Wilburton Commercial Area
Bellevue, Washington
May 15–20, 2016
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Bellevue, Washington
Envisioning a Vibrant Future for Bellevue
May 15–20, 2016
About the Urban Land Institute

THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

■ Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;

■ Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI’s membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;

■ Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;

■ Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both the built and natural environments;

■ Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

■ Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 39,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world’s most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

Cover photos: Steven Gu, ULI.

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About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 600 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI’s advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI’s interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel’s conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel’s visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI’s five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor’s issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI’s unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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Acknowledgments

ULI WOULD LIKE TO THANK the city of Bellevue for allowing the panel to assist in the future vision of the Wilburton Area. In particular, the panel would like to thank Community Development Program Manager Bradley Calvert, Planning Director Dan Stroh, and Director Chris Salomone from the city of Bellevue’s Planning and Community Development Department, who aided the panelists’ understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding the Wilburton study area, as well as providing necessary data and information to help the panel make these recommendations.

The panel would also like to thank all the approximately 60 stakeholders who participated throughout the panel process and gave their enthusiasm, thoughts, and insights for the study area.
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Background and the Panel’s Assignment

**LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE** of Lake Washington, Bellevue is a thriving city that has long been regarded as a great place to live and work. Bellevue enjoys the nearby natural amenities of the Cascade Mountains, a high-performing public school district, and a vibrant and growing technology employment sector. Home to approximately 12,000 residents and 50,000 jobs, the Bellevue downtown has enjoyed strong growth in recent years, with a large concentration of high-quality retail and Class A office space, complemented with a more recent influx of residential apartments and condominiums.

Bellevue is often described as a “City in a Park.” The powerful descriptor reflects the importance of community places in parks and open space, enhanced by the creation of a new waterfront park, completion of Downtown Park, and new placemaking and mobility opportunities such as the Grand Connection, which is planned to tie the existing city amenities into the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) and further enhance the connectivity of Bellevue’s natural and green assets.

Referring throughout this report as the study area, the extended Wilburton commercial area presents a unique opportunity to refine the role and function of parks within the urban setting. Envisioning streets as linear parks with expanded opportunities for integrated water quality management, increasing the city’s tree canopy, and integrating active uses will expand the value of parks within the overall community. The Wilburton study area offers the potential...
to change the paradigm in offering meaningful and engaging public open space to better serve the area’s growing and culturally diverse population.

Recent years have seen a significant shift in the cultural makeup of the community, and diversity is now a leading platform of the city’s economic development that is largely centered on demographic shifts created by a large influx of international professionals to support the technology sector. These demographic shifts require the city to address not only cultural diversity but also economic diversity and affordability for all of these communities.

**Study Area and Surrounding Context**

The Wilburton study area is located east of downtown and presents a significant development opportunity for the greater Bellevue community. The area has long served the role as a service sector—with its “Auto Row,” large-format retail and commercial uses, hotels, health, and services. Although the study area lies just on the other side of Interstate 405, the freeway creates a physical barrier, impeding a physical connection between the study area and the rest of the city.

To help overcome this impediment, the city has in recent years upgraded NE Eighth Street and extended NE Fourth Street east to 120th Avenue NE. Although these projects enhance connectivity and will aid in automobile traffic issues, the roads will create additional challenges at the pedestrian scale. In addition, plans exist to extend NE Sixth Street into the study area and aid the dispersion of traffic.

Other emerging districts surrounding the study area are also moving toward dense urbanization. North of the study area, BelRed aims to accommodate future city growth, capitalizing on light rail and its proximity to the ERC. Directly east of the study area is the Wilburton Hill community, a largely single-family residential neighborhood. Because of its particular location, the Wilburton study area has the opportunity to integrate with these different districts as well as develop its own distinct set of characteristics and role within the broader regional setting.

**The Panel’s Assignment**

Starting to explore the potential of the area, the city of Bellevue has asked ULI to answer the following questions and determine recommendations for the future vision of the Wilburton commercial area:

- The study area is uniquely positioned to create new growth and innovation for Bellevue and the surrounding region. What goals and guiding principles should be included in the visioning for the study area?
- How can the study area complement, rather than directly compete with, downtown Bellevue and BelRed?
- How can the study area embrace and interface with the Grand Connection, light rail, and the Eastside Rail Corridor?
- As an emerging international gateway, how can the study area capitalize on international investment as well as establish greater international prominence?
- How can the study area capitalize on the existing suite of assets, including the Medical District, the downtown business core, and forthcoming changes in the BelRed
district that include the Global Innovation Exchange (GIX) partnership with the University of Washington and Tsinghua University?

What leading edge solutions can the study area provide to local and regional challenges such as affordable housing, sustainability, and innovative workspaces and developments?

Opportunities for Wilburton

Based on the stakeholder interviews, briefing material, and on-site research, the panel found the structural framework of the city and outlying residential community very strong. The community values and economic circumstances have enabled a prosperous and high-quality urban environment. However, several areas for improvement observed in Wilburton are addressed in the following sections.

Affordability

One of the challenges resulting from the success and prosperity the city has enjoyed is lack of affordability of both residential housing and commercial space. The high costs of land in the area limit the availability of workforce housing opportunities or many commercial opportunities for smaller innovation or service space within the area. Although the concentration of higher-value corporate commercial office space and residential choices should proceed at market rate within the downtown and adjacent areas, Bellevue’s lack of affordable housing can stunt future growth. Wilburton offers an opportunity to provide more diversity of choice, which should be one of the objectives within the district.

Diversity and Culture

Although demographics indicate that cultural diversity has increased within Bellevue, little evidence of this diversity is reflected in the built environment, which has been described as culturally homogeneous. Promoting additional cultural and recreational facilities, integrating culturally diverse public art, hosting cultural events and activities within parks, open space, facilities, and the public realm would help showcase the cultural richness of this diverse community.

Complete Community

The Wilburton study area has the opportunity of creating a self-sustaining complete community with a full range of uses. The city and stakeholders have suggested that ample capacity for growth exists within the downtown area and simply expanding downtown functions to the east side of Interstate 405 would be remiss. The panel recommends adopting smart zoning controls and incentives to promote a sustainable economic center and support future development in the district. Moreover, integrating community and recreation facilities and smaller-scaled “main street” retail and active streets by following a “complete streets” code would help sustain and cater to the lifestyle-oriented needs of the medical and technology employment base.

Complementing Existing Catalytic Growth Drivers

With its existing medical cluster and potential technology cluster, the Wilburton study area can provide strong employment drivers complementing those existing in downtown. This development vision encourages the greatest opportunity to provide resilience and long-term sustainability. These sectors show significant strength, and the panel strongly recommends against an additional “silver bullet” such as a stadium or other catalytic development, which would only detract from the need and opportunity that currently exist.

Infrastructure

From what the panel learned and observed, multimodal infrastructure bridging downtown and the study area is lacking. The city needs to address this gap to foster the necessary market for growth in the study area. The enhancement of key road and pedestrian connections as well as other public realm improvements will entice private sector investors and developers to follow the public lead.
Summary of the Panel’s Recommendations

On the basis of these observations and initial thoughts for the Wilburton study area, the panel streamlined several key recommendations to focus on for the planning process. With its goals of attracting a vibrant workforce, the city now needs to expand its appeal and urban offerings to a young, tech-savvy cohort, as well as to address the real need of affordability for the large service sector that is currently not being met.

Within this setting, the following summarizes the key recommendations that are described throughout this report:

- **Build off existing strength.** No silver bullet exists for success in the Wilburton study area. However, building on the strong foundation and new transportation options in the area, the city of Bellevue can create a strong economic engine in Wilburton.

- **Develop the Wilburton study area as a complete center that can serve the existing catalytic drivers in the area.** The panel recognizes the great anchor institutions and changes coming to the area and urges the city to capitalize them. With these different industries—medical, technology innovation, and downtown commercial—the Wilburton area can foster and promote a diverse economy.

- **Enhance the city’s role as entrepreneur.** To foster the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit the city is seeking, the panel recommends making business opportunities in Bellevue, starting with the Wilburton study area, easier through clarity of leadership, collaboration, transparency, and accountability.

