

Downtown Livability Initiative Land Use Code Update



Parks & Community Services Board Meeting **March 14, 2017**

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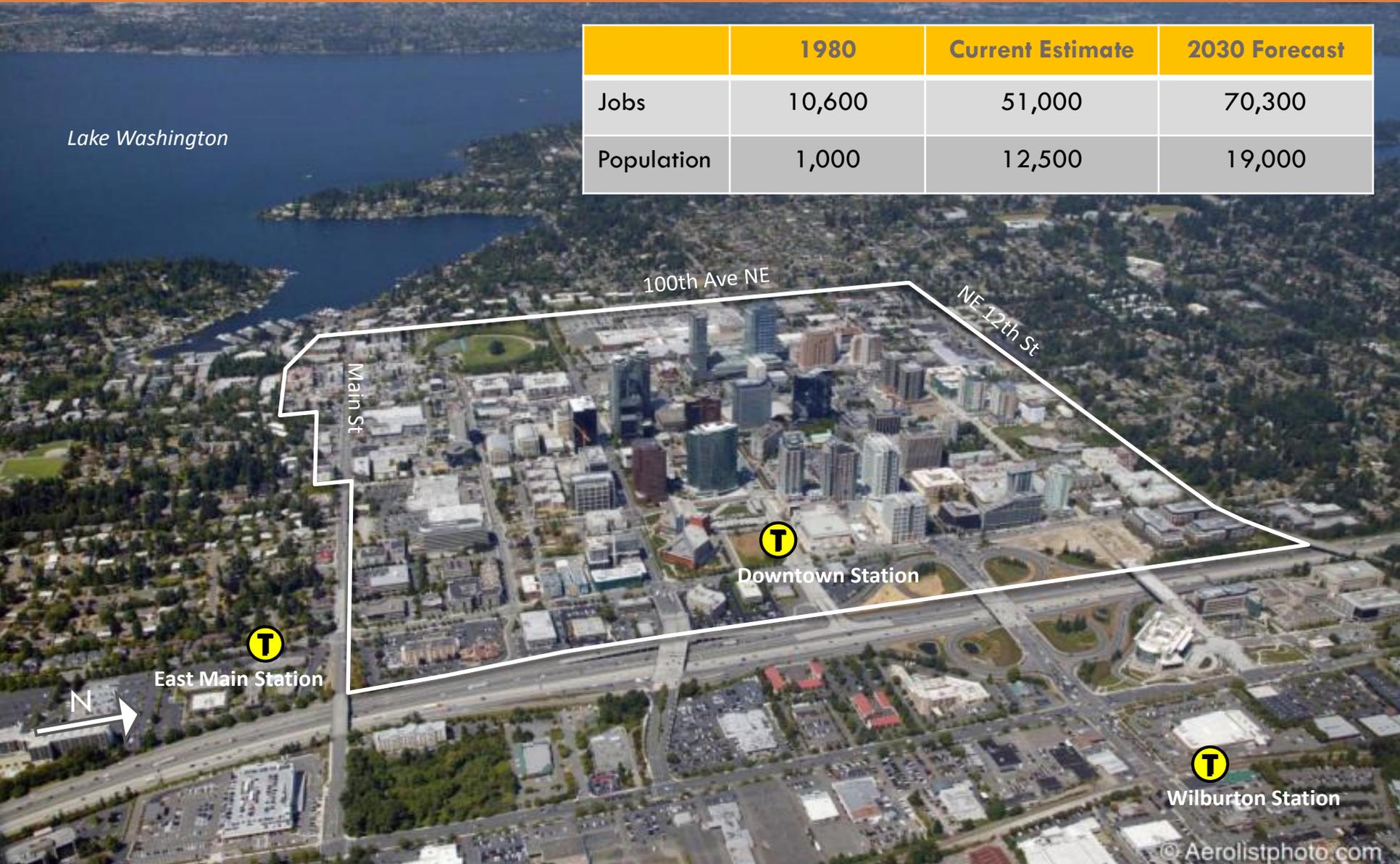
Tonight's Meeting

- Review of the City's parks and open space vision for Downtown Bellevue
- Update on the Downtown Livability Initiative
 - ▣ Planning Commission process update
 - ▣ Overview of specific items in draft Land Use Code relating to parks and open space vision
 - ▣ Collect Board feedback to relay to Planning Commission

Study Area: Downtown Subarea

	1980	Current Estimate	2030 Forecast
Jobs	10,600	51,000	70,300
Population	1,000	12,500	19,000

Lake Washington



Main St

100th Ave NE

NE 12th St



East Main Station



Downtown Station



Wilburton Station



Code Update Part of Broader Livability Effort

Update on Broader Livability Efforts for Downtown Bellevue

May 2015

The current work on updating the Downtown Land Use Code through the Downtown Livability Initiative is part of a broader agenda to make Downtown more people-friendly, vibrant and memorable, and add to the amenities that make for a great city center. This includes a wide variety of new and upcoming projects, programs and events in the following categories that provide on-the-ground examples of how the City and other participants are furthering livability in Downtown Bellevue beyond the Code update.



Safety and security

Council has set aside funding to begin site selection for a **new Fire Station #10** to serve Downtown and the surrounding area. This funding will secure land for a facility to provide rapid response for fire and emergency medical calls. The Police Department has a designated **Downtown Policing Squad** comprised of a lieutenant, corporal, and four officers.



Schools

Over 1,000 children (ages 0-18) are currently living Downtown per City estimate. The City has worked with the Bellevue School District and they recently identified a site at 124th Ave NE and Main Street for a **new elementary school** to serve the growing number of Downtown families. Anticipating this need, the school was fully funded in the district's 2014 capital construction bond.



Walkability/ pedestrian comfort

Creating a safer, more convenient and inviting pedestrian environment is a prime goal of the City. Current

projects to improve walkability and implement the Downtown Transportation Plan include: **enhancing the pedestrian crossing at 100th Ave NE/NE 4th Street**; **improving the intersections for pedestrians on the south side of Downtown Park**; **elevating the 106th Ave NE/NE 6th Street intersection** adjacent to Compass Plaza to create a safer raised "table"; and a wider and **gently sloping ramp in the "Garden Hillclimb"** segment of the Pedestrian Corridor. The City is also **following up with improvements for people that are mobility-impaired**. Council provided a dedicated resource in the new Capital Investment Plan adopted in December 2014 for addressing citizen accessibility requests and implementing high priority improvements in the City's ADA Transition Plan.



