intersection for one left-turn only, one thru lane and one thru/right-turn for each approach – NE 10th/112th Ave NE					■

Table 3-1 Matrix of Implementation Elements by Alternative (cont'd)

	DEIS Alternatives				FEIS
	Alternative 1: Major New Roadway Access	Alternative 2: Major Transit	Alternative 3: Major Intercept	Alternative 4: Hybrid Alternative	Alternative 5: Preferred Alternative
Transportation Elements Unique to Action Alternatives (cont'd)					
Roadway (cont'd)					
Selected Widenings					
Bellevue Way (Main St to NE 4th St SB; NE 8th St to NE 12th St SB)	■			■	
112th Ave NE between NE 4th and NE 8th St		■			
NE 8th St, west of 106th to 108th Ave NE			■		
NE 8th St between 106th and 108th Ave NE (no widening west of 106th Ave)				■	■
NE 2nd St between Bellevue Way and 112th Ave NE (EB and WB)	■	■		■	■
Street Extensions					
Extend NE 2nd St from new half-interchange to 116th Ave NE	■			■	■
Extend NE 6th St to 116th Ave NE as HOV Facility		■	■		
Extend NE 12th St between 102nd and 100th Ave NE	■				
Extend NE 10th St across I-405 to 116th Ave NE				■	■
I-405 and Trans-Lake Improvements					
Add two general purpose lanes on I-405 in each direction, drop 2nd lane between NE 2nd and NE 10th St	■	■		■	■
Add two general purpose lanes on I-405 in each direction, drop 2nd lane between NE 4th and NE 8th St			■		
Add New I-405 Access at NE 10th St via Collector-Distributor Lanes	■	■		■	■
Add New I-405 Access at NE 2nd St via Collector-Distributor Lanes	■	■		■	■
Dedicated Bus/Turn Only Lanes					
108th Ave NE northbound contraflow curb lane between Main St and NE 8th St	■	■		■	
108th Ave NE northbound contraflow curb lane between NE 4th and NE 8th St					■
108th Ave NE southbound curb lane between NE 10th and Main St	■	■		■	■
NE 8th St westbound curb lane		■			
NE 4th St eastbound curb lane		■			
NE 6th St eastbound and westbound inside thru lanes (west of 112th Ave NE)		■			
Access Improvements Outside of the Downtown					
Create New Full Interchange at SR 520 near 124th Ave NE	■				■
Widen 120th Ave NE from Northup Way to NE 8th St	■				possible future study
Realign 120th Ave NE/Bel-Red Road/NE 8th St Intersection	■				possible future study
Widen 120th Ave NE from NE 8th to Main St	■				
Connect 120th Ave NE to the Main St/112th Ave NE Intersection	■				
Provide new connection from Main St to SE 8th St along 124th Ave NE	■				
Provide new ramps to/from I-405 from 116th Ave NE/ Northup Way	■				■
Widen 116th Ave NE from NE 12th St to Northup Way	■				
Widen 112th Ave SE from Main St to SE 8th St to add center turn lane	■			■	
Grade separate Bellevue Way/112th Ave SE intersection	■				
Widen Bellevue Way NE from SR 520 to NE 12th St	■			■	
Sub-option: Widen Bellevue Way NE from SR 520 to NE 12th St (one HOV lane in northbound direction only)				■	
Widen Bellevue Way SE from Main St to I-90 (one lane each direction)	■			■	
Sub-option: Widen Bellevue Way SE from Main St to I-90 (one HOV lane in southbound direction only)				■	
Sub-option: Widen Bellevue Way SE from 112th Ave SE to I-90 (one general purpose lane southbound only)				■	
Sub-option: Widen Bellevue Way SE from S. Bellevue P&R lot to I-90 (one HOV lane in southbound direction only)				■	
Add eastbound on-ramp to SR 520 from Bellevue Way NE	■			■	■
Add eastbound off-ramp from SR 520 to 108th Ave NE/112th Ave NE (at Bellevue Way)	■			■	■
Widen 108th Ave NE/112th Ave NE from SR 520 to NE 12th St	■			■	
Convert Bellevue Way to Boulevard North of Downtown (no lanes added)			■		
Remove a Travel Lane in Each Direction to Improve Urban Design					
Main Street from Bellevue Way to 112th Ave NE		■			
NE 10th St from Bellevue Way to 112th Ave NE			■		

Table 3-1 Matrix of Implementation Elements by Alternative (cont'd)

	DEIS Alternatives				FEIS
	Alternative 1: Major New Roadway Access	Alternative 2: Major Transit	Alternative 3: Major Intercept	Alternative 4: Hybrid Alternative	Alternative 5: Preferred Alternative
Transportation Elements Unique to Action Alternatives (cont'd)					
Roadway (cont'd)					
Mid-Block Connections					
103rd Ave NE between NE 8th and NE 12th St	■			■	■
NE 5th St between Bellevue Way and 108th Ave NE	■			■	■
NE 5th St between 110th Ave NE and 112th Ave NE	■			■	■
107th Ave NE between Main St and NE 4th St	■			■	■
High Capacity Transit					
In Exclusive Right of Way		■			future study
In Shared Right of Way			■		future study
Additional Local and Express Bus Service Expansion		■	■		
Shuttles to Intercept Lots and P&R Lots Outside Downtown			■		
Expansion of Circulator Service or Addition of a Route		■			
Moving Sidewalk on NE 6th St Pedestrian Corridor		■	■		
Parking					
Short Term Parking Garages					
City/Metro site on NE 6th St		■		■	■
Expanded Carpool and Vanpool Parking			■		
Major Intercept Parking Located Near the Downtown Fringe			■		
City Code Changes					
Examine parking requirements for New Construction		■	■		■
In-Lieu-of-Parking Fees			■		■
Transportation Demand Management					
Flexible Work Hours Promotion and Incentives	■		■	■	■
Compressed Work Week Promotion and Incentives	■		■	■	■
Telecommuting Promotion and Incentives	■		■	■	■
Expanded Rideshare Coordination and Promotion			■	■	■
Downtown-wide Employee Transit Pass Subsidy		■		■	■
Downtown Resident Transit Pass Subsidy		■		■	■
Expanded Guaranteed Ride Home		■		■	■
Retail Customer Transit Ride Subsidy		■			
Parking Cash-out Incentives		■		■	■
Pedestrian and Bicycle					
Improved Pedestrian Environment (On-Street Parking and/or Wider Sidewalks)					
106th Ave NE (Main St to NE 10th St)	■	■		■	■
NE 8th St (Bellevue Way to 112th Ave NE)		■			
Main St (Bellevue Way to 108th Ave NE)		■			
NE 10th St (Bellevue Way to 112th Ave NE)			■		
Designated Bicycle Routes					
Bicycle route on Main St as part of Lake to Lake Trail					■
Bicycle route on/adjacent to NE 6th St (Bellevue Way to 114th Ave NE)					■
Bicycle route on 106th Ave NE					■
Bicycle route on 108th Ave NE					■
Bicycle route on Bellevue Way, north and south of Downtown					■
Urban Design Elements (see Section 4 of this report)					
Definition of Downtown Neighborhoods	■	■	■	■	■
Development of Symbolic and Functional Central District	■	■	■	■	■
Signature Streets (Shopping, Entertainment, Commerce)	■	■	■	■	■
Mid-block Pedestrian Crossing Opportunities	■	■	■	■	■
Transportation Circulator	■	■	■	■	■
Definition of Street Hierarchy (Auto-Bias, Pedestrian-Bias, Neutral)	■	■	■	■	■
Downtown Gateways	■	■	■	■	■
Parking (short-term parking supply in each district; off-peak on-street parking where appropriate; and park-once strategy)	■	■	■	■	■
Urban Parks and Open Space	■	■	■	■	■
Memorability	■	■	■	■	■
Subarea Plan Elements (see Section 5 of this report)					
Affordable Workforce Housing (multifamily tax abatement program; tax-exempt bonds and tax credits)					■
Historic Resources within Downtown (contingency planning; interpretive markers; documentary record; protection or replication of historic design features; transfer of air rights; relocation)					■
South Transition (Main St improvements; green space south of Main St)					■

Alternative 3: Major Intercept Package

This alternative was designed to improve access into and out of downtown by intercepting vehicle trips at the edge of downtown to reduce the demand for vehicle travel within the downtown. The intercept strategy would locate publicly provided parking structures just inside, just outside, or near downtown. This would primarily include intercept lots along I-405 on the eastern edge of downtown, but park-and-ride facilities located to the north and south of downtown would be expanded as well. See Table 3-1 for a full list of transportation elements in Alternative 3.

The intercept parking strategy would be combined with a variety of concepts to move people from the intercept parking location to their final destination and back. This could include circulator bus service, fare-free zone for transit, taxi/jitney services, enhanced pedestrian connections, or a people-mover system. Alternative 3 would also modify the parking requirements for new development to encourage the pooling of parking supply in new publicly provided spaces at intercept locations.

Alternative 4: Hybrid Package

Alternative 4 was designed to integrate the best-performing parts of the previous three alternatives. It included several of the same added turn lanes, selected road widenings, mid-block connections, and transportation demand management strategies as Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. In addition, Alternative 4 included strategies that were not part of the other alternatives, such as added turn lanes and a new street extension (NE 10th Street). See Table 3-1 for a full list of transportation elements in Alternative 4.

Like Alternative 1, Alternative 4 included some roadway expansion elements located outside of downtown Bellevue. For two of these elements (widening of Bellevue Way SE from Main Street to I-90 and widening of Bellevue Way NE from SR 520 to NE 12th Street by one additional general purpose lane in each direction), sub-options were included that provided varying scenarios for widening Bellevue Way. The sub-option for widening Bellevue Way NE was a northbound HOV lane from NE 12th Street to SR 520, rather than a general-purpose lane in each direction. The widened footprint along Bellevue Way NE would be smaller than the main option of adding two lanes. The two sub-options for widening Bellevue Way SE involved either widening for one southbound HOV lane from the South Bellevue Park-and-Ride to I-90, or widening for one southbound general purpose lane from 112th Avenue SE to I-90.

The Preferred Alternative and Additional CAC Recommendations

The first four action alternatives (Alternatives 1 through 4) were evaluated in the DEIS, published in October 2002. After receiving comments on the DEIS and conducting additional analysis, a fifth alternative (the Preferred Alternative) was evaluated in the FEIS, published in April 2003. Table 3-2 provides a summary of the expected results of the Preferred Alternative in comparison to the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS.

The Preferred Alternative was selected by the CAC because it evolved from the other alternatives considered. It incorporates a wide range of solutions (major and minor roadway projects, transit, travel demand management, etc.), that were the most effective elements of the other alternatives evaluated before it. This package of solutions represents a balanced multi-modal approach to providing mobility in support of the future growth of the downtown area. It was clear to the CAC early on in the planning process that the magnitude of the projected land use change downtown necessitated significant transportation investment, and that no single solution would be adequate to the task.