- **Manage the area through the establishment of a four-district framework with supporting operating structure and guidelines.** As mentioned previously, with the Wilburton area supporting different industries and anchor institutions, the panel recommends subdivision of the Wilburton study area to focus on different concentrations of land use priorities, scale, and opportunities, including the following:
  - **The Health and Wellness Cluster:** This district is anchored on the two hospitals located in the study area. With a new light-rail station located in the area, this district will continue to serve and expand as a medical hub for the region.
  - **The Technology Incubator District (TID):** With the upcoming GIX campus nearby, this district fosters the innovative spirit sought out by the city. In addition, GIX housing for students and for the startup workforce can be developed here.
  - **Transit- and Trail-Oriented Development (T2) District:** This district is the mixed-use heart of Wilburton, taking advantage of trail-oriented development of the ERC and its junction with the Grand Connection. The potential for transit-oriented development opportunities as well as light-rail development makes this area extremely desirable.
  - **The South of Fourth Street (SoFo) District:** Currently where a portion of Auto Row is located, this district has the potential for more compact development. A consolidation of Auto Row into a modern, vertical automotive sales facility with a shared parking garage for inventory is encouraged to better incorporate this district with the rest of the area.
Market Potential

AN EXAMINATION OF THE surrounding region indicates that the socioeconomic forces and demographic changes affecting the greater Seattle/Bellevue market will shape the development opportunities in the Wilburton study area. Since 1980, the three-county Central Puget Sound area (King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties) has been growing by 36,000 jobs per year, resulting in annual population growth of 45,000 people living in about 18,000 households. Today, this region has 3.7 million people living in 1.4 million households, and 2.5 million are employed in the region. The estimate is based on the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics job reports.

The city of Bellevue currently has 136,000 people living in 57,000 households. Since 1980, Bellevue’s population has increased annually by 1,200 people in 530 households, both through new development and annexation. Since 2010, this annual increase has more than doubled.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Employment</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>2.5 million</td>
<td>53,000</td>
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<td>Population</td>
<td>45,000</td>
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<td>Households</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>1.4 million</td>
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<th>Bellevue Market</th>
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<td>Population</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>136,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>1,060</td>
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Housing Starts

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<th>Central Puget Sound Market</th>
<th>Historical annual average</th>
<th>Projected annual average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Single family</td>
<td>12,000 units</td>
<td>12,600 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multifamily</td>
<td>9,000 units</td>
<td>11,600 units</td>
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<th>Bellevue Market</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single family</td>
<td>200 units</td>
<td>350 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily</td>
<td>560 units</td>
<td>850 units</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Downtown Bellevue</th>
<th>East of I-405</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townhouses and condominiums</td>
<td>70 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental apartments</td>
<td>330 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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to 2,600 people in 1,060 households. Of significance today, 12,000 people live in downtown Bellevue, but more important, over 50,000 people are employed in downtown Bellevue, demonstrating the tremendous number of people who are commuting daily into Bellevue to take advantage of job opportunities.

Regional Job Growth Projections

During the next decade, the greater Central Puget Sound region is projected to grow by 53,000 jobs per year, fueling annual population increases of more than 75,000 people in 23,000 households. Historically since 1980, the Central Puget Sound region has averaged annually the construction of almost 12,000 single-family units and 9,000 multifamily units, while Bellevue has averaged annually the construction of 200 single-family units and 560 multifamily units. In the last three years, Bellevue has averaged annually the construction of almost 800 multifamily units. During the next decade, the Central Puget Sound region is estimated to average annual demand for 12,600 single-family units, 3,000 townhouses and condominiums, and 8,600 rental units. The ULI panel estimates that the city of Bellevue will average annual demand for 1,200 residential units, including 150 townhouses and condominiums and 700 rental apartments. Of the total multifamily demand, approximately 45 percent, or 70 townhouses and condominiums and 330 rental apartments, is projected to be in the Bellevue downtown environs, with 50 townhouses and condominiums and 130 rental apartments east of I-405. With the introduction of light rail in 2023, the annual residential demand could increase to 275 units.

The balance will be single-family attached units. The demand distribution is based on historical trends of the U.S. Census Bureau survey of total housing units and building permit activity. Projected out ten years, total future demand is based on historical building permit activity and employment estimates.

Potential Office and Commercial Market

As of 2016, the Central Puget Sound office market includes 190.2 million square feet, of which 7.7 million square feet is vacant, as reported by CoStar, and 48.7 million square feet is on the Eastside with 9.7 million square feet in Downtown Bellevue. This space has a vacancy of 9.9 percent. During the last three years, the Central Puget Sound region constructed an average of 4.2 million square feet of office space; in 2016, this market has 7.7 million square feet under construction. During the next decade,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Historical inventory (square feet)</th>
<th>Projected annual demand (square feet)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Puget Sound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>190.2 million</td>
<td>4.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>91.0 million</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>9.7 million</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>2.7 million</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilburton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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this market is projected to deliver 4.0 million square feet annually, 1.0 million square feet on the Eastside and 400,000 square feet in Bellevue. The ULI panel estimates that the Wilburton study area will capture 40 percent of this projected office demand in Bellevue, and annually it will enjoy a market for 160,000 square feet. With the introduction of light rail, the demand for office space could grow to 250,000 square feet per year.

Demand for office space is based on the assumption that each new employee occupies 200 square feet. Annual employment growth for office employees is estimated to be 20,936 per year in the three-county area. The Eastside currently captures 25 percent of office space demand. The panel believes that the Wilburton study area will roughly double its historic capture rate within the Eastside market in the future.

As of 2016, the Central Puget Sound region has over 91 million square feet of retail space, or 25 square feet per capita, which is similar to the national average. The current vacancy factor is a very healthy 2.6 percent. Of the total retail square footage, 10.9 million square feet is on the Eastside with a vacancy rate of 2.1 percent, and 2.7 million square feet is in Bellevue with a vacancy factor of 4.2 percent. In the last three years, the Central Puget Sound region has delivered an annual average of 750,000 square feet of retail space and during the next decade is projected to deliver 1.9 million square feet per year with 300,000 square feet on the Eastside. With the demographic shift, this estimate is based on the assumption of 25 square feet of new retail per person. The Bellevue area has an extremely high median household income of over $94,000, approximately $22,000 of which is available for retail expenditures. Realizing the projected population and household growth, the ULI panel estimates that Bellevue should experience demand for the construction of approximately 63,000 square feet of retail space per year. Within the Wilburton study area, housing could increase by 275 units per year, which suggests demand for 15,500 square feet of retail space per year, or an additional 155,000 square feet of retail space over a decade to service growth in the Wilburton study area. In addition to multifamily residential, office, and retail development, another strong area of potential for the Wilburton study area is hotel development. The Central Puget Sound market area has a very vibrant hotel market, which today is operating at 80 percent occupancy, and this occupancy is up over the 72 percent occupancy realized in 2014 and 2015. Today, 24 hotels are under development in the Central Puget Sound market, and these projects will add almost 5,400 rooms.

Downtown Bellevue today has approximately 2,500 hotel rooms and three hotels and 600 rooms under construction. On the basis of projected hospitality employment in the Bellevue market for the next decade, this area should enjoy a market for 260 new hotel rooms per year; of this total, 75 rooms per year could be added in the Wilburton study area for a total of 750 rooms during a ten-year projected period. Of the four proposed districts, the medical district, the technology incubator district, and the I-405 frontage district would be logical locations for future hotel development in the Wilburton study area.
Wilburton Study Area Market Issues

These market demand estimates suggest a number of issues regarding sustainability, affordability, and the vision that should be put in place for the Wilburton study area. The panel recommends the following for the current and future Wilburton study area market.

Based on interviews conducted and recent land transactions, the panel found that landowners in the study area are anticipating very aggressive land prices, ranging up to $100 to $150 per square foot—and maybe higher. The panel does not find the projected annual absorptions and current rents justify such high land prices in the Wilburton study area. The high land prices will result in slow and scattered development, which in turn will make infrastructure improvements very expensive.