Character

One of Council's adopted priorities for 2015-16 referred to as the **Grand Connection** will create major placemaking elements and open space from Meydenbauer Bay, through Downtown, and across I-405 to the Eastside Rail Corridor trail (old Burlington Northern rail line). Conceptual design work will be proceeding in 2015 on what will become a signature feature for Downtown. The **Old Bellevue identity project** including gateway signage, district markers, and historical utility box wraps was completed in early 2015. A downtown-wide **median study** will prioritize planted median locations that will green the Downtown, aid in pedestrian safety and enhance neighborhood and gateway character. Implementation will take place in coordination with existing and planned transportation improvements.

Downtown Bellevue (continued)



Vehicular mobility

A number of street projects are underway or in the works to **improve vehicle access to Downtown**. The new NE 4th Street extension from 116th Ave NE to 120th Ave NE, and the widening of 120th Ave NE, add capacity for traffic entering and exiting Downtown. Both will be completed in 2015. Full funding is now in place for the Spring Boulevard connection between NE 12th Street and 120th Ave NE, which will provide additional capacity at the north end of Downtown. Council also recently approved funding for full design and environmental review of **high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) improvements on Bellevue Way just south of Downtown**, which would add significant capacity to move people during the evening commute period. In the Old Bellevue area, **25 new on-street parking spaces** have been added to support local small businesses, as recommended in the companion Downtown Transportation Plan.



Parks and open space

Council approved funding and work is expected to be underway this summer to **complete Downtown Park**, which includes constructing the remaining portion of the circular water feature and promenade, and completing a "gateway" at the Park's northeast quarter fronting on Bellevue Way. The Rotary Club of Bellevue has partnered with the City to help fund and build **Inspiration Playground** within Downtown Park. It will feature universally accessible design and sensory-rich play experiences suitable for all ages and abilities. Work also continues on the **first phase of Meydenbauer Bay Park**, which will result in a spectacular connection between Downtown and the Lake Washington waterfront.

Downtown Bellevue (continued)



Affordable/ workforce housing

Downtown is Bellevue's fastest growing neighborhood and the location planned for the largest share of the City's residential growth. As part of a broader City housing strategy, Bellevue is considering use of a **multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program** to encourage development of workforce housing in Downtown, Bel-Red, Eastgate, Newport Hills Commercial Area, Crossroads, and Wilburton Commercial. The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) recently completed **August Wilson Place**, which adds 57 units of affordable workforce housing to Downtown, including 12 units for homeless people, eight units for veterans, and three units for families with developmental disabilities.



Neighborhood services

To serve the needs of residents living Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, a third major grocery store opened in the subarea. **The Asian supermarket Hmart now joins QFC and Safeway in Downtown Bellevue**. In addition, Downtown continues to **evolve with an ever-growing mix of retail, restaurants and coffee shops, and entertainment venues** that offer services to Downtown residents, workers, and nearby neighborhoods as well as the rest of Bellevue and the region.

Council Principles (see handouts)

Overall Downtown Livability Project Principles

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

Council Guidance on Incentive System Update

Council Guidance for Updating Downtown Incentive Zoning
Adopted by Council 1-19-16

For many years incentive zoning has been part of Bellevue's strategy for implementing the Downtown Plan. Through the Amenity Incentive System, development is offered additional density (FAR) in exchange for providing certain public amenities. The Downtown Livability CAC report calls for a number of revisions to the system. The Council is providing the following direction to staff and the Planning Commission as they consider the CAC recommendations and move forward to develop the specific Land Use Code amendments to update the incentive zoning system.

1. Focus the system on making Downtown more livable for people. This should include incentivizing public open space, walkability/connectivity, affordable housing in recognition of the City's broader work on affordable housing, and other amenities that are most important to achieving Downtown livability.
2. Be forward-looking and aspirational, reflecting the evolving needs of a 21st century city.
3. Design the incentive system to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity.
4. Recognize that incentive zoning is one part of the broader Downtown land use code, and will work together with development standards, design guidelines and other code elements to collectively address impacts of development and ensure Downtown is a great place for people.
5. Simplify and streamline the incentive system with a clear structure and desired outcomes. This includes narrowing the list of incentives by mandating appropriate elements, incentivizing what would not otherwise happen, and increasing the base FAR to account for any current incentive that is converted to a mandate.
6. Ensure that the amenity incentive system is consistent with state and federal law. In particular, the process should be sensitive to the requirements of RCW 82.02.020, and to nexus and rough proportionality.
7. Design the amenity incentive system to act as a real incentive for developers, and ensure that modifications to the incentive system don't effectively result in a downzoning of land, in particular for current incentives converted to mandates.
8. Ensure that participation in the updated incentive system is required for any increases to currently permitted maximum density (FAR) and/or height.
9. Consider potential unintended consequences of the update, specifically: a) the effect of incentive zoning changes on the ability to continue to provide transit-oriented, workforce housing in Downtown, including the anticipated effect of the MFE; on producing such housing; b) the effect of incentive zoning changes on small lots, to ensure that their redevelopment remains viable and not contingent upon becoming part of an assemblage with other properties; and c) special sensitivity to Perimeter neighborhoods.