Table 3-2 Summary of Impacts

Environmental Element	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1: Major New Roadway Access	Alternative 2: Major Transit
Air Quality	Maximum calculated CO concentrations lower than existing conditions. No worst-case CO concentrations exceed ambient air quality standards.	Maximum calculated CO concentrations lower than existing levels; no worst-case CO concentrations exceed ambient air quality standards.	Maximum calculated CO concentrations slightly exceed No Action Alternative, but still well below ambient air quality standards.
Wetlands	No impact.	Most wetland impacts; access improvements to/from downtown cause impacts, including: widening 120th Ave NE, connect SE 8th St to 124th Ave, widening Bellevue Way, improving SE 8th/112th St intersection	Fewer improvements outside downtown, therefore fewer wetland impacts; wetland buffer impacts if adding SB through lane at SE 8th/112th intersection.
Threatened and Endangered Species	No impact.	47.6 acres increased impervious surface area from new pavement and sidewalks; could increase stormwater runoff and degrade stream habitat	5.7 acres increased impervious surface area.
Land Use and Neighborhoods	No direct land use impacts or displacements; inconsistent with Comprehensive Plan.	Most right-of-way required and 5-8 displacements. High potential for traffic intrusion on neighborhoods.	Minor right-of-way impacts except displacements due to NE 2nd and NE 10th extensions. Lowest potential for traffic and parking intrusion into neighborhoods.
Housing	No impact.	Consistent with Downtown Subarea Plan housing policies.	Similar to Alternative 1, but also supports housing policy to facilitate transit access for multi-family housing
Aesthetics	No impact.	Highest aesthetics impacts due to greatest number of improvements (11) that alter visual character moderately or substantially, including: extending NE 12th St between 102nd and 100th Ave, adding collector-distributor access to I-405 at NE 10th St and NE 2nd St, widening 120th NE from Northup to NE 8th St, connecting 120th Ave to Main St/112th St intersection, providing new connection from Main St to SE 8th along 124th.	Three improvements would moderately or substantially alter visual character: adding 2 GP lanes on I-405, and adding new collector-distributor access at I-405 and NE 10th St and NE 2nd St.
Recreational Facilities	No impact.	17 direct park impacts could occur from improvements.	6 direct park impacts could occur from improvements.
Noise	Peak-period traffic noise levels would increase 2 dB and likely be considered minor, but total sound levels at most locations would reach or exceed 67 dBA.	Projected noise increases over both existing levels and future No Action levels would remain small. Expected future levels at all locations would exceed 67-dBA.	Peak-period noise levels would be similar to or slightly less than levels expected with No Action, except near NE 10th St.
Environmental Hazards	No impact.	25 environmental hazard sites could be impacted by improvements.	7 environmental hazard sites could be impacted by improvements.
Transportation			
Construction	No impact.	Greater construction impacts north and south of downtown, due to construction of 120th Ave corridor, 124th Ave extension, widening 116th Ave, 112th Ave, and Bellevue Way, grade separation at 112th Ave SE and Bellevue Way.	Fewer construction impacts than Alternatives 1 and 4; almost all construction impacts would be within downtown.
Neighborhood Traffic/ Parking Intrusion	Increased potential for neighborhood traffic intrusion due to increased congestion.	Less neighborhood traffic intrusion from traffic diverting to avoid congestion on Bellevue Way and 112th Ave.	Similar to No Action Alternative.
Roadway Volumes		Distributes volumes more evenly across downtown street grid; high volumes on Bellevue Way and 112th Ave.	Less effective dispersion of traffic; high volumes in many locations.
Peak Hour LOS		5 intersections LOS F; 14 intersections LOS E.	12 intersections LOS F; 15 intersections LOS E.
Regional Freeway Access		Less congestion at NE 4th St and NE 8th St than No Action and Alternative 3; would take advantage of future I-405 expansion efforts; provide better regional access to SR 520 and I-90 with widening of Bellevue Way and 112th Ave, and new access ramps to SR 520; will help relieve congestion at I-405 interchanges; unavoidable impacts of regional system congestion and forecast timing.	Less congestion at NE 4th St and NE 8th St than No Action and Alternative 3; would take advantage of future I-405 expansion efforts.
Transit Improvements		Doubling of transit service assumed as core element in all action alternatives and is needed to serve projected growth; regional analysis necessary to fully consider HCT impacts and benefits.	Same as Alternative 1; analysis of HCT in exclusive ROW was inconclusive.
One-Way Couplets		108th Ave/106th Ave couplet would contribute to better LOS than two-way operations in No Action and Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1; couplet on NE 4th St and NE 8th St would break down on NE 4th at end points (Bellevue Way and 112th Ave).
Road Widening		NE 2nd St from 3 to 5 lanes important adjunct to I-405/ NE 2nd new collector-distributor access, and improves LOS on NE 2nd St. NE 8th St from 108th Ave to 106th Ave NE improve LOS compared to No Action and Alternative 3. Bellevue Way and 112th Ave improve LOS in downtown from 4 LOS F intersections in No Action to 2 LOS F—also improves Bellevue Way/112th Ave from LOS E to LOS C.	NE 2nd St from 3 to 5 lanes same result as Alternative 1. On 112th Ave, NE 4th St to NE 8th St needed to facilitate couplet operations but does not improve LOS. LOS at 112th Ave at NE 4th St, NE 6th St, and NE 8th St result in LOS F.
Street Extensions		NE 2nd St extension to 116th Ave reduces volume on NE 4th St over I-405. NE 12th St from 100th Ave to 102nd Ave would increase volumes on 12th St west of Bellevue Way by 20-30%. Localized access benefits.	NE 6th to 116th as HOV extension ineffective. NE 10th and 2nd extensions to I-405 and E-W accessibility.
Dedicated Bus/ Right Turn Lanes		No LOS F intersections on 108th Ave NE with lane.	Same as Alternative 1.
Lane Reductions		No lane reductions proposed.	Main St from 5 to 3 lanes (from I-405 to Bellevue Way) reduces volumes on Main St due to reduced capacity; Trips diverted to other streets, especially NE 2nd St (increase 200-300 vph) but also to NE 4th St and NE 8th St. 8 intersections operate at LOS F (vs. 5 that operate at LOS F with 5 lane Main St).
Non-motorized	Significant roadway congestion, therefore increased potential for conflicts between bicycles and vehicles; longer wait times at intersections	Street widening results in more traffic adjacent to pedestrians, pedestrians closer to noise, increasing crossing distance for pedestrians	Though somewhat less than No Action, still substantial congestion on roadways, therefore increased potential for conflicts between bicycles and vehicles; more pedestrians in environment due to transit and parking lot locations, long wait times at intersections.
Intercept Parking	N/A	N/A	N/A
Public Services and Utilities	No impact on utilities; congestion will pose increasing challenges in delivering public services such as fire and police response	Because of greatest number of improvements, Alternative 1 has the greatest potential to impact utilities. Access for public services would be improved.	Similar to Alternative 1. Fewer improvements than Alternative 1, but still potential to impact utilities.

Table 3-2 Summary of Impacts (cont'd)

Environmental Element	Alternative 3: Major Intercept	Alternative 4: Hybrid	Preferred Alternative
Air Quality	Similar to Alternative 2.	Predicted worst-case CO concentrations less than existing conditions. No worst-case CO concentrations exceed ambient air quality standards.	Predicted worst-case CO concentrations similar to but less than those of Alternative 4. No exceedances of air quality standards are predicted.
Wetlands	Similar to Alternative 2; depending on locations, parking garages could result in wetland impacts.	Second most wetlands impacts, including impacts from widening 112th Ave SE from Main St to SE 8th St, grade separating Bellevue Way SE/112th Ave SE intersection; widening Bellevue Way	Wetland impacts similar to those of Alternative 4, but less because impacts associated with Bellevue Way/112th Ave SE widening/grade separation would not occur
Threatened and Endangered Species	4.8 acres increased impervious surface area.	27.9 acres increased impervious surface area	4.9 acres increased impervious surface area.
Land Use and Neighborhoods	Least right-of-way impacts of all the alternatives. Highest traffic volumes resulting in highest potential for traffic and parking intrusion into neighborhoods.	Second most right-of-way required and 4-6 displacements. Neighborhood traffic intrusion similar to Alternative 1, but slightly less.	Minor right-of-way acquisition and 1-2 commercial displacements. Neighborhood traffic and parking similar to Alternative 4.
Housing	Similar to Alternative 2.	Similar to Alternative 1.	Similar to Alternative 1, but also includes Task Group recommendations for workforce housing.
Aesthetics	Lowest aesthetics impacts due to lowest number (1) of improvements that alter visual character moderately or substantially.	Five improvements would moderately or substantially alter visual character: in addition to the three improvements described in Alternative 2, extending NE 2nd and NE 10th St across I-405 to 116th with new I-405 collector-distributor access.	Overall similar to, but less than, Alternative 4 because adverse impacts associated with Bellevue Way/112th Ave SE widening and grade separation would not occur.
Recreational Facilities	7 direct park impacts could occur from improvements.	10 direct park impacts could occur from improvements.	No direct impacts to parks; new parks and open space elements would be implemented as identified in the Urban Plan.
Noise	Similar to Alternative 2.	Traffic noise levels near the most affected arterials would be similar to levels expected with No Action; the largest increases would occur near NE 10th St.	Lower traffic noise levels than Alternative 4 due to lower traffic volumes; no exceedances of 67 dBA FHWA noise abatement guidelines are expected.
Environmental Hazards	Least potential for impacting environmental hazard sites.	12 environmental hazard sites could be impacted by improvements.	4 environmental hazard sites could be impacted by improvements.
Transportation			
Construction	Same as Alternative 2; neighborhoods north of downtown would be affected by construction of boulevard treatment on Bellevue Way.	Similar to Alternative 1, although fewer construction impacts outside downtown Bellevue because Alternative 4 includes fewer transportation elements outside downtown	Fewer construction impacts than Alternatives 1 and 4; almost all construction impacts would be within downtown.
Neighborhood Traffic/ Parking Intrusion	Similar to No Action Alternative.	Same as Alternative 1.	Similar to Alternative 1.
Roadway Volumes	Similar to Alternative 2.	Similar to Alternative 1.	Distributes volumes most evenly across the downtown grid; decreased volumes on Main, NE 4th, NE 8th, NE 10th, and NE 12th, increased volumes on NE 2nd, NE 10th, and 106th and 108th NE.
Peak Hour LOS	15 intersections LOS F; 13 intersections LOS E.	5 intersections LOS F; 16 intersections LOS E.	5 intersections LOS F; 9 intersections LOS E.
Regional Freeway Access	Similar to Alternative 2.	Similar to Alternative 1.	Fewer improvements to I-90 and SR 520 access than Alternative 4, but would take advantage of future I-405 expansion efforts.
Transit Improvements	Same as Alternative 1; analysis of HCT in shared ROW was inconclusive.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
One-Way Couplets	No couplets in Alternative 3	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1.
Road Widening	NE 8th St from 106th to 108th widened by one lane but LOS worst of all alternatives.	NE 2nd St from 3 to 5 lanes important adjunct to I-405/ NE 2nd new collector-distributor access, and improves LOS on NE 2nd St. NE 8th St from 108th Ave to 106th Ave NE improve LOS compared to No Action and Alternative 3 – critical to make 106th/108th Ave couplet work.	Similar to Alternative 1, but without widening of Bellevue Way on 112th Ave SE.
Street Extensions	Same as Alternative 2 on NE 6th extension.	NE 2nd St extension to 116th Ave reduces volume same as Alternative 1. NE 10th extension to 116th Ave relieves 12th and 8th.	Similar to Alternative 4.
Dedicated Bus/ Right Turn Lanes	LOS F at both NE 4th St and NE 8th St intersections with 108th Ave NE – restricts buses into and out of Bellevue Transit Center.	Same as Alternative 1.	Contraflow bus lane on 108th from NE 4th to NE 8th would contribute to LOS F at NE 4th intersection.
Lane Reductions	8 intersections operate at LOS F as described in Alternative 2.	Main St from 5 to 3 lanes (from 112th Ave to Bellevue Way) reduces volumes on Main St due to reduced capacity; Trips diverted to other streets as described in Alternative 2.	No lane reductions proposed.
Non-motorized	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Similar to Alternative 1, but nonmotorized transportation will benefit from the addition of five new bicycle routes as part of the Preferred Alternative.
Intercept Parking	Insignificant shift in vehicle trips and LOS Sizeable implementation challenge.	N/A	N/A
Public Services and Utilities	Similar to Alternative 2.	Similar to Alternative 2.	Less probability for utility impacts than Alternative 4 or Alternative 1.