In addition, the land parcels currently in the Wilburton study area are scattered and divided in ownership, not lending themselves to large-scale projects as currently configured. Land assemblage to achieve meaningful parcel sizes will be very difficult; however, it is necessary to ensure sustainable growth in the area. Strategies for this recommendation are discussed later in the report.

Even greater pressure will exist for workforce housing. Bellevue today is unique, with 50,000 employees working downtown and only 12,000 people living downtown. Stakeholder interviews and on-site research indicate major downtown employers are having difficulty recruiting employees because of the shortage of workforce housing. The panel believes this situation will only get worse, and it needs immediate attention by the city of Bellevue.

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**Recommended Land Use for 20-Year Buildout**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use</th>
<th>Annual absorption</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Units or square feet</th>
<th>Residents or employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townhouses/condos</td>
<td>75 units</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>60 units/acre</td>
<td>1,500 units</td>
<td>3,400 residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental apartments</td>
<td>175 units</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>100 units/acre</td>
<td>3,500 units</td>
<td>6,100 residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>250,000 sq ft</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>5,000,000 sq ft</td>
<td>21,800 employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>15,500 sq ft</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>310,000 sq ft</td>
<td>900 employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>75 rooms</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>75 rooms/acre</td>
<td>1,500,000 sq ft</td>
<td>3,000 employees</td>
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<td><strong>Total developable acreage</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Right-of-way, open space, and community space</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total study area</strong></td>
<td><strong>237</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5,000 units</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,500 residents</strong></td>
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**ULI/THK Associates Inc.**
Opportunities and Vision

THE WILBURTON STUDY AREA presents real, tangible opportunities for the city of Bellevue. It is a release valve for the high price of real estate in downtown, enabling the city to pursue a vision that caters to technology-focused millennials and young families seeking a more affordable, vibrant, active urban lifestyle. As mentioned in the summary of the panel’s recommendations, no single “silver bullet,” such as a new 18,000-seat arena and entertainment venue or business-as-usual with Auto Row and big-box stores, will result in the immediate transformation of the Wilburton study area. Building upon the strengths of the existing uses and the future improvements planned for the area, however, will allow Wilburton to become a valuable community asset.

The panel recommends four districts to better address Wilburton’s development strategy and design opportunities. These districts are based on their proximity to existing or future uses as well as their internal connectivity. The panel sees the following opportunities and suggests the following proposed visions for each district.

Health and Wellness District

This district is anchored on the two hospitals located in the study area and can expand as a medical hub for the region.

Opportunities

The panel identified the following assets and opportunities for the Health and Wellness District:

- Two established regional medical facilities;
- Nearby Seattle Children’s Hospital;
- Many colocated medical service firms in low-rise office buildings;
- Future presence of Kaiser Permanente (acquiring Group Health);
- Growth of Bellevue College (formerly Bellevue Community College) from a two-year to a four-year degree program with increased medical training; and
- Proximity to GIX in the BelRed Spring District.

The current facilities in the Health and Wellness District comprise the old Group Health medical center, the designer furniture shopping outlet, and a Whole Foods Market. With the incoming new light-rail station and redevelopment of the medical institutions by Kaiser Permanente, an opportunity exists to link these three areas.
Vision

The proposed Health and Wellness District vision is centered on leveraging the existing regional medical services cluster and making the principles of healthy living manifest in the built form and the public realm.

This vision can be achieved by focusing on the redevelopment of underused land and structures in the district into modern, flexible medical office facilities to support the growth of existing activities. Similar to what is being achieved in cities such as Memphis, Tennessee, these new facilities will meet the needs of an aging population, serve a more diverse city, and increase the proportion of young families in the neighborhood. This growth will also increase the demand for housing for medical staff, short-term accommodations for patients and their families, and convenience restaurants and retail.

As health and wellness services within the district grow, a steady supply of trained medical workers must be ensured. Fortunately, Bellevue College is currently expanding its medical degree programs and is a potential and valuable partner in solving these future workforce needs. The establishment of a district campus would provide stronger educational and internship or employment opportunities, solidifying this relationship between the college and the district employers. Moreover, this district needs to establish a cutting-edge, cross-district collaboration with the proposed abutting Technology Incubator District and nearby GIX. With the increasing use of robotics in the medical field, possible collaborations between the two institutions are numerous.

To connect all the dots, Bellevue must take advantage of the opportunity to complement what is already happening within the medical facilities and turn them from closed to open medical systems. From complete streets to strong connections with the ERC, the panel encourages the incorporation of safe pedestrian and biking infrastructure to connect the medical facilities.

Technology Incubator District (TID)

North of NE Eighth Street and east of the ERC, the TID fosters the spirit of innovation sought by the city.

Opportunities

The panel identified the following opportunities for the TID:

- Future GIX located to the north in Bel-Red;
- Access to older building stock;
- Increasing need for associated housing and office spaces for technology entrepreneurs; and
- Location abutting both the Health and Wellness District and GIX.

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, and its $1.2 billion medical campus expansion plan highlight the investment in regional medical facilities. The vision of the new Kaiser Permanente medical campus can draw on examples such as Memphis to meet the needs of Bellevue's changing demographics.
Vision

The proposed TID vision revolves around its location abutting both the future GIX and the growing regional medical cluster in the Health and Wellness District to service the needs and provide the cross-pollination of ideas for a growing population of technology entrepreneurs.

The Wilburton study area already has plenty of diverse building stock for varied commercial uses. The existing low-cost building stock can be converted to affordable creative, incubator, and maker space. This use will greatly benefit the GIX instructors, graduates, and associated individuals seeking places to cater to the spillover need for innovation space from the Spring District.

This district will also require a mix of housing types and price points as these students grow from struggling entrepreneurs to seasoned professionals. The city will need to encourage the establishment of restaurants and services targeting these technology entrepreneurs.

Moreover, it is imperative to facilitate this link with the Health and Wellness District. Doing so will create a meeting place for the exchange of ideas between Bellevue College and the GIX, which is a partnership between the University of Washington, Microsoft, and Tsinghua University. In particular, the GIX focuses on innovation and entrepreneurship in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math. This exchange has the potential to create everything from Microsoft’s next acquisition to a medical device of the future.

Transit- and Trail-Oriented Development (T2) District

This T2 District takes advantage of trails, transit, and the Grand Connection interface with the ERC.

Opportunities

The panel identified the following opportunities for the T2 District:

- Future Wilburton Light-Rail Station;
- Future active bike/pedestrian recreation on the ERC;
- Future eastern landing area of the Grand Connection;
- Underused land parcels;
- Existing publicly owned land;
- NE Eighth Street and NE Fourth Street connections from downtown and to the east; and
- Proposed NE Sixth Street extension to Wilburton.
Vision

The proposed T2 vision emanates from the future Wilburton Station and nexus of the Grand Connection and Eastside Rail Corridor that will allow the district to exemplify all aspects of a trail- and transit-oriented development.

Much as is being achieved in Portland, Oregon’s Pearl District, creating a strong live/work/play environment reflected in the built form and public realm is important. It not only requires the provision of infrastructure for a smart, connected, and sustainable neighborhood, but it also requires the provision of publicly accessible space for arts and an embrace of the city’s growing cultural diversity.

Development in this district should be focused within the quarter- and half-mile radius of the new light-rail station, incentivizing increased densities bridging the high-rise buildings in downtown and the low-rise single-family houses to the east of the study area. Constructing a variety of housing types at different price points is imperative to accommodate the city’s diversifying workforce and young families. The establishment of an elementary school, with a potential partnership with the growing international school, will meet the needs of young families expected to move to the area. To attract and retain the creative class in Bellevue, the city needs to create different working environments for all stages of company growth.

The intersection of the Grand Connection and the ERC presents an opportunity to create a keystone feature of this neighborhood. To accommodate the demand that will emerge with the creation of this intersection, Bellevue should locate a food, beverage, and retail destination at the Grand Connection eastern landing area. Whether food trucks or brick-and-mortar locations, this destination will enhance the intersection of the ERC and the Grand Connection, which is a pivotal location along the City in the Park’s “green necklace.” Furthermore, all abutting developments should have frontage toward the ERC. To fully embrace a healthy, active lifestyle, the city needs to implement a complete streets program on NE Eighth Street and the proposed NE Sixth Street extension. Last, to release the traffic on the NE Eighth Street interchange, the half-intersections at Main Street and NE Tenth Street must be finalized.