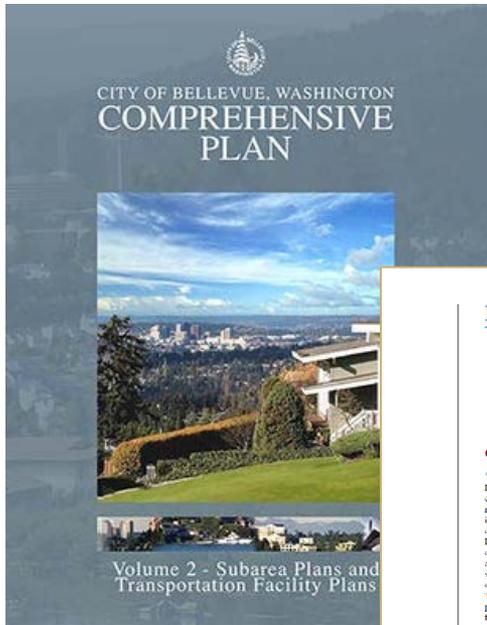
amenity incentive system lack market viability.

viability for incentivizing per value.

form to address

Downtown Framework

- **Comprehensive Plan:**
Provides vision, goals, policies



Downtown Subarea Plan

GOALS

The Great Places Strategy

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

OVERVIEW

A Community's Vision

Between 2001 and 2003, the city worked with Bellevue residents and business interests to strengthen the community's vision for Downtown while focusing on planning issues that face a growing urban center in an area where many of the basic elements already in place.

The second generation of planning addressed solutions for increased transportation demand as well as the character of future Downtown development over the next twenty years.

This document provides the policy framework and list of associated projects to support development of Downtown Bellevue as the primary urban center of the Eastside, consistent with countywide and regional plans. This Subarea Plan is implemented through regulations that guide the scale and character of new development, targeted public investments such as roadway, transit and pedestrian improvements, new parks and public buildings, as well as private sector investments such as rehabilitation and cultural structures that continue to foster the vision for Downtown.



View along Avenue and parking plaza are largely in private hands, Bellevue Downtown.

- **Parks & Open Space System Plan**
Translates vision and goals into specific project recommendations



Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan | 61

Urban park system development or planning is underway in three areas including Downtown, BelRed and the Eastgate-100 Corridor. Downtown has achieved and is continuing to build out the higher density urban lifestyle that didn't exist in Bellevue 20 years ago. BelRed is just beginning its transformation, and the Eastgate-100 Corridor is at the starting gate. To attract new residents and employees to these areas, a significant, new style of parks and open space systems is envisioned. Parks designed for urban areas differ substantially from those designed to serve lower density single family neighborhoods. As such, the unique challenges of developing an urban park system are described in this section, focusing first on Downtown, then on BelRed and Eastgate, and finally on issues that equally affect these areas.

DOWNTOWN BELLEVUE

Downtown is the city's financial and business hub and the area where the majority of new residential and employment growth is occurring and will continue to occur well into the future. Downtown represents less than two percent of Bellevue's land area, but will accommodate exponentially higher percentages of Bellevue workforce and resident populations. Maintaining a livable urban environment while accommodating significant new growth depends on creating a parks and open space system that responds to the unique needs of the community.

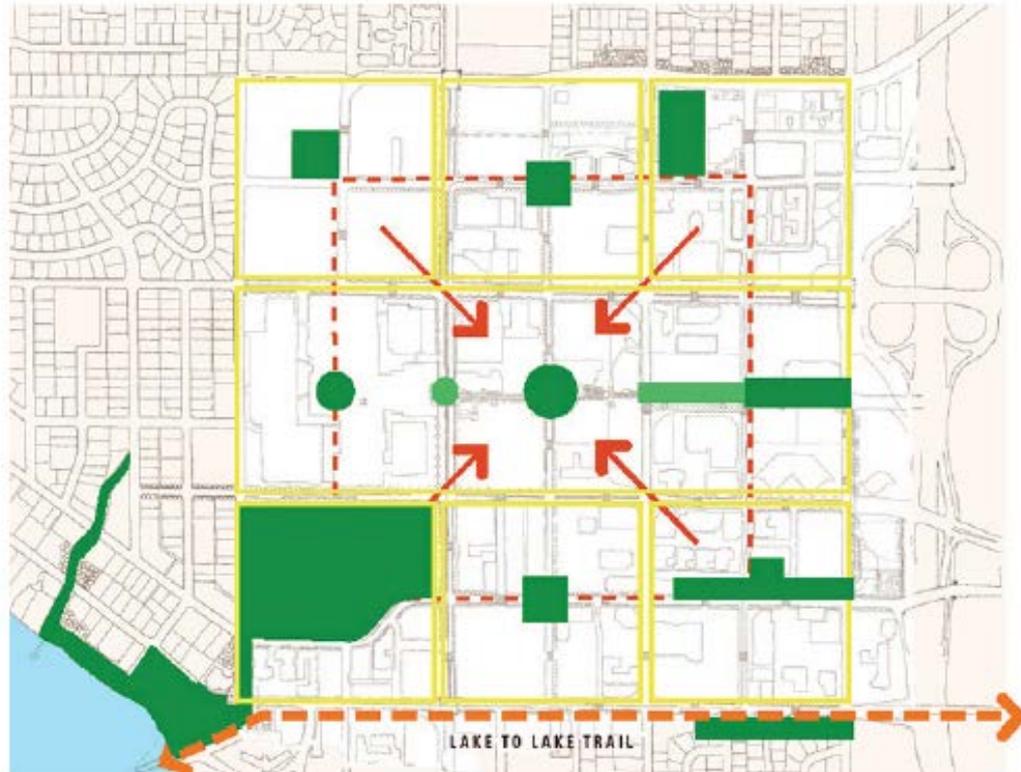
Meeting Downtown's parks, open spaces, and recreation needs requires a different approach than used elsewhere in the city. Limited land availability with its resulting high costs precludes opportunities that exist in other areas and requires a distinct treatment for open space needs and solutions.

A system of coordinated and connected open spaces requires commitment from both public and private sectors. Public-private partnerships will be critical to meet the recreation needs of the people who live and work in the Downtown neighborhood. Since most land in Downtown is privately owned, the City is dependent on a degree upon developers to incorporate exciting and inviting public spaces into their development projects. To accomplish this goal, the City provides incentives through the zoning code allowing Downtown developers to achieve greater development potential in exchange for amenities that benefit the pedestrian experience and add to publicly accessible open space. These amenities can include arcades, plazas, active recreation areas, public art, and landscaped green spaces.