The Elements of the Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is most similar to the Hybrid Alternative (Alternative 4) analyzed in the DEIS, with some notable exceptions. The Preferred Alternative does not include several of the major transportation elements from the Hybrid Alternative, but also includes a few new minor transportation elements that were not included in the DEIS. It also includes the common elements described on page 3-2. See Table 3-1 for a complete list of the elements that make up the Preferred Alternative.

Unlike the Hybrid Alternative, the Preferred Alternative does not include any widening of Bellevue Way or 112th Avenue, inside or outside of downtown. In addition, the following transportation elements that were included in the Hybrid Alternative are not included in the Preferred Alternative:

- SE 8th Street/112th Avenue NE – add southbound through lane
- Bicycle route on NE 1st Street/NE 2nd Street as part of Lake to Lake Trail
- Bicycle route on/adjacent to NE 6th Street (110th Avenue NE to 114th Avenue NE)
- Eastbound right-turn lane – NE 4th Street/ Bellevue Way
- Westbound left-turn lane – Bellevue Way/ Main Street
- Dual northbound left-turn lanes – NE 4th Street/ Bellevue Way
- Westbound right-turn lane – NE 4th Street/ Bellevue Way
- Dual northbound and southbound left-turn lanes – NE 8th Street/110th Avenue NE
- Dual eastbound left-turn lanes – NE 12th Street/ 116th Avenue NE
- 108th Avenue NE northbound curb lane between Main Street and NE 4th Street

The Preferred Alternative also includes a few new transportation elements that were not included in the DEIS. These elements are minor in their potential environmental impacts and positive in their effects on transportation. They are as follows:

- Convert eastbound through-right to right only – NE 4th Street/Bellevue Way
- Configure intersection for one left-turn only, one through lane and one through/right-turn for each approach – NE 10th Street/112th Avenue NE
- Examine parking requirements for new construction
- Examine in-lieu-of-parking fees
- Bicycle route on Main Street as part of Lake-to-Lake Trail
- Bicycle route on/adjacent to NE 6th Street (Bellevue Way to 114th Avenue NE)
- Bicycle route on 106th Avenue NE
- Bicycle route on 108th Avenue NE
- Bicycle route on Bellevue Way, north and south of downtown

Figure 3-1 depicts the Preferred Alternative.

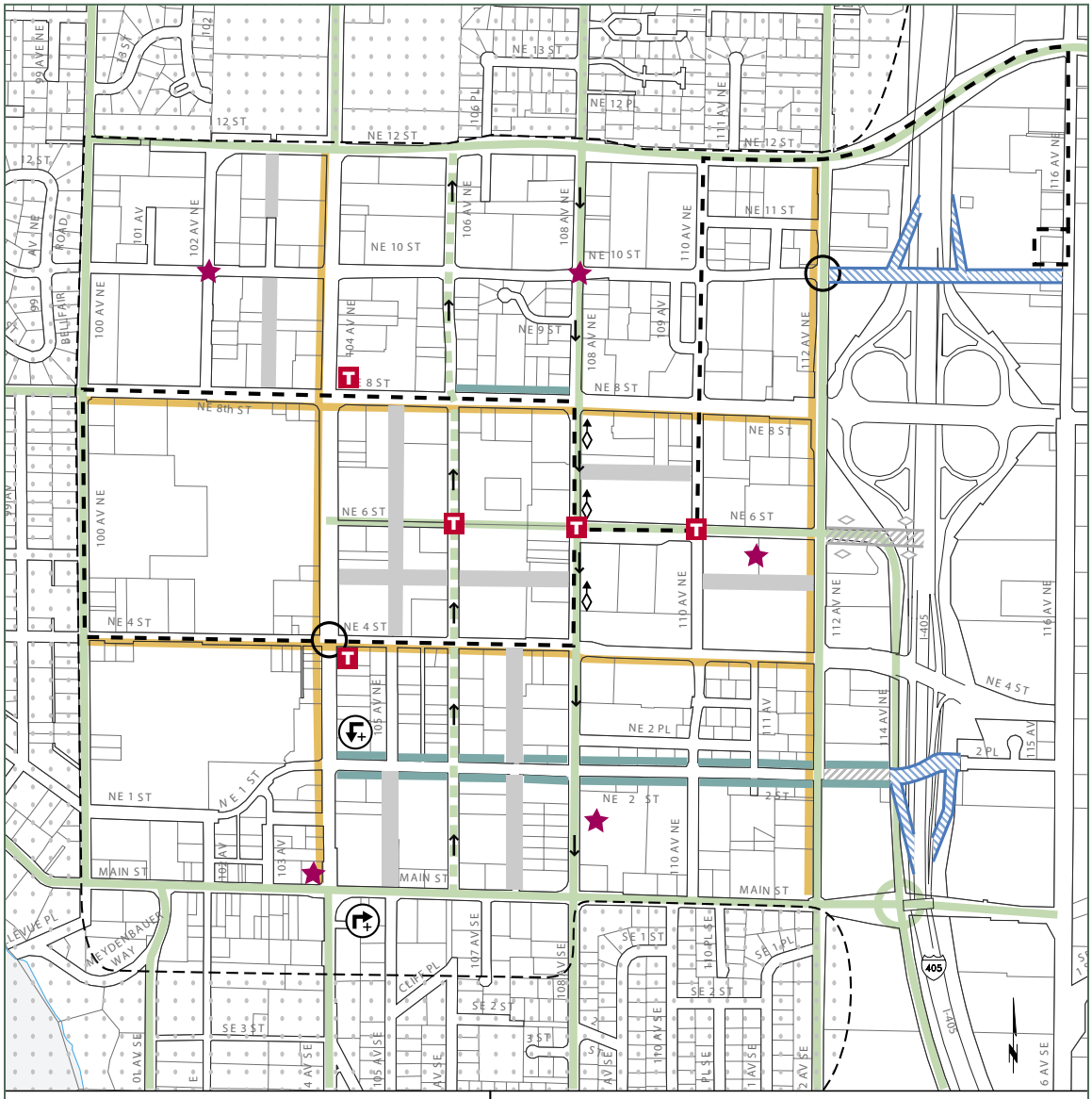
Additional CAC Recommendations

Several projects that were analyzed in the DEIS were recommended by the CAC for inclusion in the FEIS Preferred Alternative, but ultimately were not included at the direction of the Bellevue City Council. These are:

- Widen Bellevue Way, one HOV lane northbound from NE 12th Street to SR 520;
- Widen Bellevue Way, one HOV or general purpose lane southbound from Main Street to I-90;
- Widen Bellevue Way, one HOV or general purpose lane southbound from 112th Avenue SE to I-90;
- Widen Bellevue Way, one HOV lane southbound from South Bellevue park-and-ride to I-90; and
- Widen 112th Avenue NE, one lane northbound and one lane southbound from NE 12th Street to SR 520.

Except for the noted changes, the Preferred Alternative analyzed herein is consistent with the CAC's recommendation.

Figure 3-1 Preferred Alternative



Key Components and Outcomes of the Preferred Alternative

106th/108th Avenues NE One-Way Couplet

The Preferred Alternative includes the conversion of on 106th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street to a one-way couplet, with 106th Avenue NE running northbound and 108th Avenue NE running southbound. Traffic modeling analysis was performed for the Preferred Alternative to understand how the one-way couplet compared with a two-way street system. The results indicate that the entire downtown traffic system would work better as compared to the 2020 No Action Alternative with 108th and 106th Avenues NE operating as a one-way couplet rather than as two-way streets. Total system delay would be reduced by 27 percent, delay per vehicle reduced by 53 percent, vehicle miles traveled reduced by 20 percent, and average speed increased by 29 percent. The number of LOS F intersections would also be reduced, from 11 under a No Action scenario, to 7 with two-way operations, to 5 with one-way operations.

The one-way couplet would cause heavier turning movements on Bellevue Way NE and at key intersections with 106th and 108th Avenues NE, such as NE 8th and NE 4th Streets. NE 10th and NE 2nd Streets would carry more vehicles between the couplet intersections of 106th and 108th. The operation of 106th Avenue NE one-way northbound would cause a large increase in left-turning traffic onto southbound Bellevue Way NE. Vehicles destined to 106th Avenue NE from Bellevue Way would have to travel one additional block south on Bellevue Way NE before proceeding east and then north on 106th Avenue NE (one-way) to their destination.

I-405 and Trans-Lake Improvements

Improvements currently being planned by WSDOT will provide substantial additional capacity (two additional general purpose lanes in each direction) in the I-405 corridor. The existing I-405 interchanges currently operate at capacity conditions. To support additional growth in downtown Bellevue, improved interchange capacity at I-405 is needed. This would be provided with the Preferred Alternative, which includes additional access to the I-405 collector-distributor roadway system at NE 2nd and NE 10th Streets. These improvements would result in less congestion and better levels of service on NE 4th and NE 8th Streets and at freeway interchanges.

The Preferred Alternative recommends converting 108th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street to the southbound portion of a one-way couplet with 106th Avenue NE.

The Preferred Alternative also includes some improvements planned as part of the Trans-Lake Washington Project, which is studying ways to provide additional capacity in the SR 520 corridor. Like the I-405 improvements, these projects will facilitate access to and from downtown. Trans-Lake Washington Project improvements included in the Preferred Alternative include adding an eastbound on-ramp to SR 520 from Bellevue Way NE and adding an eastbound off-ramp from SR 520 to 108th AvenueNE/ 112th Avenue NE at Bellevue Way NE. This would help relieve congestion at the I-405 interchanges and provide alternative routes to and from SR 520.