South of Fourth (SoFo) District

Currently the location of a portion of Auto Row, the SoFo District can consolidate more compact vertical development.

Opportunities

The panel identified the following opportunities for SoFo:

- Proximity to the Bellevue Botanical Garden;
- Large land parcels;
- Grade change from the ERC and NE 116th Avenue;
- Desire to increase allowable height and density;
- Established regional automotive sales presence; and
- Permanent wetland easement.
Vision

The proposed SoFo vision grows out of the existing uses for the area but seeks to create a more urban version of Auto Row and the local big-box retail while embracing the existing natural resources of the district.

This area of Wilburton possesses some of the largest parcels in the study area. To create a more walkable urban feel, establishing a finer grain of development will be necessary, similar to what has happened in Vancouver and Washington, D.C. In the North of Massachusetts Avenue (NoMa) neighborhood in Washington, D.C., traditional big-box stores such as Walmart have developed a new, compact version of their stores for the urban environment, encouraging mixed use, such as residential apartments, above.

As part of this finer-grained development, a concerted effort should be made to consolidate Auto Row. This can be achieved through the construction of a modern, vertical automotive sales facility with a shared parking garage for inventory, which is common across land-constrained areas in parts of Asia. In Chicago, Berman’s Infiniti dealership is another example of an urban model for auto dealerships. In addition, to maximize sales, a unified regional branding effort among all automotive dealership owners should be strongly considered.

Even with the predominance of big-box retail and automotive dealerships, SoFo has great environmental amenities that must be embraced. The ERC should be linked to the wetlands in the district and adjacent botanical gardens. The existing grade change from the ERC to NE 116th Avenue provides development opportunities, and the city should mandate frontage on both levels. Moreover, the wetlands could be improved upon and maintained to become a public amenity, as seen in Shanghai.
Design Opportunities and Strategy

OVER THE YEARS, THE WILBURTON neighborhood’s identity has focused on its automobile-centric uses with excellent freeway access. With the construction of Interstate 405 as a dividing line between east and west, Wilburton developed away from the high density of downtown, instead building a low- to random-rise mixture of housing, office, retail, medical, and automobile dealership uses. Because of historic growth patterns, Wilburton lacks a sense of place, or as one person indicated, “there is no focus to this neighborhood.” To address this, the panel recommends both building upon the strong existing urban patterns and imagining a new future based on forces that are underway from both civic and transportation investments as well as market demand.

The New Districts

Creating districts in the Wilburton study area will increase legibility and showcase the unique qualities found in this neighborhood. The panel expanded the initial study area to incorporate several parcels in the south that had similar uses as other parcels along NE 116th Avenue as the open-space rail corridor and I-405 come closer together. The expanded study area is approximately 237 acres, inclusive of all parcels, open space, and road rights-of-way. Throughout the process, the panel has heard repeated reference to the “wedding cake” form that suggests downtown is the top tier of the cake and that surrounding districts would step down to lower tiers. The panel discourages plans to remake the Wilburton study area as “Downtown East.” Although considerable development densities and intensities are yet unrealized in Wilburton, a careful modeling of potential building massing and form should be studied to help guide actual floor/area ratio (FAR) recommendations. Descriptions of the proposed districts follow.

Health and Wellness District

The Group Health and Overlake medical centers plus associated medical office and support services are a strong and desirable community need stretching north of NE Eighth Street. The panel believes redevelopment of parcels in that area to support medical needs is warranted, and greater commercial intensities to allow FARs of 4.0 and greater are justified. The parcels in that area are within a short walking distance of the proposed Wilburton light-rail line station north of Eighth Street and just east of NE 116th Avenue, and within visibility and easy access from Interstate 405. The panel believes that higher densities in the area should be permitted, particularly around the medical centers for supporting office and clinical users. The city should test several parcels to analyze a 4.0 yield and higher to determine what footprints and resulting heights are both possible and marketable for potential developers working within the medical office space.

The parcel to the north of the Whole Foods Market that is currently occupied by low-rise buildings with surface parking lots is a prime location for increased commercial intensity with a wellness focus, particularly given the short walking distance to the future Wilburton light-rail transit (LRT) station. As that parcel is redeveloped, direct and easy access from NE 116th Avenue to the station should be addressed, compared to the current proposed solution adjacent to the Whole Foods parking lot.

Technology Incubator District

This district includes approximately 59 acres of buildings with wide-ranging types of uses and forms in irregular parcel shapes and configurations. Land parcels south of NE 12th Street, north of NE Eighth Street, and east of the ERC are areas that can be repurposed for other uses, such as small incubators for technology and related industries, housing in varying densities, and community-
serving retail facilities. With the development of the Spring District directly north of NE 12th Street, the panel is optimistic that space will be in demand over time for entrepreneurial activity as a result of the GIX mission. The TID has the potential to become the place that nurtures a culture of home-grown, local innovation and where small companies can grow over time. The aged building stock that surrounds Lake Bellevue provides opportunities to be transformed into low-rent startup spaces. The lands just north of the Wilburton LRT station and south of Lake Bellevue are ripe for higher-density development and should be subject to a higher FAR that could be between 4.0 and 6.0. That density could taper downward moving from west to east.

Because of the space’s proximity to the light-rail station, the city should be bold in its thinking and allow creative responses to achieve higher yields. The current low-rise automobile land use patterns are outdated, particularly the approach to those fronting Lake Bellevue. Although the development community may not come forward with mid-rise proposals, the city should not have in place restrictive FARs that would discourage active regeneration of a long neglected part of Bellevue that is within walking distance of downtown.

Finally, Lake Bellevue is a missed opportunity on many fronts: it has no public access, has little view access, and exhibits a development pattern that is wasteful considering a large body of water in an urban context. The panel recommends a separate study be undertaken with the property owners to vision its future anew.

T2 District
The greatest opportunity within the study area to effect change is on lands south of NE Eighth Street to NE Fourth Street and includes approximately 69 acres. These lands are in the middle of the Grand Connection’s easterly terminus, as well as within easy walking distance of the Wilburton LRT station. In addition, parcel sizes south of NE Eighth Street are larger and more conducive to land assembly and allow more creativity in defining a new character. The city and the public school district own several parcels that provide the catalyst for change, and the private sector will presumably follow the public sector lead with significant reinvestment for parcels on both sides of NE 116th Avenue. The lands subject to change within the T2 District include approximately 33 acres.

The panel recommends FARs in this region be between 4.0 and 6.0, depending on proximity to the LRT station. As noted in the name of the district, the panel also recommends buildings front the ERC trail where feasible, and the city should explore some instances where a smaller access road parallels the ERC to avoid back-on conditions. A more fine-grained road system both east and west of the ERC should be planned and constructed to achieve better vehicular and pedestrian connectivity while alleviating short trips on NE 116th and NE 120th avenues.

SoFo District
SoFo is an opportunity for the city to revisit Wilburton’s important contribution to Bellevue, financially supporting the city by providing automobile dealerships and other larger retail establishments such as Home Depot. The SoFo District includes approximately 62 acres and is outside the quarter-mile walking radius of the Wilburton LRT station, though it is within the walking radius of the East Main LRT station that will be located west of the study area across I-405. The area includes a wetland associated with Sturtevant Creek and has excellent freeway visibility.
The panel assumes that approximately 33 acres would be subject to redevelopment with a lower FAR between 0.75 and 2.0. Locating other uses such as hotels, restaurants, and entertainment is important in the SoFo District as well, particularly for the parcels that are east of NE 116th Avenue fronting the ERC. As noted earlier, the panel recommends that SoFo be extended in a southerly direction to include the Lexus dealership and several other parcels. Since the ULI panel met, the city has expanded the study area to include an additional 48 acres south of the original boundary.