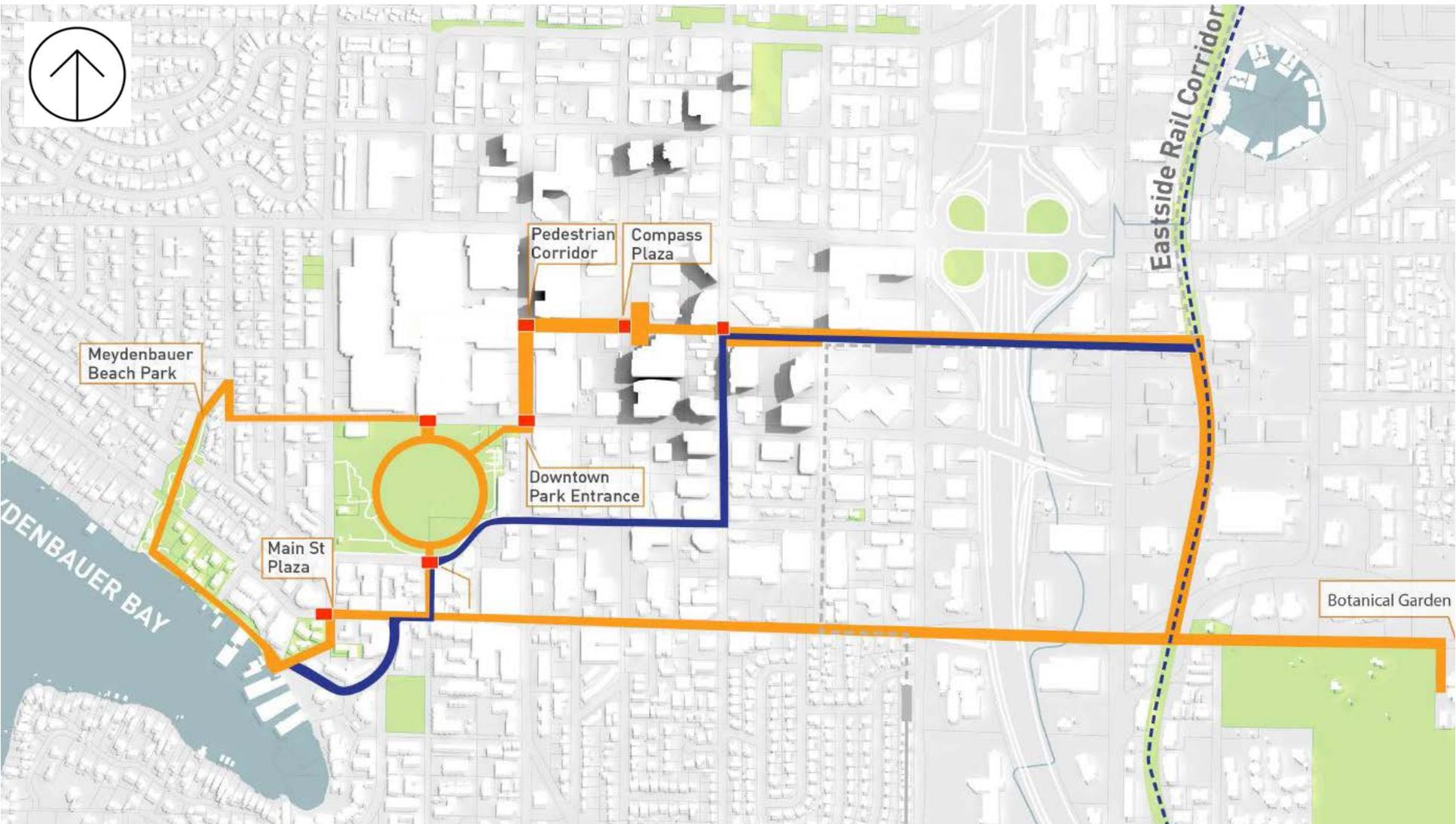
While this method of providing public spaces has resulted in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor public amenities, there are drawbacks. The private developers designing these spaces may not place the highest priority on serving the public. This can result in public spaces that are