Daily Travel Demand and Mode Choice

Transit is expected to represent roughly 9 percent of the total daily person trips to and from downtown Bellevue in 2020, representing a 50 percent increase from the year 2000 conditions. This increase would result from the assumed doubling of transit service that is common to all 2020 action alternatives. The remaining 91 percent of daily person trips are predicted to be by automobile.

Park-and-Ride Demand

Many of the transit trips to downtown Bellevue are by people who use a park-and-ride facility. Capturing the forecasted transit ridership for each of the 2020 scenarios will require accommodation of many more park-and-ride spaces. Each of the 2020 scenarios would require 4,000 to 4,500 additional park-and-ride spaces to be available for passengers traveling to downtown Bellevue. Almost half of these spaces would be in Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap Counties. Many of the park-and-ride locations would also serve transit trips to Seattle and other regional destinations, so the parking demand for these other trips would also need to be met to ensure the needed spaces are available for passengers to downtown Bellevue.

Transit Service

A doubling of overall transit service to downtown Bellevue would result in a reasonably high level of service quality for local and regional express service. Most of the existing service to downtown runs every half hour during peak periods. With a doubling of service, this could be increased to every fifteen minutes. Five routes, including two regional express routes, currently have service every 12 to 15 minutes; the frequency of this service could be increased, or new regional express services could be initiated. Two routes presently provide service only once an hour during the peak. The frequency on these routes could be increased to once every 30 minutes as the demand justifies.

The east end of downtown (east of 106th Avenue) would have good connectivity with the doubling of transit service. All of the existing transit routes pass through some portion of the east side of downtown, and all but a few pass through the transit center. However, the west side of downtown is not as well served by transit. Only nine of the existing routes come farther west than 106th Avenue. Because all of the routes come into or near the transit center, there are already excellent opportunities for regional connectivity. A doubling of frequency would result in reasonable wait times for transferring passengers, even if the layover times in the transit center were reduced to accommodate the increase in the number of buses.

The Preferred Alternative would offer the best operating conditions for transit of all the alternatives evaluated because it has the fewest LOS F intersections, the best average travel times, and the highest average speeds. In addition, the dedicated transit lanes planned on 108th Avenue and the 106th/108th one-way couplet would provide opportunities for easy curb-side loading by buses in the core of downtown and more reliable schedule adherence.

Street Extensions

The Preferred Alternative includes the extension of NE 10th and NE 2nd Streets across I-405 to 116th Avenue NE. Extending these streets will improve downtown circulation by providing additional access points between downtown and the areas east of I-405. The alignment for the extension of NE 10th Street to 116th Avenue NE has been tentatively established through preliminary engineering study. However, the introduction of a new street into the Overlake Hospital campus could cause impacts that would require mitigation. How best to do that will need to be determined though discussions between the City, WSDOT, the Overlake Hospital and potentially other affected businesses or property owners.

Demand Management

Recommended demand management strategies would require coordination with the private sector and would focus on managing the level of travel demand for work trips. These strategies would help spread travel to non-peak periods (using flexible work hours and compressed work weeks) and to reduce vehicle miles traveled through such measures as telecommuting and expanded rideshare coordination and promotion. A guaranteed ride home program offers transit riders and carpoolers a way to return home in an emergency, such as illness, or due to an unexpected late meeting.

Providing better information to travelers would make them more aware of various travel options besides driving. Transit pass subsidies for downtown employees and residents could also reduce driving by making it more convenient and affordable to use transit. Employers could implement a parking cash-out strategy by charging for parking and then offering their employees a set transportation allowance per month (equal to the cost of parking), which employees could choose to keep or use to pay for parking.

Nonmotorized Transportation

The overall volume of vehicular traffic would increase in all of the alternatives evaluated. However, the transportation recommendations for the Plan Update would provide moderately better pedestrian levels of service for street crossings on Bellevue Way north and south of downtown because the widening of Bellevue Way would not be included. Additional bicycle routes through downtown would be included, which could result in a more pleasant and safe environment for bicycling. Bicycle routes would be included on:

- Main Street (rather than on NE 2nd Street and NE 1st Street as in the Hybrid Alternative)
- NE 6th Street
- 100th Avenue NE
- 106th Avenue NE
- 108th Avenue NE
- 112th Avenue NE
- 114th Avenue NE south of NE 6th Street
- Bellevue Way (north and south of downtown)

A good pedestrian network can be created with NE 6th Street and 106th Avenue NE forming the core and with well-landscaped sidewalks along the other streets. Landscaping to enhance the pedestrian experience would be most important along the roadways at the edges of downtown, including Main Street and NE 12th Street between 112th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way. Landscaping on these street segments can also serve to soften the edges of downtown where they are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Attention to the pedestrian environment is one of the principles identified in the Urban Plan (see Section 4 of this report for further detail).

Neighborhood Traffic and Parking Intrusion

There is likely to be some intrusion into the neighborhoods surrounding downtown by traffic and by parking, although there is no reason to believe that the intrusion would be significant. The analysis of parking supply and demand indicates that the ratio of demand to supply should increase only moderately, and so the overall supply of parking within downtown should be adequate.

There is likely to be more pressure of intrusion from traffic than for parking, but the local streets through residential neighborhoods around downtown do not generally offer good alternatives to the principal arterials. Traffic intrusion into the neighborhoods is most likely if there is any disruption of flow from accidents, vehicle breakdowns, or other incidents that disrupt flow in one or more lanes.

Mid-Block Connections

Mid-block automobile connections can provide worthwhile benefits in maintaining a reasonable level of service on the downtown streets. These connections would not provide additional through streets, but would allow for some functions that might otherwise cause traffic delays to occur on the main arterials. For example, if the mid-block connections provide access to garages, queues that may develop from cars waiting to enter the garage could be stored in the mid-block connection rather than on the main arterial streets. The mid-block connections may provide opportunities for delivery vehicles to park off the main arterials.

Table 3-3 PM Peak Hour Vehicle Trips

Analysis Scenario	From Downtown	To Downtown	Within Downtown	Total Trips	% Growth from Existing
2000 Existing	9,300	6,400	3,500	19,200	0%
New Baseline	18,000	12,000	9,700	39,700	107%
Preferred Alternative	17,400	11,700	9,300	38,400	100%

Mid-block connections would also provide benefits to pedestrians by affording more convenient circulation through the superblocks and promoting human-scaled development patterns. Mid-block connections (pedestrian and/or vehicular) are currently encouraged or required in certain parts of the downtown. The connections create opportunities for pedestrian-oriented uses by being located away from the busier arterial streets.

P.M. Peak Hour Vehicular Traffic and Level Of Service

As indicated in Table 3-3, total P.M. peak hour vehicular traffic entering, leaving, and within downtown Bellevue is forecast to increase by approximately 107 percent between 2000 and 2020.

Because of the substantial increase in traffic volumes over existing conditions, the New Baseline would result in additional congestion within downtown Bellevue and to and from I-405, as discussed in Section 1. Given the projected growth in population, employment, and vehicle-miles traveled, existing downtown Bellevue streets would not accommodate the travel demand forecast for the year 2020 under the New Baseline Alternative. The Preferred Alternative's transportation recommendations would distribute trips more evenly across the downtown street grid, with roadway volumes fairly well balanced, especially on east-west streets. The addition of access to the I-405 collector-distributor roadways at NE 2nd and NE 10th Streets would draw trips to those streets, away from Main, NE 4th, NE 8th, NE 10th, and NE 12th Streets. NE 8th Street would see the greatest reduction, with almost 900 fewer trips near Bellevue Way than under the New Baseline.

The Preferred Alternative transportation recommendations would result in five LOS F intersections, significantly less than the 11 LOS F intersections resulting from the New Baseline. In almost every case where intersections show poor levels of service, the cause is a high volume of turning movements. The operations at these five failing intersections could likely be improved by widening for turn lanes. However, further intersection widening would conflict with the vision outlined in the Urban Design Plan (see Section 4), and therefore is not included in these transportation recommendations.

As shown in the undated photo below, downtown Bellevue developed with surface parking serving low-rise retail and service uses.

Courtesy of Bellevue Square

Parking Demand and Utilization

The Preferred Alternative includes an examination of parking ratios for new downtown development. It also includes examination of a potential program to allow developers to pay a fee into a "pool " in lieu of parking, which would be used to provide public parking where it is in shortest supply. These programs could affect the demand/supply relationship, particularly in specific blocks, depending on how much code-required parking is reduced and where the "pooled" public parking is located.

Table 3-4 Comparison of Predicted Parking Demand with Expected Supply for 2020

Preferred Alternative	Superblock 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Predicted PM Demand	3,870	4,080	1,088	8,373	5,887	7,462	3,453	4,767	715	39,696
Minimum Supply Under Code	5,824	6,683	2,873	7,696	10,417	9,421	5,662	7,343	2,146	58,063
Predicted PM Occupancy	66%	61%	38%	109%	57%	79%	61%	65%	33%	68%

Parking demand would increase as a result, but would be somewhat less than the projected parking supply under the existing code. An estimate of the ratio of peak parking demand to maximum capacity for each of nine areas in downtown is provided in Table 3-4. The nine parking areas (and existing parking occupancy rates) are shown in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2 Superblocks and 2000 P.M. Parking Inventory and Occupancy

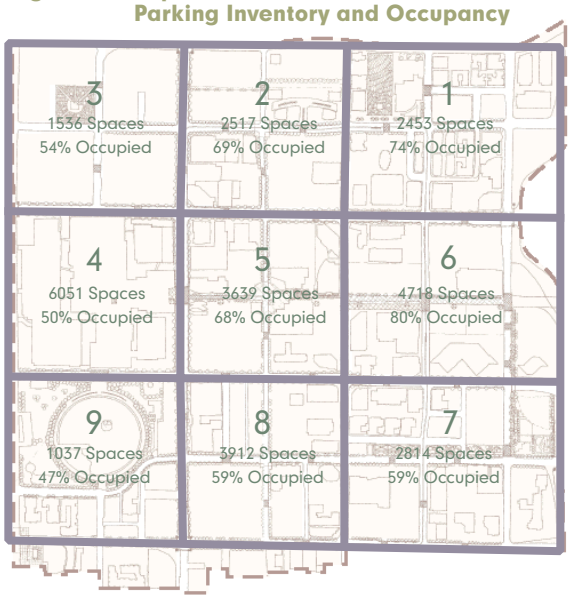


Table 3-4 shows that the existing development code will deliver a more than adequate parking supply to satisfy future demand in all but one subarea (4). Given that surplus supply is expected to be available, a re-examination of parking requirements is recommended by the CAC. Also, the current approach, in which each property provides its own parking supply, does not necessarily provide conveniently located parking in the "right" locations, accessible to the public. Therefore, the CAC recommends publicly accessible parking structures to be developed in five locations to support neighborhood-scale retail services.