Public Realm and Open Space
The Wilburton study area will be defined in the future by its unique linear park and open-space connections to the greater Seattle area. The panel supports the Grand Connection as a bold and visionary idea to bridge the interstate and provide a world-class connective artery. In addition, Wilburton includes the ERC, a proposed regional trail connection that aims to have more than 4,000 nonvehicular trips a day for the Wilburton segment. The intersection of these two key open spaces provides an unparalleled opportunity to create a community gathering space for Wilburton, Bellevue, and visitors as well.

The Grand Connection is planned to span I-405 between NE Fourth Street and NE Sixth Street. The panel understands that the actual horizontal and vertical footprints of the connection have not yet been determined; however, the panel recommends that the connection not be directly attached to the 35-foot-high LRT bridge as a simple appendage and that alignments that bend slightly south of NE Sixth Street, lower in height while avoiding impact to the vertical clearance necessary for high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes and that provide some decking function of the freeway, be considered. Maximizing the opportunity for the crosswalk and decking can be achieved at a lower elevation while helping mitigate freeway noise. The city-owned Lincoln Center parcel in the T2 District is an ideal place to receive the connection before heading eastward to 116th Avenue. The area below the connection on the Lincoln parcel could be used for a city-owned parking structure that services the Wilburton Center District. As the connection moves eastward of 116th Avenue, the iconic public artery could open onto a grand plaza that intersects with the ERC. Uses surrounding the plaza could include higher-density housing with ground- and second-level supporting retail, restaurants, and civic uses. To the east of the ERC, and also fronting the plaza, could be a magnet school, YMCA, and additional mixed-use buildings. The school site could be located on the School District property that currently houses the bus parking yard. The bus parking could be relocated to another site or combined within a multilevel and multipurpose structure.

The ERC traverses the entire length of the study area with multiple opportunities for trail-oriented development and places to have east–west open-space connections. The panel recommends that connections be made not only at the Grand Connection but also at several locations in SoFo, and several locations within the Health and Wellness and TID Districts. Connections made to the botanical gardens within SoFo are important as a regional destination and only a short bicycle ride from the T2 East Plaza. In general, pedestrians and cyclists should have direct and easy access to move laterally (east and west) within the Wilburton neighborhood. The panel recommends that the ERC should have grade-separated access at NE Fourth and NE Eighth streets, with well-signed and well-lit ways to access the Wilburton LRT station.

Expose the Station Area
The panel is concerned that the proposed station location is placed behind the Whole Foods Market, negatively affecting the station’s visibility, connectivity, and transit-oriented opportunities. Although the panel understands the placement of the station in a central location along the straight right-of-way owned by Sound Transit was a critical decision, efforts will need to be made to enhance this location, given its constraints. Redeveloping land parcels east of the station for multimodal access and higher density is critical. Long-term redevelopment of Lake Bellevue and lands north of the Whole Foods Market is needed to allow greater commercial intensities.
Placemaking Opportunity

Effective placemaking will have a huge impact on Wilburton. As the neighborhood is redeveloped, the design of the neighborhood shapes its new character. Instead of large distances between streets, the city should focus on making smaller blocks to encourage walkability. Instead of a neighborhood that lacks open space and a walkable public realm, the potential to create a connected system will provide amenities to residents and a destination for tourists. Instead of a place with no legibility or cohesion, one with defined edges and districts will reinforce the neighborhood’s identity. Strong leadership and bold, visionary planning are necessary to spur these placemaking initiatives.

Mobility and Connectivity

As the center of an important regional transportation keystone, Wilburton suffers from traffic congestion and other negative transportation externalities. The panel supports the city’s steps toward improving this situation and suggests the following site-specific recommendations.

Existing North–South Road Network

The Wilburton commercial area is bounded by a major north–south corridor, the I-405 freeway, on the west and within the district currently bisected by north–south roads such as major arterials 116th, 120th, and 124th streets. Existing streets within the area are significant arteries carrying relatively high volumes of traffic. Currently, intersections in the study area are operating at level of service B and are projected to reach level of service C in 2021. Each of these corridors presently divides the community rather than unifying it, and many are devoid of significant placemaking or identity characteristics. The panel supports the newer projects proposed by the city, such as the extension of Fourth Street through the district to the east, which will incorporate pedestrian- and multimodal-friendly design features, including comfortable sidewalks, separation from the roadway with landscaped parkways, and bike lanes.

Existing East–West Road Network

East–west major roadways in Bellevue are 12th Street on the north and Eighth, Sixth, Fourth, and Main streets. Presently, access over I-405 can occur at 12th, Tenth, Eighth, Fourth, and Main streets. None of these connections are pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly, especially the Eighth Street connector, which requires navigating over two cloverleaf freeway ramps on a street that carries more than 45,000 vehicles on an average weekday with no signalized pedestrian crossing, as well as King
County Metro’s RapidRide B-Line service with ten-minute headways in the peak hours. A bus stop also is located on Eighth Street immediately east of the future Sound Transit Wilburton station.

The panel recommends replacing the traditional cloverleaf interchange at I-405 and Eighth Street with a single-point urban interchange design. This would reduce the footprint of the interchange and free developable land on both sides of the freeway, as well as improve I-405’s interface with both the downtown and Wilburton communities in Bellevue and the pedestrian experience of Eighth Street.

Sixth Street has been identified for potential extension east from its terminus at the HOV lanes located within the I-405 right-of-way. That project is intended to extend Sixth Street east at least to 116th Street. The panel supports extending Sixth Street to the east farther than 116th to the ERC. This would allow it to serve as a central spine of the core Wilburton commercial area, break down the existing large-block structure of the area, and provide another connection from the ERC former BNSF right-of-way into the Wilburton area. Sixth Street is also proposed in future to carry frequent bus service, which will turn north on 120th to Eighth Street and then head east.

**Sound Transit’s East Link Light Rail**

The proposed Sixth Street extension will be flanked by Sound Transit’s East Link rail alignment running parallel to it from the downtown Bellevue station east on the north edge of Sixth Street. The light-rail alignment turns toward the north east of 116th Street, still in an elevated condition, and proceeds north to the Wilburton station adjacent to the ERC.

The Wilburton station area is in a constrained location, with the high-volume Eighth Street on its south, the east (back) edge of the Whole Foods Market and its parking lot on the west, and the ERC and low-scale disconnected development to its east. The confluence of the ERC, with its future flow of pedestrians and cyclists, directly adjacent to light rail and bounded by a high-volume vehicular roadway, makes the access issues surrounding this station acute. The Overlake Hospital and Group Health facilities are located in the medical district to the west of the station area, and those facilities’ employees and patients are obvious identified users of the light-rail system. At-grade access between the station and the medical facilities is less than desirable. Redevelopment of sites on the east side of 116th Street in the future must facilitate better access for pedestrians to and from the medical facilities.
Pedestrian connectivity through the TID can be facilitated both west to the Wilburton area station and north to the Spring District station, through the Spring District development itself.

**Bicycle Facilities**

Bicycle facilities in the Wilburton commercial area are virtually nonexistent. A small segment of dedicated lanes is provided on the newly constructed Fourth Street between 116th Street and the ERC. However, during the site visit, the narrow width of the bike lanes as well as the high speed of vehicles made the road an unattractive route for bikers.

The 116th Street Streetscape Plan calls for the redesign of 116th from Main Street to Eighth Street into an “urban boulevard that is the gateway to a compact, pedestrian-oriented district,” compared to Mercer Street in the South Lake Union District of Seattle. Redesign of 116th calls for:

- A 13-foot sidewalk on each side of the street;
- An eight-foot parking lane in each direction against the curb protected with bulb-outs at intersections;
- A five-foot bike lane in each direction, with two-foot buffers for each bike lane;
- Two travel lanes in each direction; and
- A 12-foot median/center turning lane.

With this design, the panel recommends switching the location of the buffers from outside the bike lanes to between the bike lanes and the parking, and increasing the width of the bike lanes from two to three feet by reducing the median width to ten feet.