Comprehensive Plan Vision

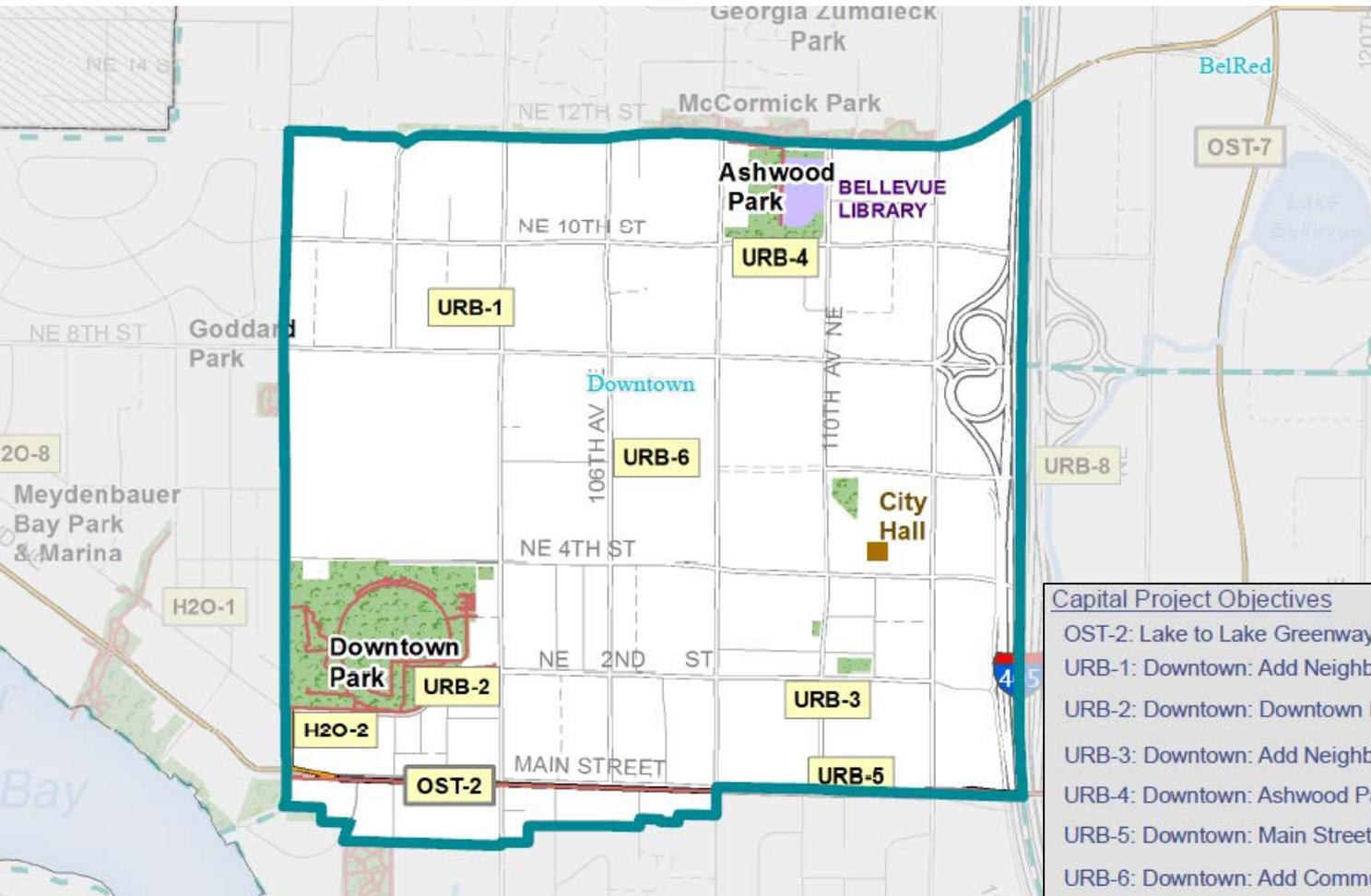


Concept for Downtown parks and open space network.

Grand Connection



Parks & Open Space System Plan



Capital Project Objectives

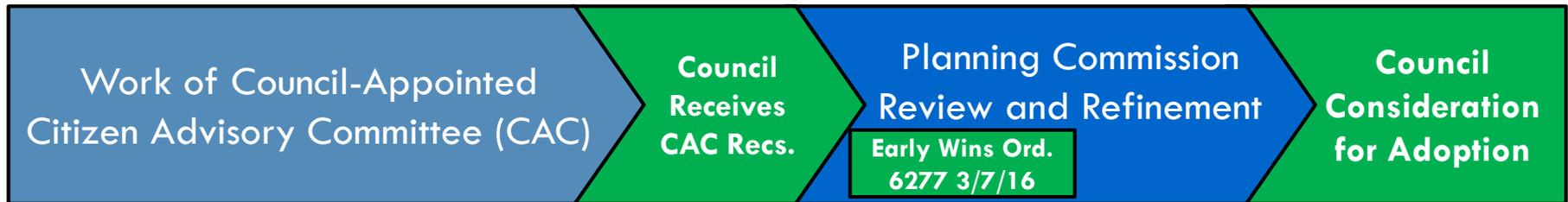
- OST-2: Lake to Lake Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
- URB-1: Downtown: Add Neighborhood Park in NW Quadrant
- URB-2: Downtown: Downtown Park
- URB-3: Downtown: Add Neighborhood Park in SE Quadrant
- URB-4: Downtown: Ashwood Park
- URB-5: Downtown: Main Street Linear Buffer Greenway
- URB-6: Downtown: Add Community Center
- URB-7: Downtown: Urban Trail System
- URB-8: Downtown: Grand Connection from Meydenbauer Bay to ERC
- H2O-2: Meydenbauer Bay Park to Downtown Park Connection

Examples of Publicly-Accessible Open Space



Overall Downtown Livability Process

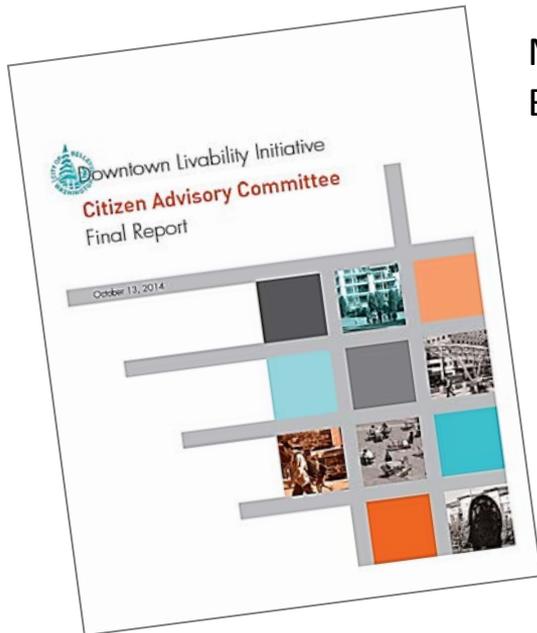
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



March 2014, Parks Board Check-in



We Are Here



Major Council Direction to Date:

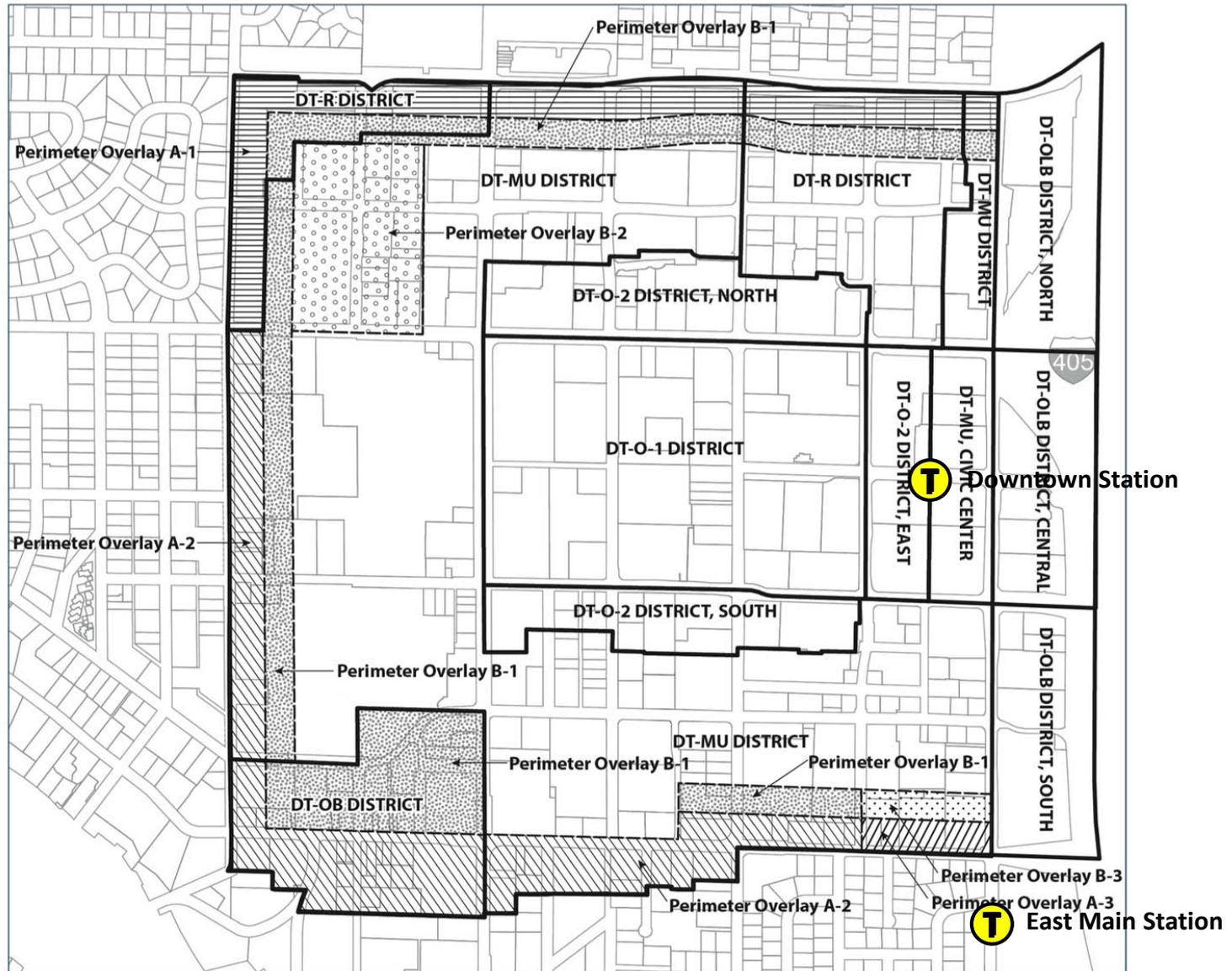
- Overall Scope and Project Principles (2013)
- Charge to Planning Commission re: Review of CAC Recs. (5/2015)
- Council principles to guide incentive zoning update (1/2016)
- Adoption of “Early Wins” (3/2016)
- Proposed approach to update incentive system (6/2016)

Public Engagement

Started with CAC Process, Continues Today

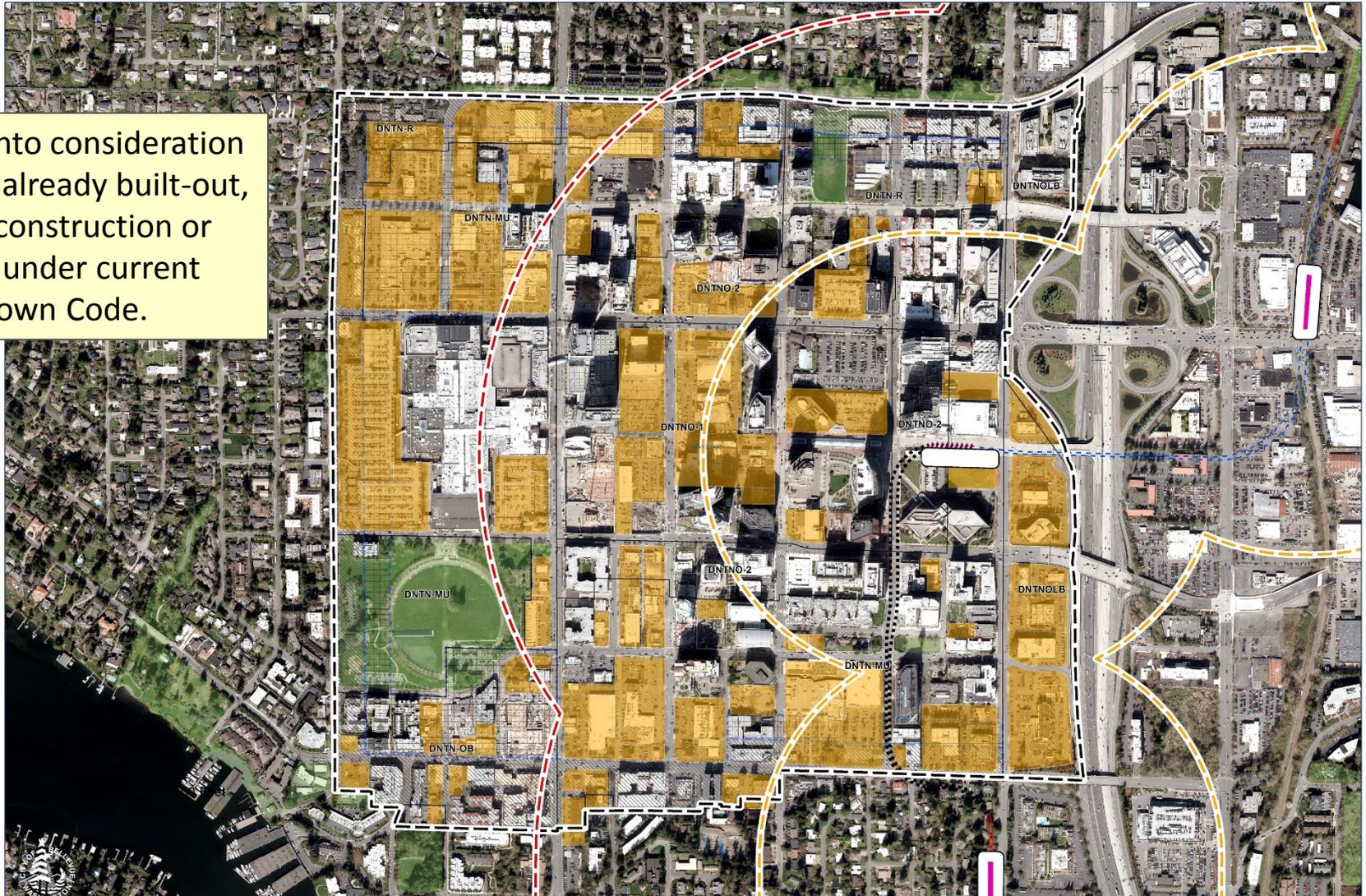
- Broad range of interested parties (1,370 on email list)
- Focus groups
- Downtown walking tours
- Open houses at key points
- Meetings with the community
- Small group & one-on-one interactions
- 18 Planning Commission study sessions and 13 CAC meetings, all with public comment period
- Ongoing updates through project website, email to interested parties, It's Your City