A "great place" strategy will establish downtown Bellevue as the symbolic and functional heart of a thriving Eastside region.

Section 4
An Urban Design Plan for Downtown Bellevue

Introduction

The Urban Design Task Group—a working committee of the larger Citizen Advisory Committee—was tasked with developing the urban design for downtown Bellevue. CollinsWoerman and Street-Works were engaged by the City of Bellevue to create an urban design vision for downtown Bellevue, as part of the update to the Downtown Subarea Plan and the Downtown Implementation Plan. This section is based on a report to the full Citizen Advisory Committee of their work.

The process began by observing and analyzing the city's existing context, then initiating a dialogue with each of several distinct neighborhoods to produce a perspective of life in the city direct from the residents' and stakeholders' viewpoints.

The urban design team combined its observations and analysis with comments from stakeholders to yield a model for understanding the city's evolution. Cities evolve cyclically, focusing in turn on viability, livability, and memorability as they grow. The design team employed this model to develop a "great place" strategy for downtown Bellevue, which it then described in a position statement.

Finally, the design team applied the model and the position statement to the city's infrastructure to produce a catalog of principles. Each of the principles is an essential element for a specific and comprehensive urban plan. The plan for downtown Bellevue aims to establish a common identity for the creation of value into the foreseeable future.

History

Fifty years ago, the entire City of Bellevue had a population of less than 6,000. Its downtown was a cluster of structures along Main Street, and Bellevue Square was the modest strip mall pictured above. In an historical blink of an eye, it has increased its population more than 18 times and made an astonishing leap from its literally pastoral beginnings to a vibrant, skyscraping urban center, all without snarling to a standstill or losing its soul.

It managed all this through the foresight and the harnessed energies of committed citizens. At mid-century its first planning commission actively embraced growth and planned an orderly, efficient, spacious downtown built to accommodate the automobile. The "superblocks" and grid of four- and six-lane streets they laid out provided the room and arterial vitality necessary for growth.

A glance out any downtown Bellevue window will reveal how well that initial vision has worked as well as evidence of the need for a new, equally fruitful vision for the new century.

Observations

The first question posed by the urban design team was: "What is Bellevue?" That is, what is the physical reality, and what are the established interactions? There were two observations:

1. **It was worse than expected.**

The superblocks—the 600-foot grid organizing the City plan—were not super, but super-duper blocks, 1200 feet on a side. The integration of an auto-oriented original street plan had actually been magnified in scale through implementation.

2. **There were opportunities.**

There was a lot going on inside of the 600-foot blocks people were unaware of. Functions that were adding life to the streetscape, creating business and pedestrian activity, but were not known or readily recognized.

The challenge embedded in the observations circled around the conflict between the scale of the street grid, and the fact that cities eventually evolve at a common scale, a pedestrian scale. Accordingly, the team made the following observations:

- Bellevue has not super, but super-duper blocks.
  - — Only every other street crosses the freeway.
  - — Inside the super-scale, there are alleys with addresses.
- Downtown Bellevue's superblock layout provides roughly half the public right of way of comparable cities.
  - — Seattle has 38 percent, Portland 42 percent of its land as public right-of-way.
  - — 21 percent of Bellevue's downtown is streets, alleys, and sidewalks.
- There are two downtown Bellevues.
  - — The freeway portion and the regional shopping center coexist.
  - — The ridge on 108th Avenue separates them.
- The city is aligned in conflict, north to south and east to west.
  - — Addresses evolved north-to-south, access east-to-west.
  - — Only three streets go anywhere other than downtown, NE 8th Street, Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue.

Interstate 405 and the parallel ridge of 108th Avenue delineate the eastern edge of downtown Bellevue; residential neighborhoods and the waterfront the northern, western, and southern edges.

- Old Bellevue is of a finer scale than more recent growth.
  - — Old Bellevue is the only place to touch the water.
  - — The new Bellevue is surrounded on three sides by residential neighborhoods.
- The last 20 years of hard work have also created great opportunities for the future.

The urban design team recognized that the very significant accomplishments made by downtown Bellevue over the past 20 years would serve as catalysts, and that significant civic initiatives are underway to further reinforce the strength of the Bellevue community. These accomplishments and initiatives include:

- Identification as a successful regional shopping center
- Construction of a noted national convention center
- Development of a high-rise office district
- Construction of a noted art museum
- Establishment of a King County Regional Library
- Planning of a performing arts center
- Construction of a regional transit center
- Recognition and identification of a pedestrian corridor
- Two significant city parks and an active parks program

Neighborhood Dialogue

The second question posed by the design team was, "Why is Bellevue what it is?" For this answer the team went directly to the community. This was an essential step in order to confirm that the observations made were accurate, complete, and comprehensive. More importantly, the data from the neighborhood dialogue provided the urban design team with two critical opportunities:

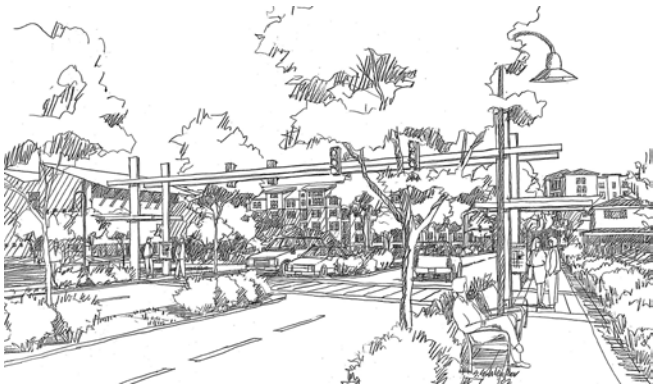
1. A chance to see downtown from the eyes of its stakeholders
2. A chance to foster engagement through participation

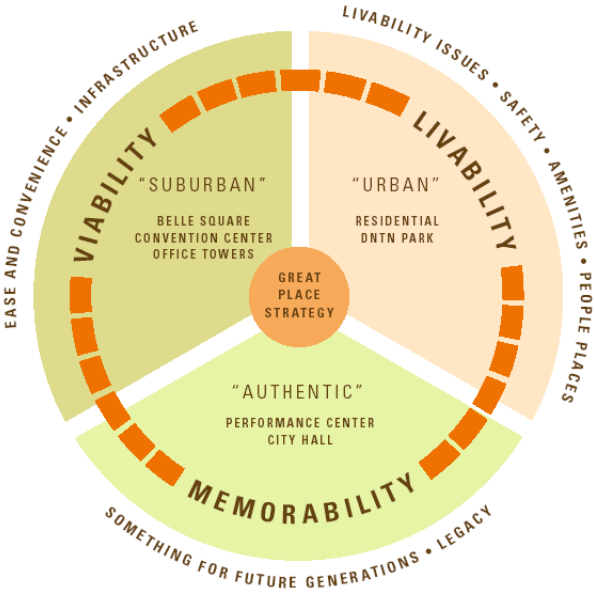
In order to solicit participation by the community, the team asked four questions of stakeholders:

- What works for you in downtown Bellevue?
- What doesn't work for you in downtown Bellevue?
- How do you define success in the year 2020?
- What are the biggest obstacles to achieving success by the year 2020?

The design team compiled more than 500 comments during the course of these meetings. It then consolidated the meeting minutes, ordered the results, and conveyed them back to the community. The comments fell into three major categories:

- Infrastructure-related issues
- Convenience and livability issues
- The strength of the city's identity





Viable, Livable, Memorable

Cities evolve through a dynamic process. This process is a non-linear progression in which cities are relatively more viable, livable, or memorable during different stages of their growth. It is a constantly changing response to an array of influences. Based on the stakeholders' responses to the four questions, it is evident that downtown Bellevue currently sits on the threshold between viable and livable in its evolution.

Nascent cities strive to become economically viable. Viability is about quantity, about creating critical mass. Viability is achieved through large-scale, single-action projects and efforts such as a freeway exchanges, regional shopping, high-rise zoning and jobs. Viability is constantly challenged as city infrastructure ages.

Evolving cities strive to be livable. Livability is about quality, about weaving an urban fabric rich in resources and quality of life. Livable cities welcome 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 of having been to the place. Memorable cities have strong, clear identities.

A Great Place Strategy

The positions which follow establish a "great place" strategy for downtown Bellevue. In order to arrive at this strategy, the urban design team sat down with all of the neighborhood comments, its viable-livable-memorable model, and original observations. The positions resulting from this consolidation exercise are "the what": the things downtown Bellevue needs to achieve to aspire to its goal of implementing a "great place urban plan."

The City is grappling with a number of issues. It has assumed leadership of the east side of the lake, but has not yet established a true identity for that leadership. It has experienced significant growth and must continue to reflect the diversity of an international city.

The positions represent an opportunity. On the one hand, the City has the chance to seize its most memorable attributes—such as its neighborhoods, waterfront, and shopping—and leverage their visibility and evolution. On the other, the City has the chance to seize less desirable aspects of its growth—such as traffic and parking—and shape the future to maximize constituent utility and minimize impact.

Positions

Downtown Bellevue Needs an Urban Strategy.

Bellevue has evolved from a suburban bedroom community into the preeminent, Eastside suburban community through strategies of regionally scaled, single-use developments supported by regionally scaled, easy vehicular access with centralized (location-based) convenience.

Because of geographical conditions, transportation infrastructure growth limitations and the pressures of Eastside growth patterns, these strategies are no longer effective on their own.

To continue to be competitive long-term, downtown Bellevue must evolve into the preeminent Eastside urban center. As it becomes more and more challenging to commute to Seattle, downtown Bellevue must be prepared to be more regionally competitive on its own. To do this it must focus on issues of livability and memorability.

Statement

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 and regional uses located in distinct, mixed-use neighborhoods connected by a variety of unique public places and great public infrastructure.

Downtown Bellevue Must be a Great Place.

Downtown Bellevue is now, in effect, two places: east downtown Bellevue (at I-405) and west downtown Bellevue (at Bellevue Square), separated by the ridge along 108th Avenue.

To compete regionally, downtown Bellevue must be perceived as more than the sum of its regional parts. It must begin to positively address its identity from I-405 and capitalize on its location on the Lake Washington waterfront.

The Eastside Must Have a Center.

Historically the "Center of Town" has moved from Main Street, to Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street, to 8th and I-405, based on direct access and maximum convenience. Currently, there is no such easy and convenient "center" for Bellevue or the Eastside as a whole. It must make itself the "Heart of the Eastside."

Like Pike Place Market in Seattle, Union Square in San Francisco, and Rockefeller Center in New York, downtown Bellevue needs a City Center that organizes civic and economic value in the downtown. This must be created at a place that is under downtown Bellevue's control and jurisdiction, that can be developed in a "Bellevue way."

Downtown Bellevue Must be a Livable Place.

Downtown Bellevue has been developed at a "super" scale of transportation and real estate projects that have created a uniform, automobile-oriented system of streets and blocks and super-scaled developments.