A two-way cycle track has also been considered for 116th Street. Cycle tracks, or protected bike lanes, provide the greatest separation of bicycles from vehicles and therefore increase bicycle rider safety. They have been proven to increase the safety of all street users more than other types of bike facilities. Separated cycle tracks would be an appropriate device to use on the central spine of the Wilburton commercial area, with the new emphasis the panel suggests on multimodal accessibility in this area that is so enticing to employers such as REI and technology innovators, and the millennial generation on the whole. However, the difficulty of turn movements at intersections from within two-way cycle tracks makes those facilities less desirable than one-direction cycle tracks. Assuming the cycle track solution proves feasible and desirable in Wilburton, the panel suggests that single-direction cycle tracks would be preferable and possible, with a narrowing of the proposed median and placement of bike lanes against the curb with parking protected buffers outboard of them.

**Pedestrian Facilities**

Although the city has not adopted a complete streets policy, current street projects do incorporate complete streets principles, as in evidence in the Wilburton study area’s Fourth and 120th Street projects previously referenced. Nonetheless, the city should adopt a complete streets policy to ensure that every street redesign project in Wilburton provides safe access for all road users, whether walking, biking, driving, or taking transit. Furthermore, the high-volume arterials in the district should be augmented where possible by a finer-grained network of local connections within development areas, which will be smaller in scale and more pleasant, lower-stress facilities on which to walk and bike.

The bike lanes in Portland, Oregon, have the ideal buffers and width that Bellevue’s bike infrastructure plans should adopt.
Health and Healthy Corridors
Research by ULI and others increasingly shows that healthy places provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles that rely less on vehicular travel and provide more opportunities for walking and biking. These healthy places also are in greater demand from both today’s aging populations, who may lose their ability or desire to drive, and today’s younger populations, who place less emphasis on personal vehicle ownership. Increased demand for such healthy opportunities has been shown to drive economic values up and to support reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Active Transportation and Real Estate: The Next Frontier
Fifty percent of U.S. residents say that walkability is a top priority or a high priority when considering where to live, according to the Urban Land Institute’s America in 2015 report, and, according to the U.S. Census, bicycling has become the country’s fastest-growing form of transportation for commuters.

Research shows that the built environment (including buildings, streets, and neighborhoods) has a profound impact on health outcomes. An American Journal of Preventative Medicine study found that people who live in neighborhoods with shops and retail establishments within walking distance have a 35 percent lower risk of obesity.

Bicycling can also reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The European Cyclists Federation found that, if levels of cycling in the European Union were equivalent to those found in Denmark, where the average person cycles almost 600 miles (965 km) each year, bicycle use alone would achieve 26 percent of the 2050 greenhouse gas reduction targets set for the transportation sector.

A 2009 nationwide study by CEOs for Cities, a cross-sector organization that develops ideas to make U.S. cities more economically successful, found that “houses located in areas with above-average walkability or bikability are worth up to $34,000 more than similar houses in areas with average walkability levels.”

Today, bike trails, bike lanes, bike-share systems, and other forms of active transportation infrastructure are helping spur a new generation of “trail-oriented development.” This trend reflects the desire of people around the world to live in places where driving an automobile is just one of a number of safe, convenient, and affordable transportation options. The Urban Land Institute’s America in 2015 report found that, in the United States, over half of all people (52 percent) and 63 percent of millennials would like to live in a place where they do not need to use a car very often; half of U.S. residents believe their communities need more bike lanes.

THE PANEL OUTLINES SOME POLICY and planning strategies to achieve the objectives suggested in this report. By implementing a framework as described in the following sections, the city can use a careful balance of regulatory incentive and leadership capacity to drive change in the Wilburton study area.

Organizational Leadership and Development

To advance these goals, the city requires senior-level leadership to set economic strategy, assemble staff supports, negotiate public/private partnerships, hold the authority required to garner stakeholder attention, and be accountable for outcomes. The panel recommends several positions are needed to create more concentrated points of contact for the successful redevelopment of the Wilburton study area.

- Establish the position of assistant city manager for special opportunities. The panel believes that creating a respected high-level position with a familiar title is the best way to gain the traction and accountability necessary to advance this multifaceted and highly complex project, as well as future special projects of high priority to the city leaders. This role should be equal in responsibility to the other existing assistant city manager positions and be directly accountable for the redevelopment of the Wilburton study area. The new assistant city manager for special opportunities will provide leadership to bring external stakeholders together and leverage the contributions of all stakeholders in a way that supports enhanced economic opportunity for Bellevue.

- Establish a chief innovation officer position. The city recognizes that innovation companies are an important and growing part of the Bellevue economy and therefore has doubled-down on the concept of promoting innovation within the study area. The ULI panel supports the creation of an Innovation District close to GIX in the Spring District and the Medical District. These assets will continue to support an already thriving innovation ecosystem for Bellevue, but the panel believes that a truly thriving innovation economy requires a government that is similarly innovative. The panel recommends creating a chief innovation officer position that reports directly to the city manager. The chief innovation officer can be responsible for out-of-the-box thinking that relates to business development in new and inventive ways, driving collaboration among and between government agencies, and identifying technology solutions that enable a more effective and efficient service delivery system.

- Bring Code for America to Bellevue. Code for America is a nonprofit organization that brings technology-savvy volunteer teams to government jurisdictions to work with the local staff to identify technology-based solutions for improved government operations. The intent is to bridge the divide between private sector and public sector technology capabilities that improve operational and service efficiencies, enable data-driven decision making, and open greater opportunities for citizen engagement. The fellowships are traditionally one year in length, and the panel recommends bringing Code for America to support the Wilburton redevelopment strategy.
One popular way to encourage civic engagement is through public art installations. The “Before I Die” public art installation created by artist Candy Chang is a global initiative to create a space where people can reflect and start a dialogue with others on their life aspirations.

- **Develop a public engagement strategy.** Hire a consultant to assist the city in developing a public engagement strategy that places a high priority on engaging diverse cultural and socioeconomic interests. With a rapidly changing demographic profile and a motto of “Bellevue Welcomes the World,” the city should be expected to have a variety of reliable, consistent, and creative mechanisms available to reach and engage diverse interest groups in a way that is effective and measurable and that is well aligned with the city’s goals.

- **Use public benchmarking for planning and infrastructure projects.** A large number of planning processes and strategies are being developed or under consideration within city government, and the panel heard a moderate degree of confidence in government to deliver the goals realized in these plans from residents, local businesses, and stakeholders. This news is very positive; however, the panel interviews revealed that key stakeholders are not always informed about the projects or plans important to them. The panel heard varied and sometimes conflicting ideas about the plans and goals to reconnect NE Sixth Street across I-405 to the study area. Even more of a disconnect existed about the status and schedule of the project. To improve transparency around city-commissioned studies and infrastructure plans and to harness the energy of willing and able external validators and stakeholders throughout the community, the panel recommends that the city create a single, user-friendly webpage that houses status updates on all studies and plans and offers links to more information, including staff contacts, for those who wish to gain more information about a particular planning initiative.

- **Celebrate milestones.** The city should be applauded for recognizing the opportunity to redevelop a 237-acre swath of land and for its forward thinking in undertaking this endeavor to plan for the future of a whole new neighborhood within the subject area. The panel hopes the community will be enthusiastic about the decade-long objectives and opportunities laid out in this report; however, the panel recognizes that residents may experience “planning fatigue” if they are continually asked to participate in the process without seeing any immediate progress. To counter this challenge, the panel recommends working with government, business, and community leaders to celebrate the small milestones achieved throughout the project term. Whether they are land acquisitions completed, ground broken, trail sections completed, businesses opened or expanded, private/public partnerships reached, or other exciting developments along the way, the city needs to keep the community excited about and engaged in the overall redevelopment vision for the area. The panel recommends a comprehensive, long-term communication strategy specific to the study area that can be led by the assistant city manager for special opportunities.