Downtown Land Use Districts & Overlays



Potential Sites to Redevelop Under New Code

Takes into consideration what's already built-out, under construction or vested under current Downtown Code.



Downtown Neighborhoods

Figure 20.25A.070.D.1



Amenity Incentive System

DRAFT CODE

- Allows development to exceed its base (or as-of-right) density and/or building height
- Draft list of 18 bonusable amenities
 - ▣ Specific design criteria
 - ▣ Bonus rates by Downtown Neighborhood
- Combination of on-site performance or in-lieu fee provisions
- 75 percent focus on public open space features (#1-#8)
- Complexity of updating system:
 - ▣ Important economic considerations
 - ▣ Significant technical analysis
 - ▣ Urban Land Institute review

Amenity Incentive System

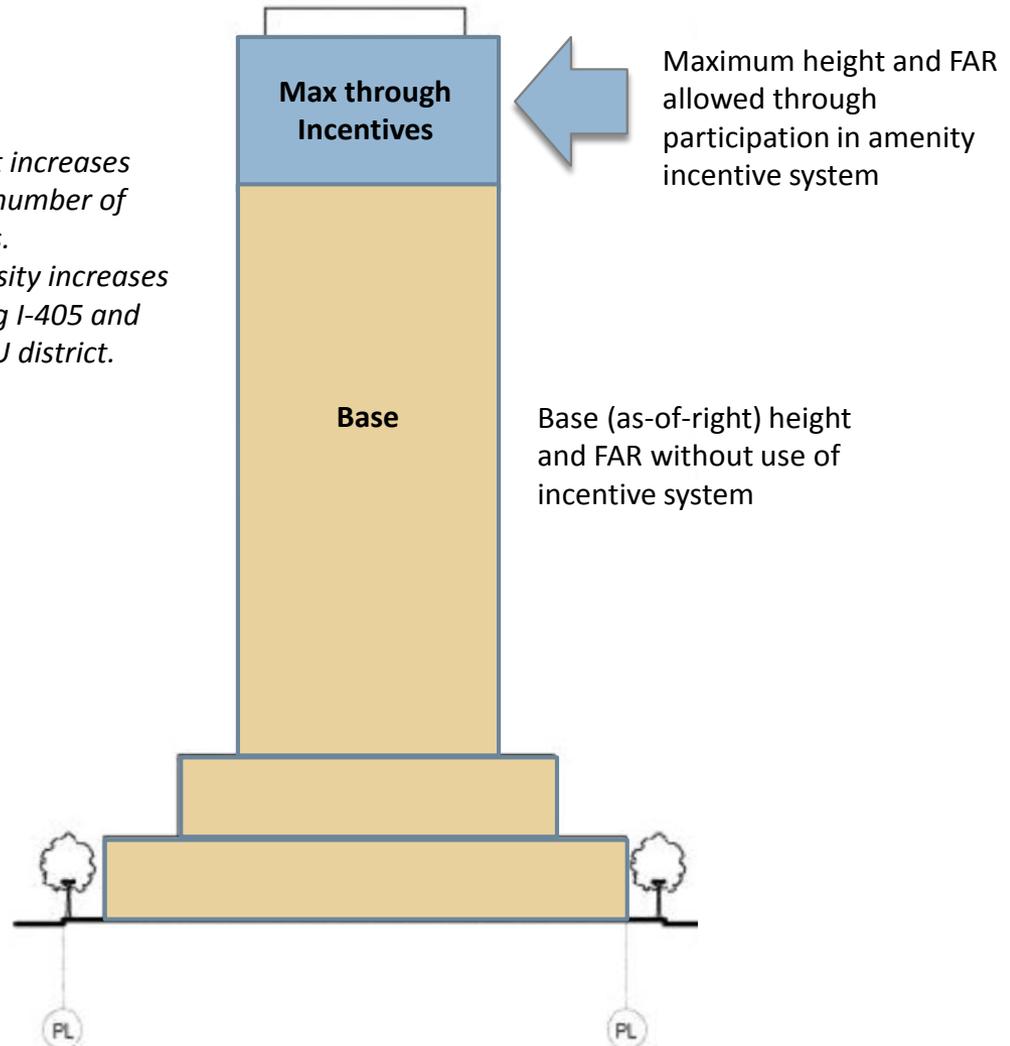
All New Development

Must meet new upgraded requirements in the form of:

- Development standards
- Design guidelines

DRAFT CODE

- *Building height increases proposed in a number of zoning districts.*
- *Maximum density increases proposed along I-405 and for office in MU district.*



Bonusable Public Open Space Amenities

DRAFT CODE

#1 Major Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space

- ▣ Pedestrian Corridor extended to 112th Avenue NE
- ▣ Future updates to incorporate Grand Connection