Downtown Bellevue must become a series of unique districts or neighborhoods that capitalize on their locations and geographical differences to provide more pedestrian-scaled, diverse, and unique urban lifestyle experiences and options. The districts adjoining the existing established residential neighborhoods should continue to be supportive of the health and connection to those existing neighborhoods.

Downtown Bellevue Must Be a Memorable Place.

A city is memorable for the full array of attributes, spaces and experiences it contains. Bellevue has made great progress in creating memorable experiences through parks, shopping and the events that take place within downtown. Future efforts, including potential landmarks, large and small, could further enhance Bellevue's memorability.

Principles

The principles are abstract representations of urban design strategies for Bellevue to consider in the implementation of its great place strategy. The principles grow out of the original observations of the Task Group and respond to the comments and concerns that surfaced during the neighborhood dialogues.

The principles acknowledge the tremendous progress Bellevue has made to date, and at the same time describe a set of strategies for accommodating downtown's growth within a superior urban design framework. The principles are intended to complement and balance the recommendations of the CAC transportation subgroup.

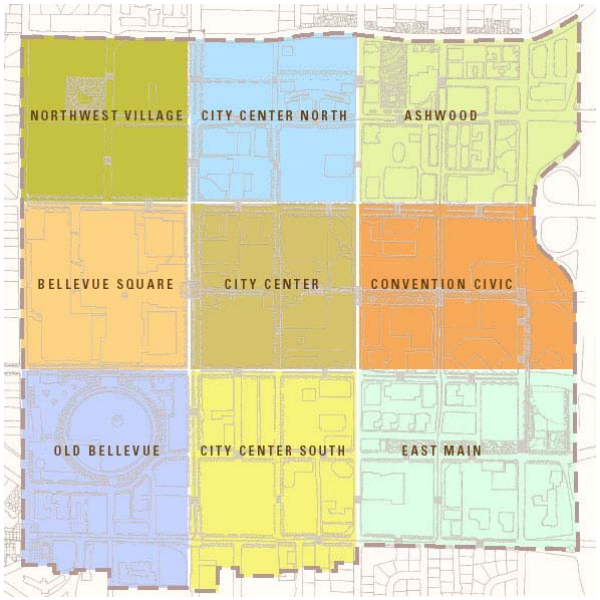
The principles begin with issues that most directly impact Bellevue as a regional identity, such as the creation of a city center and identification of the unifying corridor within downtown. They become finer-grained as they move to issues like "gateways," street hierarchies and transportation circulators, that offer ways to join the City's urban design and transportation goals.

These principles are described in the following text and graphics. The text descriptions are intended to be conceptual in nature, the graphics symbolic. For example, maps depicting open spaces are not site-specific and pedestrian crossings should not be located on every block. The principles are not meant to be used prescriptively. The principles should help inform decisions about how downtown's public infrastructure and private development should be shaped to carry out the great place strategy.

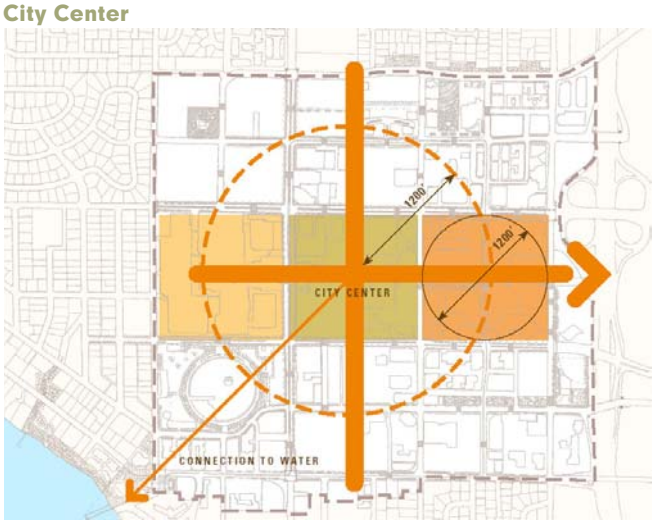
The Nine Square Grid

Urban places are subdivided by districts. Districts are defined by their unique identities and attributes. They are also defined by clear boundaries and walkability. Districts, as a planning principle, are a way to enhance value. It is a given of real estate that when a boundary is drawn and a place differentiated, its value increases.

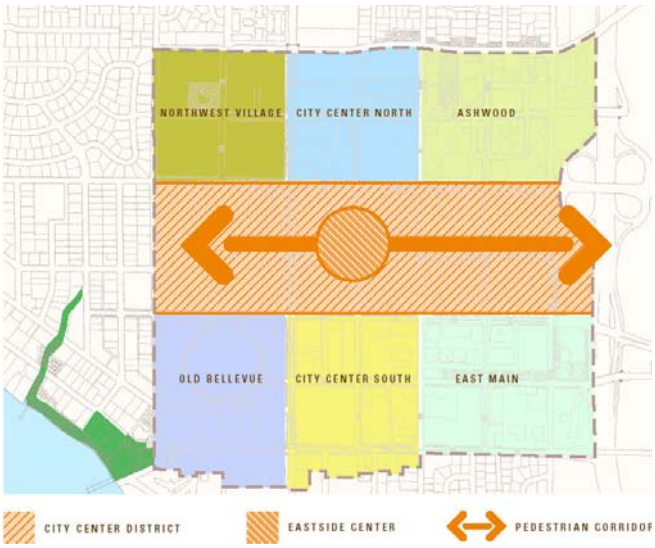
Downtown Bellevue is defined by a distinct street grid laid out in a nine-square grid. Each of the nine components represents a potential district. The identity of each of these districts will evolve over time. Some defining characteristics, such as topography, already exist. And each of the districts is pedestrian-friendly in its size, easily traversed in a ten-minute walk.



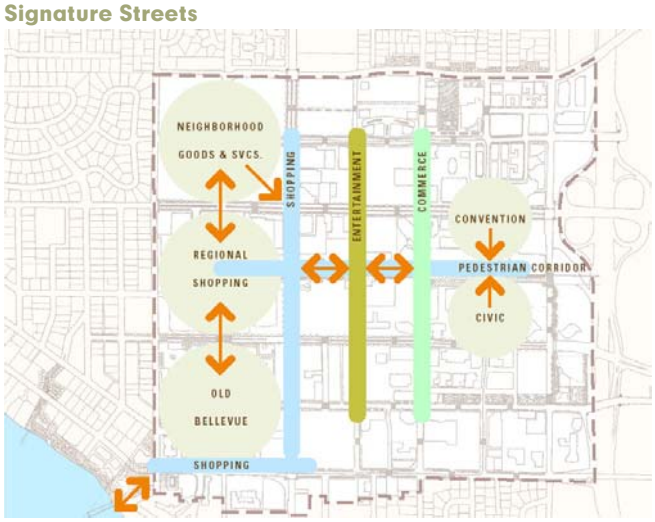
City Center



Eastside Center



Signature Streets



City Center

Walkability is a key factor in establishing boundaries. There is a national standard for retail malls which dictates that the distance from anchor to anchor should be no more than a ten-minute walk, or 1,200 feet. Each of the Bellevue superblocks can be bounded by a circle with this diameter.

From the center square of the nine-square grid, a great circle can be applied with a 1,200 foot radius. Because this circle reaches into each of the nine districts, it suggests the creation of one symbolic and functional center district. From this central district, each district's key features may be reached within a nominal ten-minute walk. This organizing principle unifies Bellevue.

Eastside Center

The central district, and adjacent east and west districts, reinforce each other with common attributes. This combination implies a kind of City Center with common access to each of the other districts. The combination of attributes also reinforces the City Center as the center of the Eastside. Each of the three districts:

- Lies along an axis which connects I-405 to the regional shopping district
- Functions as a pedestrian thoroughfare linking east to west.

By connecting the center row into a common district, the symbolic and functional center of the Eastside is created. This reduces the number of districts from nine to seven. It strengthens the identity of the horizontal connection from the easternmost Bellevue Square district to the westernmost Convention district. This principle further unifies Bellevue while overcoming some of the barriers compromising civic identity.

Signature Streets

The next step is to understand how the districts work together from north to south. This occurs through the functional aspects of three signature streets. These three streets stitch the seven districts together from north to south with shopping, entertainment, and commerce. The strength of these identities will develop over time, and is currently a conceptual overlay on what is more accurately a mixed-use environment.

The westernmost street consolidates Bellevue's three most significant shopping environments in a grand shopping street. This is an established identity. Another street already mostly in place at this time is commerce street. This is the Eastside's business

address. What is missing in the existing context is an environment which keeps residents and workers after hours. This is the proposed entertainment street. The Task Group envisions this street filled restaurants, clubs, and venues that no only connect north to south at night, but also connect the grand shopping street to commerce. This will create a balanced downtown core surrounded by residential neighborhoods, with local neighborhood goods and services available on the north and south side.

Pedestrian Crossing Opportunities

The scale of the superblock provides challenges in creating a cohesive and safe pedestrian environment. In select locations, a finer grain of pedestrian-oriented circulation has begun to emerge. Because this occurs within and between the existing street infrastructure, it suggests a principle for enhancing pedestrian connections.

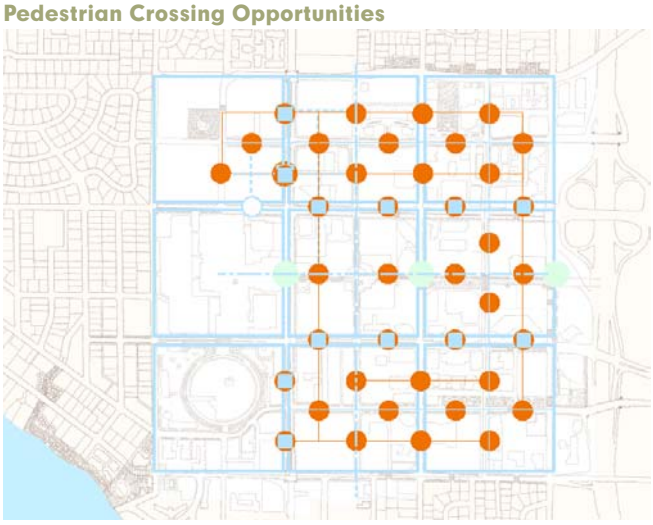
Signalized mid-block street crossings will allow pedestrians to cross the street at some mid-point of Downtown's 600-foot superblocks. The precise location and number of these crossings will be determined by the design of adjacent superblocks, consideration of traffic flow, and the quality of the pedestrian environment. Mid-block crossings would probably not be appropriate on auto-biased streets, but may be possible on auto-neutral streets and pedestrian-biased streets.

Signalized crossings and pedestrian shelters will enhance pedestrian safety. The speed, volume, and density of traffic can overwhelm foot traffic. The narrowness of the sidewalks and absence of screen or shelter between car and pedestrian further heighten this conflict. These crossings will create events that reinforce the importance of pedestrians.