**Planning and Policy**

During stakeholder interviews, the panel heard from a variety of individuals that the policies governing development in Bellevue lacked clarity and were inconsistent in application. In some cases, the panel heard that policies may not even officially exist but are applied anyway. Although the panel believes that these instances may be well intentioned, the practice of implementing policies inconsistently or applying erroneous policies without a formal means of doing so creates opportunities for confusion and possibly even appeals of city decisions. To drive the city’s goal of maximizing sustainability, becoming a more welcoming location for visitors, pedestrians, and cyclists, and fostering a unique redevelopment environment in the study area, local government must establish clear, predictable
policies that will drive desired outcomes and knit together
the fabric of a consistent, cutting-edge sustainable urban
environment.

■ Rezoning: The city has a track record of adopting zoning
districts for areas of the community that require special
guidance on development consistent with adopted
policies and goals for the area. The panel suggests that
the Wilburton study area will require special zoning. This
may take the form of a hybrid form-based code, similar
to those already being used in other parts of Washington
state, which could incorporate graphic orientation and
street frontage type/site configuration provisions from
form-based models with use provisions only for use
specifications that are very important to the commu-
nity, together with development standards (e.g., height
and parking) and design guidelines tied to the specific
districts within Wilburton.

■ Street standards: The panel recommends that the
city develop and adopt a complete streets ordinance.
Although street projects completed today in Bellevue
incorporate some of its elements, complete streets poli-
cies seek to ensure that integrated, connected networks
of streets are created in communities that are safe
and accessible for all people, regardless of age, ability,
income, ethnicity, or chosen mode of travel. Complete
streets policies not only ensure that the design of streets
facilitates travel by all modes, including walking and
biking, but they also require commitment in maintenance
and funding decisions to ensure that complete streets
are built and endure over the long term.

■ Pilot and demonstration projects: The panel encourages
the city to participate in pop-up urbanism initiatives
and projects. Many cities across the country are finding
they no longer need to wait for public realm projects to
be fully budgeted for permanent construction. Jurisdic-
tions are now experimenting with temporary projects
demonstrating possible improvements, bringing people

The 116th Street Streetscape Plan
An example of special zoning can be found in the 116th
Street Streetscape Plan. This plan already contains
some guidance that will be appropriate to build on in an
effort to ensure that development in the Wilburton
study area supports the healthy, innovative, vibrant
lifestyle that Bellevue residents, visitors, and workers
will demand. Direction about reducing the number of
driveway access points, as well as restricting turning
movements off the street into parcels, zero setbacks
for new development, and prohibition of parking lots or
drives between the roadways and the buildings are a few
of the items from the 116th Street plan that would be
worth considering.

Historic Los Angeles Broadway Corridor
In downtown Los Angeles, a streetscape master plan
was developed for a mile-long stretch of the Broadway
corridor within the Historic Broadway Theater District.
The plan called for “road dieting,” or reducing the
roadway width from five lanes to three, and creating
on-street parking and loading, while freeing up space
for pedestrian use and programming of outdoor dining
areas and the like.

Instead of waiting for the project to be constructed
piecemeal as developer projects occurred along the
street or finding tens of millions of dollars for
constructing the whole project at one time, the city
council allocated just under $2 million to remake and
narrow the street using paint, planters, and removable
vertical delineators and adding movable furniture. The
project was completed and opened in just a few months
and has been a huge success.
to new spaces, and testing solutions on the ground with community member input.

- **Housing:** The city—including government leaders and staff, residents, and the business community at large—acknowledges the need for additional workforce housing production to feed the labor demands of the local economy and meet the needs of residents across the full socioeconomic spectrum in Bellevue, yet policy has not kept up with this principle. The city operates a Multifamily Housing Property Tax Exemption program and offers a strategic range of affordable housing incentives in different parts of the city. How effective those policies have been in producing new affordable housing units in Bellevue is unclear, and the panel believes the city requires bold new policies to support unit production of the type and scale required to support sustainable economic growth in the area.

  - **Define workforce housing.** In this context, workforce housing should mean residential units reserved for residents making between 50 percent and 80 percent of Area Median Income.

  - **Establish as-of-right housing production in the Technology Innovation, Health and Wellness, and T2 districts.** “As-of-right” housing refers to developments meeting certain conditions that are not subjected to discretionary review by local decision-making bodies. This should be done in accordance with established FAR limitations and design guidelines.

  - **Require the creation of 10 percent workforce housing units in every multifamily housing project in the study area.** The panel recommends that the payment in lieu of production policy be eliminated for housing projects within the study area in favor of putting new workforce housing units on line to serve the greater economic interests of the community.

  - **Publish an annual update on the number of units under active permit review in the Wilburton study area.** These numbers need to include the number of units permitted but not yet constructed, as well as the number of units constructed. This reporting will give local governmental leaders the ability to monitor the effectiveness of the city’s housing policy to produce near-term results in the study area and to consider adjustments that may be necessary as the real estate market evolves, new infrastructure is constructed, and development patterns change.

- **Planning:** Clear, concise, and predictable planning and permitting requirements are required to achieve the city’s desired outcomes in the subject area. Understanding what is likely to be approved, how much it will cost, and how long it will take to obtain the approval is paramount to attracting investor interest in the study area.

  - **Adopt a mandatory complete streets policy.** All municipal projects as well as private development projects that modify any public way will need to adhere to the policy to ensure a consistent design and track patterns.

  - **Continue to track and publish permitting times associated with each permit category.** As noted in the Development Services Oversight Reports on the city website, this process will not only create transparency and predictability for applicants, but also provides the city with data to inform policy and process changes aimed at improving efficiencies.

  - **Foster the necessary environment to encourage medium-sized and small businesses to locate in existing buildings.** This will require the easing of restrictions on repurposing of existing space for housing, work/live lofts, and other unique housing options that meet the market preferences of millennials and the creative economy and have the potential to offer less expensive real estate options for various users. To achieve this goal, the panel recommends the city work to reduce the average permit times for certain categories within the subject area, including the following:
Addition to Existing Structure for a Medium Commercial Project, which currently takes an average of 348 days or 49.8 weeks to permit; 

Change of Use for a Tenant Improvement, which currently takes an average of 91 days or 13.0 weeks to permit; and 

Design Review or Site Plan Approval, which currently takes an average of 312 days or 44.6 weeks to complete.

- Appoint the assistant city manager for special opportunities or a designee to serve as a permitting ombudsman. A smooth, coordinated review of projects in the Wilburton study area needs to be facilitated. The objective is to remove bureaucratic or regulatory barriers and speed the local review process for projects within the study area, while prioritizing multifamily mixed-income projects that produce workforce housing units and commercial spaces that serve the medical and innovation clusters.

- Explore a pre-permitting model for key parcels within the district. This will help landowners attract tenants or private investment to further the objectives of each unique district of Wilburton. This tool will expand the levers currently available to the city, which is currently limited to development agreements.

- Adopt form-based code. Creating a unique pedestrian-friendly experience for Bellevue will achieve the desired character of each district within the study area. This tool enables the city to drive outcomes such as engaging first-floor areas that look and feel like retail spaces but do not require retail uses in places where the market does not support them. Form-based code is being used elsewhere in the region and could be particularly useful in achieving the goals of the study area.

- Engage in a planning exercise for Lake Bellevue. This study needs to address the current and future land uses around the lake, seeks to improve the environmental integrity of the waterbody and associated streams, and considers public access to this natural amenity.

Strengthen the Workforce

A consistent theme heard repeatedly by the ULI panel is that a talented and educated workforce is Bellevue’s most treasured asset, but the ULI panel also heard that although access to information technology talent is strong, other sectors such as medical, retail, and tourism do not have the same access to talent required of their business. In the city’s business survey 41 percent of businesses state they have had difficulty retaining or finding talent, and half of all retail businesses and 61 percent of tourist-related businesses have difficulty retaining or finding talent. The medical sector was not specifically identified in the business survey, but ULI heard anecdotally from the industry that workforce attraction and retention is an ongoing concern.

- Establish an academia-industry-government consortium. The innovation economy thrives on connections between government, academia, and industry. If one leg of the three-legged-stool model is broken, the free flow of innovation is tempered. The first objective of the consortium, led by the assistant city manager for special opportunities, is to address the current and long-term workforce needs of local employers by using the consortium to support enhanced collaboration between academia, employers, and the city. The agenda of the consortium is expected to grow over time to encompass the full range of needs of a local and regional innovation economy.