#2 Outdoor Plaza

- ▣ Additional bonus for Northwest Village and City Center North neighborhoods
- ▣ Additional bonus for large plazas (10K sq ft +) designed for public assembly

#3 Donation of Park Property

- ▣ Additional bonus if park property located in Northwest Village or East Main neighborhoods

#4 Improvement of Public Park Property

- ▣ Additional bonus if park located in Northwest Village or East Main neighborhoods

#5 Enhanced Streetscape

- ▣ Additional bonus for Old Bellevue, City Center South or East Main neighborhoods

#6 Active Recreation Area

#7 Enclosed Plaza

#8 Alleys with Addresses

- ▣ Bonus focused on Northwest Village, City Center South and East Main neighborhoods

Other Bonusable Amenities

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- #9 Free-standing Canopies
- #10 Pedestrian Bridges
- #11 Performing Arts Space
- #12 Public Art
- #13 Water Feature
- #14 Historic Preservation of Physical Sites/Buildings
- #15 Historic and Cultural Resources Documentation
- #16 Neighborhood Serving Uses
- #17 Sustainability Certification
- #18 Flexible Amenity

Open Space for Additional Height

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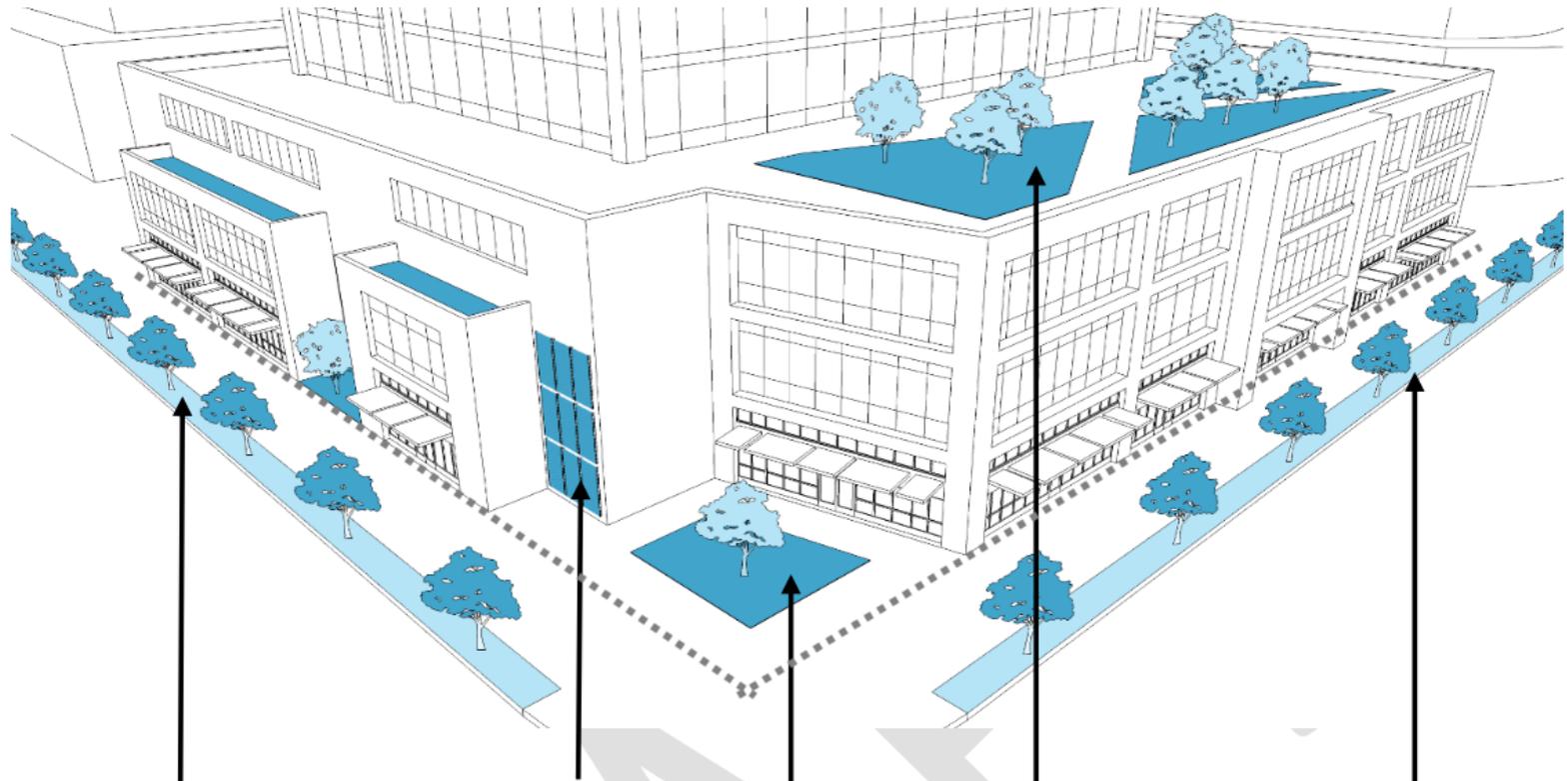
- Taller building heights being considered for a number of Downtown districts
- Draft code includes diminishing floor plate and outdoor plaza space requirements if exceeding current maximum allowed height
- Outdoor plaza requirement 10 percent of project limit
 - ▣ No less than 3,000 square feet in size
 - ▣ Meets requirements for Outdoor Plazas in incentive system

Green and Sustainability Factor

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- New score based system that:
 - ▣ Credits baseline streetscape requirements
 - ▣ Allows flexibility for inclusion of other elements
 - ▣ Provides opportunities to stack features
- System includes:
 - ▣ Landscaping and street trees, bioretention facilities, structural soil systems, preservation of landmark trees, green walls and roofs, rainwater harvesting, and public bicycle racks.

Green and Sustainability Factor



Property line – Green Factor calculations include frontage improvements

Green wall system

Landscaped open space

Green roofs that may include landscaped areas, trees, groundcover, shrubs, and native or drought-tolerant plants

Streetscape improvements that may include trees, native or drought-tolerant plants, shrubs, and bioretention facilities

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