Mid-Block Connections

The superblock pattern of downtown Bellevue sometimes creates access challenges for the interiors of the superblocks. Mid-block connections may provide important service, vehicular, and pedestrian access to the superblocks. These mid-block connections on private property will be part of the overall design, viability, and pedestrian friendliness of the superblock development, and could create attractive physical environments for the pedestrian while still providing vehicular access.

Pedestrian Crossing Opportunities



Mid-block connections should be developed under flexible design standards. Traffic flow and capacity constraints on adjacent streets will be important factors. Mid-block connections must be shown to serve a reasonable transportation or planning purpose for serving the developments that contain them; they should not be used as a City regulation to create through-grid streets on private property.

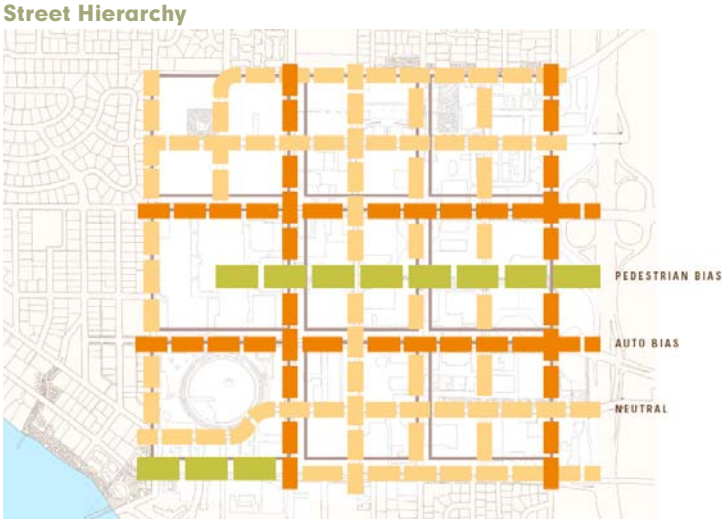
The exact alignment and location of mid-block connections is subject to the design process on private property.

Transportation Circulator

Convenient connection among the districts is another key principle. Many of downtown Bellevue's amenities are located on its perimeter, yet there are few current options other than to climb in a car or take a long walk. An effective transportation circulator will link not only the perimeter amenities, but also each of the districts. Based on a recently completed study, the City has concluded that some time in the next twenty years a transportation circulator may make financial sense. In the mean time, a free ride bus zone may be more feasible.

There are a number of options for the circulator. It may be rubber-tired or rail. It may support a one-way circulation loop. It may provide central as well as perimeter access. Regardless, the introduction of a transportation circulator will reduce traffic demands and signal times while enhancing use and access to key amenities.

Street Hierarchy

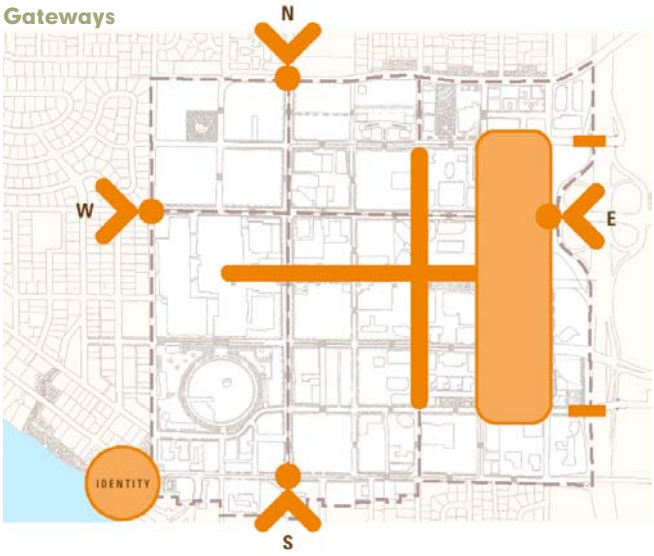


Street Hierarchy

Streets in downtown Bellevue have a certain hierarchy as a function of their use, volume, and capacity. There are those that serve high-volume traffic now, and will be required to serve similar and increasing volumes into the foreseeable future. These are the auto-bias streets. They won't ever be the greatest environments from a pedestrian perspective, but they will work, and their appeal can be enhanced with landscape.

Bellevue has established a pedestrian-biased corridor from east to west in order to reinforce circulation. Neutral bias streets will evolve and will reinforce and define the character of each of the districts. Opportunities for landscape, beautification, and street medians will enrich the neutral bias streets. Finally, there will be hybrids, offering tradeoffs between pedestrian and vehicular uses. Still others will shift in bias throughout the day according to prevailing need and use patterns. A clear street hierarchy will optimize Bellevue's infrastructure efficiency.

Gateways



Gateways

Bellevue has an opportunity to highlight its most important points of entry as gateways, depending on what mode of transportation, what time of day, and where the city welcomes its residents, workers, and visitors. Gateways can be functional, symbolic, and memorable aspects of a city. They can highlight or downplay certain aspects of the established urban context. Gateways can become a kind of front porch and badge of honor.

There are four obvious opportunities for gateways. The towers on the commercial street welcome traffic from the freeway. The specific edge created as the city meets the freeway represents a critical gateway opportunity. Bellevue Way provides points of entry from the north and south. Finally, the waterfront and the finely scaled buildings of Old Bellevue frame the city against the ascending foreground from the lake, perhaps Bellevue's most picturesque viewpoint.

Parking

Parking was the single most discussed topic in the neighborhood dialogues. Downtown Bellevue is characterized by limited amounts of short-term parking in areas that are not always convenient to key points of access. This principle of parking speaks more to what's not and needs to be, than what is and how to shape it. Parking and transportation reinforce the viable.

Three factors will significantly influence parking. First, each district needs to supply short-term parking. Short-term parking facilities will be located in proximity and accessible to retail destinations. Second, on-street, off-peak parking needs to be provided in appropriate locations. Third, a "park-once" strategy needs to be developed as an overlay for all parking considerations. These three factors will significantly influence the street character of downtown Bellevue and enhance the ability of people to move between districts conveniently.

Urban Parks and Open Space

Bellevue is known as a "City in a Park." Open space punctuates, accents, and highlights the fabric of a city. Whether in the center of a business district or adjacent to a waterfront, open space is one of the most significant features in a livable and memorable city. Bellevue has just completed a thorough open space study. This principle of Urban Parks and Open Space reinforces the intent of the study. Each district should have reasonable access to open space amenity.

The parks and open space system as well as other points of interest can be tied together in a planned and deliberate way by creating an urban trail system. The character of parks and open spaces will vary from quiet, contemplative and green to crowded, high energy and more architectural. Creating the visual and physical connection from Downtown Park to Meydenbauer Bay will dramatically enhance the overall performance of the future open space and pedestrian system in downtown. The system when viewed as a whole will serve regional, district, and neighborhood needs.

Memorability

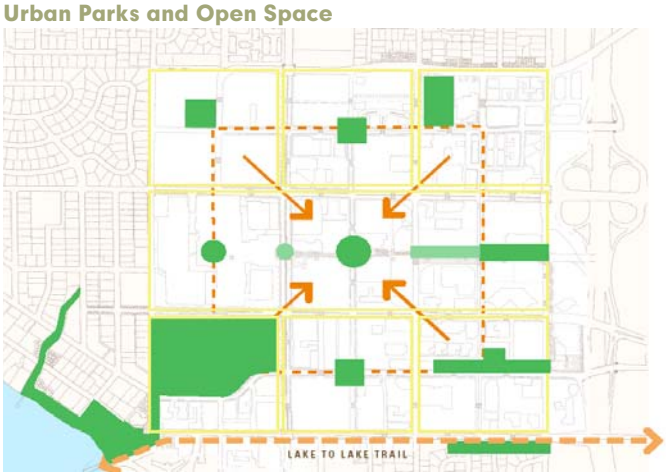
Viability, livability, and memorability are all important in the evolution of downtown Bellevue. Memorability can take many forms. It can be recognizable in the form some local icons, such as the Space Needle, or Pike Place Market. It can be more generally recognized as an identity, such as the neighborhoods of the Back Bay or Beacon Hill in Boston. It can be established as a multi-use district, such as Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco.

It is important that memorability be a component of the work performed by the Citizens Advisory Committee for the City of Bellevue. It is perhaps even more important that this memorability be authentic – a genuine expression of Bellevue's place and adjacency to those geographic and natural features most strongly identified with the Pacific Northwest.

This may ultimately take either a symbolic or physical form. It may reinforce a connection to Meydenbauer Bay and link water features already part of the downtown, or may find an entirely different from of expression. It may be a combination of a lot of little things, as well as some significant grand gestures. It may soften some obvious boundaries, or reinforce the linear character of important streets.

In any case, this work is a starting point – a starting point to chart a clear course for the future, to consolidate the needs of Bellevue's stakeholders, and to help Bellevue ensure its success in the implementation of its great place strategy.

Urban Parks and Open Space



Next Steps

When you back all the way out and abstract the existing plan of the city, it becomes evident that many of the observations made by the design team already hold to some degree. Growth and use have followed accessibility and synergy. Circulation patterns have been established based on access from the freeway and a focal point at Bellevue Square. Similar to a city bordering a natural boundary, such as a waterfront, commercial and retail functions have migrated in roughly the shape of a wedge from the freeway boundary to the shopping focus.

The distinction in the planning effort is the following: by making the observations, involving the neighborhood in the dialogue, and refining a set of principles based on best practice urban design principles as well as community participation, the existing plan becomes a springboard for next steps.

Without a clear vision for the future, guiding principles, and the involvement of the residents of the city, the resulting plan of downtown Bellevue will be merely a postscript for incremental growth.

The next step is the implementation of the principles. Implementation will set in motion the great place strategy. Implementation will ensure that the vision and opportunities for downtown Bellevue in 2020 are realized.

Courtesy of Bellevue Square

Section 5
Subarea Recommendations

The City Council initially convened the Downtown Citizen Advisory Committee for the single purpose of updating the Downtown Implementation Plan. Subsequently the Council expanded the scope of the group to also address review and updating of the Downtown Subarea Plan as needed. Following an expanded scoping process to identify Subarea Plan issues, a Subarea Task Group of the CAC was charged with making recommendations on three specific areas related to the Downtown Subarea Plan that were not being covered elsewhere in the planning process. The points of study that had been scoped as part of the Plan Update, but not covered elsewhere in the process, were: affordable housing, historic resources, and the "south transition" between downtown and the neighborhoods lying south of Main Street. The process undertaken by the Task Group and recommendations formalized by the full CAC are summarized below.

Affordable Housing

Affordable workforce housing is an important issue for downtown Bellevue. The Task Group started by reviewing housing affordability levels of new downtown developments over the past fifteen years. The group also examined existing regulatory incentives. These included a 15 percent density bonus for affordable units, reduced parking ratios, and the ability for the City to waive transportation impact fees and exempt projects from transportation concurrency review. The group also reviewed strategies tried before by the City, but discontinued, including a past requirement for 10 percent of new units be affordable at the below 80 percent median income level and "first-time homebuyer" mortgage assistance targeted to specific income levels.

Based on their review, the CAC concurred that affordable workforce housing is an issue that downtown should address. The Task Group recommended that the City should retain existing incentives and policy language, and add the incentive-based strategies listed below. Policy changes are not needed in the Downtown Subarea Plan in order to pursue these strategies.

1. **Multifamily Tax Abatement Program:** State law (RCW 84.14) permits cities to designate "residential target areas" within urban centers, and to exempt new multifamily housing therein (improvements, not land) from property taxes for a period of ten years. The housing must meet criteria defined by the local government, which may include affordability levels. After the ten-year abatement period, the properties would be taxed to include the improvement value. The use of the tax abatement would reduce development and operating costs, thus increasing affordability.

2. Tax-Exempt Bonds and Tax Credits: These gap funding tools are available from the state to promote affordable housing. Minimum thresholds require that 20 percent of the units in an eligible project are available to households at or below 50 percent of the median income, or that 40 percent of the units are available to households at 60 percent of the median income.

These incentives could be beneficial to the private sector, as well as helping A Regional Coalition of Housing (ARCH) and Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH) to pursue future projects within downtown. Neither ARCH nor DASH has focused their efforts much in downtown Bellevue because of the high land prices, but there is a possibility that with the proper incentives they would be able to pursue downtown projects.

Historic Resources

The 1993 Bellevue Historic and Cultural Resources Survey (updated in 1997) identifies ten existing historic structures within downtown Bellevue. The Task Group discussed the ideas of a historic district downtown an inter-local agreement with King County for historic preservation services. The Task Group recommended that any preservation measures for these structures should be based on incentives rather than prescriptive regulations. The following strategies should be pursued:

1. Contingency planning: The Eastside Heritage Center has expressed an interest in working with a professional to further study the properties contained in the *1993 Historic Resources Survey* for prioritization, and to make suggestions for what could happen to each building should it face redevelopment. When historic properties like the Philbrooke House (the oldest farmhouse in Bellevue) come up for sale or face redevelopment, there is currently no contingency plan in place which prioritizes their importance or provides direction on appropriate response.

2. Interpretive markers: Work with property owners to place plaques and interpretive markers that identify existing and past sites of historic and cultural importance in downtown Bellevue. Interpretive markers and plaques are currently used on park property to identify such sites.

In the 1920s, NE 4th Street was still a country lane (upper photo). By the 1940s, Bellevue Square was beginning to rise along NE 8th Street, the prominent street in the lower photo.

Courtesy of Bellevue Square

Courtesy of Bellevue Square

3. Documentary record: Work with the Eastside Heritage Center and their Bellevue Historical Society subcommittee to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit items that document the history of downtown Bellevue. A long-term goal could be to have a place to house the collection of interpretative materials.

4. Protection or replication of historic design features: Develop voluntary regulatory incentives for the replication or protection of "historic" facades or important design features when development occurs. The incentives would allow for density/bulk/height bonuses to be gained when identified properties are redeveloped in a manner that reflects historic design features. This was done successfully in the McKee housing development in Old Bellevue.

5. Transfer of air rights: Develop a voluntary mechanism to allow air rights to be transferred from historic properties to other downtown property. This would allow historic properties to be protected while providing for the transfer of the underlying development potential. If the City's existing transfer program were to be expanded in the future for historic preservation purposes, there would most likely need to be revisions to remove restrictions on where air rights can be transferred.

6. Relocation of historic properties: Consider relocation of certain historic structures to Parks Department property. The City currently owns and maintains some of the most important historic properties in Bellevue as identified by the Historic and Cultural Resources Survey. Structures would be moved on a voluntary basis.

South Transition

The "south transition" deals with the appropriate treatment of the southern area of downtown along Main Street and its transition to the Surrey Downs and 108th Avenue SE neighborhoods to the south. The Task Group's objective for this issue was to examine the equity of the transitions from downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods on the south, north, and west. The group compared the south transition with those to the west and north to determine if the treatment of the transitions was equitable. Comparisons were made for: (1) the amount of each perimeter design district in each transition area; (2) parks and open space distribution in and around downtown; (3) changes in elevation; and (4) the distance from single family areas surrounding downtown to the edge of each of the design districts.

The range of potential implementation strategies considered included:

- Potential downzoning options of the area north of Main Street between Bellevue Way and 107th Avenue NE to limit residential and non-residential development potential for height and allowable floor-area-ratio.

- Applying a requirement for a 15-foot building stepback above 55 feet for the area north of Main Street between Bellevue Way and 107th Avenue NE to break down the scale of buildings as experienced by the pedestrian, and to create a wider view corridor down Main Street.
- Removing the "C" perimeter design district from the southern portion of downtown. The change would affect bonus provisions related to neighborhood retail uses and mixed use development.
- Place more of a focus on neighborhood-serving retail uses in the southern portion of downtown.
- Develop design guidelines related to the orientation of any towers that exceed 90 feet in height directly north of Main Street. Guidelines would encourage towers to be oriented in a north-south direction to provide visual relief of the built environment as viewed from the south.
- Main Street sidewalk and landscaping improvements to improve the character of the area.
- Add green space south of Main Street between 110th Place SE and 112th Avenue SE for use as a linear buffer.

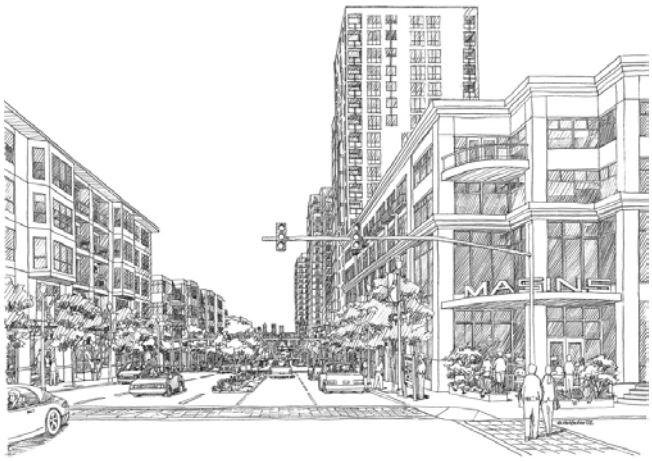
Following examination of the issues and potential implementation strategies, the majority of Task Group members felt that the existing distribution and location of the southern perimeter design districts did not warrant amendment and no change in zoning should occur. The group did recommend that the following strategies be pursued:

1. **Main Street improvements:** Enhancements are needed to improve the character of the Main Street corridor. Specifically, significant sidewalk and landscaping improvements on Main Street should be constructed.

2. **Green space south of Main Street:** Acquisition of property south of Main Street between 110th Place SE and 112th Avenue SE should be used as a linear buffer. This area of old single family lots is outside the Downtown Subarea and is zoned Professional Office. It would function in a similar manner as McCormick Park on the northern edge of downtown.

The Task Group recommendations on this issue were not unanimous; there was a strong dissenting position from a member of the group that the zoning north of Main Street is inappropriate and should be changed to lower allowable building heights.

Planning concepts for the south transition area focus on enhancements to the Main Street corridor (seen from 108th Avenue NE in the photo below) and using sidewalk and landscape improvements to enhance the transition between downtown and the neighborhoods to the south.

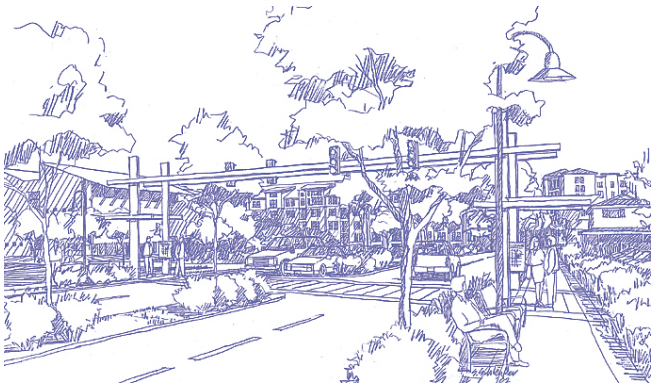


Section 6
Implementation

The work on the Downtown Implementation Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan has strengthened the community's vision and defined specific projects and principles to guide downtown Bellevue over the next 20 years. Bellevue is becoming well-known for the quality of its vibrant urban environment. For downtown to continue its evolution as a mature urban center, implementation of these ideas must continue with policy revisions, short and long-term projects funded by the City and private sector, and coordination with regional partners.

Downtown Subarea Plan and Downtown Transportation Plan

In order to implement the concepts and projects resulting from this planning effort, the City will need to update two Comprehensive Plan elements: the Downtown Subarea Plan and the Downtown Transportation Plan. The Downtown Subarea Plan, which sets the overall policy vision for downtown, is the appropriate home for urban design principles from the CAC's Urban Plan, as well as specific CAC recommendations on Subarea issues. The Downtown Transportation Plan is the appropriate home for key transportation policies, together with the list of approved projects. Adoption of these Comprehensive Plan amendments will require a formal process of public review, with the Planning Commission as the lead recommending body overall, and the Transportation Commission leading review of the transportation policies and project list.



Early Action Items

Staff is ready to begin work on early action plan recommendations this year. Early action refers to projects that should occur in the next three years. Funds for these projects were included in the current adopted 2003-2009 Capital Investment Program. The early work will preserve opportunities for future implementation and allow recommended ideas to be built incrementally over time through private development and routine street (or other) projects. Funded parts include:

- Design studies for the one-way couplet on 106th/108th Avenues, NE 2nd widening and extension to 116th Avenue, NE 10th extension to 116th Avenue, mid-block crossings, and arterial optimization. Studies will lead to direct construction or refinement of concepts that can be built incrementally over time.
- Physical improvements for one or two mid-block pedestrian crossings as pilot projects and establishing additional on-street parking where appropriate.
- Work on district character guidelines will cause the development of distinct design features to define and enliven downtown neighborhoods.
- Regulatory revisions and zoning incentives will be pursued to advance Plan Update provisions.
- Work will continue to establish a linkage between downtown and Meydenbauer Bay.
- Analysis of short-term parking needs and implementation of recommendations.

Long-Term Implementation

The near-term focus will be on early action items and preparing a long-term financial plan. Complex ideas with large capital costs may not begin construction for ten or more years. For example, it took 18 years to begin **Access Downtown** construction from when it was first a planning concept. Staff will monitor the downtown transportation system and the character of downtown on an ongoing basis to determine project timing. Projects will be brought forward into subsequent CIPs and TFPs as needed.

Regional Coordination

The CAC's work directly influenced the outcomes of planning for the I-405 corridor. The planned new access points to the I-405 collector-distributor roadways at NE 2nd and NE 10th Streets are an integral part of the I-405 Corridor Study's Preferred Alternative. The City will continue to work with regional agencies to fulfill Bellevue's long-term growth strategy through regional planning and implementation efforts.