- Support the creation of a Bellevue College School of Nursing in the Health and Wellness District. As our population ages and life expectancy grows, the demand for well-trained nurses and medical support staff increases nationwide. This reality presents an opportunity for Bellevue College to serve an active role in feeding the growing medical needs of the community by locating close to the medical district and enabling opportunities for market-driven educational programming and hands-on
learning for area students. Bellevue College already offers a multitude of health-related training and degrees and leveraging that higher-education capacity and intellectual capital to support the growth and development of the medical cluster in the Health and Wellness District makes good sense.

- **Pay attention to talent retention.** The city of Bellevue operates a high-performing public school system that churns out talented and well-prepared young people every year. Coupled with the emergence of GIX and the availability of current and future specialized training programs in the area, the city should focus on student retention as a mechanism to feed future workforce demands. A well-established means of doing so is to support local internship programs. The panel recommends the city partner with the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce to establish internship placement goals of 250 high school and college students per year to be placed in internship programs in local companies and city government. The Chamber of Commerce can establish a web portal that markets the program, solicits resumes of prospective student participants, and promotes participating businesses. The city can also recognize participating businesses in an annual public event at Downtown Park. Bellevue and the chamber can look to some good examples in other parts of the country such as the Greater Boston Chamber’s Intern Hub (https://internhub.internships.com/join).

**Land Assembly and Phasing**

The panel recognizes that the Wilburton study area, despite including many larger parcels, currently offers fractured parcel ownership with disparate interests in redevelopment. Whereas some landowners wish to redevelop their parcels in the near term, others are prepared to sell under the right circumstances or see no incentive for change. The challenge of finding ways to conduct land assembly requires creativity. The panel recommends that the city use all available levers to create transformational redevelopment opportunity in the subject area, including getting started on the public projects to generate energy for the private market to understand.

- **Phase the Grand Connection.** A key element of the city’s Grand Connection vision is to construct a pedestrian overpass spanning I-405 into downtown. The panel supports that vision and encourages the city to continue working toward that end; however, the regulatory and cost burdens associated with the freeway overpass are significant. The panel believes the city can benefit from a phased infrastructure development approach that enables near-term construction of the Grand Connection on the easterly side of I-405 in the study area to unlock redevelopment of the T2 District immediately, while pursuing design, permitting, and financing of the proposed I-405 pedestrian deck on a parallel but separate track. The panel recommends the city begin to acquire the necessary land and funding required to begin the Grand Connection construction immediately and to create a phasing plan that enables incremental activation. To do so, the panel recommends the city explore every financing method available for land acquisition and construction of not only the Grand Connection but also other related public uses, including a public park, school, and YMCA facility. The financing methods may include bonds and traditional capital investments by the city,
establishing a municipal services district and creating a tax levy to support the construction of public resources, local and regional foundation support, and public/private partnerships. The panel notes that it is important that the city keep confidential the specific parcels it is looking to acquire to avoid artificially inflating the real estate value of those parcels.

- **Begin construction of the Eastside Rail Corridor.** Similar to the Grand Connection, the panel believes a benefit exists in commencing with near-term construction of the ERC in sections as funding is made available. The goal is to make the full 46-mile connection at the conclusion of the project, but the panel strongly recommends that the city, through the assistant city manager for special opportunities, seek the formation of a public/private partnership to financially support this endeavor, beginning with REI, whose corporate interests are uniquely aligned with the city’s goals and objectives of the trail and the Health and Wellness District.

- **Relocate or repurpose the school bus parking lot.** The school district bus parking and maintenance facility is located on a key parcel in the T2 District. The panel recommends the city work with the school district to explore opportunities to relocate that facility and share space with the existing metro parking and maintenance facility to the north of the study area or the planned Sound Transit maintenance facility in the Spring District.

- **Explore partnerships.** The panel recommends the city explore partnerships with organizations such as Forterra for assistance assembling land for public purposes and driving land costs down to make affordable housing construction feasible and attractive in a way that encourages private investment.

- **String together the open-space system.** Create public access links between existing and planned public open spaces from the Botanical Garden to Lake Bellevue and beyond, including links to the Grand Connection and the ERC to create a wonderful environmental and recreational experience for residents and tourists alike. The city can further enhance this experience by integrating locally sourced technology applications such as virtual reality solutions to the public spaces, thus creating a unique user experience that can be found only here in Bellevue.

### Ease of Doing Business and Supporting Entrepreneurship

Creating an attractive business climate requires a careful balance of predictability and flexibility that many governments struggle to achieve. The most productive and innovative cities set rules that are generally applicable and protect the common good but are not so rigid in their application that they seem unreasonable and turn business opportunities away.

- **Simplify use codes for business operation.** The panel heard anecdotally that business have actually been turned away because they do not fit squarely into one of the city’s use boxes. In a place that prioritizes innovation, for the city to recognize the impossibility of defining every potential use that currently exists and is yet to come is important. The panel recommends the city simplify its use codes and create flexibility around their application.

- **Enable pop-up business program.** The panel recommends the city create a program that offers temporary permits for pop-up businesses to use empty storefronts or vacant lots. Innovative programs such as these enable landlords to secure rents on a short-term basis and invite the creative class and innovation companies to test ideas in retail format before investing in a longer-term space commitment. These entities bring a spirit of fun and whimsy to city centers that can help define the character that is expected to come to the Wilburton study area. A variety of pop-up programs throughout the country can serve as examples for the city, such as the OPEN Program in San Antonio, Texas, which offered a holiday-themed focus; a newer program in Akron, Ohio, that offers tenants longer-term rentals up to six months; or Pop Up! Downtown KCK in Kansas City, Kansas.
■ **Enable street-based businesses.** Conduct a comprehensive review of the city’s regulations, bylaws, and ordinances to enable food trucks, street vendors, sidewalk dining, and other mobile, street-based performance, entertainment, and retail to enliven the streets of the study area and create a destination for residents throughout Bellevue and the region.

■ **Develop entrepreneurship.** Working through the previously referenced academia-industry-government consortium, establish programs and supports specifically intended to promote entrepreneurship opportunities, with particular emphasis in supporting the immigrant, minority, women, and low-income communities. These segments of the population are the least likely to know how to navigate a preexisting governmental and market structure to seek financing, government approvals, and even available real estate, yet these populations have a significant degree of value to add to building a unique and diverse cultural character and experience within the study area.

■ **Drive startups and incubators.** Bellevue already offers opportunities for startups and innovators to convene, share ideas, and put business plans into action. The panel strongly encourages the city to continue to promote incubators, coworking spaces, and informal meet-ups, and tie those assets together in a way that makes them easily navigable for new innovators to find. The New York City Economic Development Corporation maps existing incubators and coworking spaces, as well as available commercial spaces for would-be and growing entrepreneurs. The panel encourages the city to undertake a similar effort that applies specifically to the study area plus the Spring District, to foster a climate of innovation in the places where land uses are expected to follow. This would fall under the purview of the chief innovation officer.

■ **Establish a digital gaming institute.** Working with local, state, and regional legislators, area colleges, gaming companies, GIX, startups, and other interested stakeholders, the city should seek to establish a statewide or regionally significant digital gaming institute in the study area. The goal of the institute is to drive collaboration and foster growth of the city’s existing gaming sector. An example of this concept is MassDIGI, a digital gaming institute in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
THE PANEL HAS LEARNED from the community and market data that the Wilburton study area will not and should not be a second downtown Bellevue but its own unique district of the city. With medical centers and an incoming global educational institute, many old and new anchors will help push this area toward new economic growth. The following are the overall recommendations for the study area:

- **Build off existing strength.** Emphasis on the area’s strengths, building strong foundations, and investing in new transportation options are key to creating a strong economic engine in Wilburton.

- **Develop Wilburton study area as a complete center that can serve the existing catalytic drivers in the area.** The city needs to capitalize on these different industries—medical, tech innovation, downtown commercial—for this diverse economy to prosper.

- **Support the city as entrepreneur.** Business opportunities in Bellevue and the Wilburton study area need to have clear leadership, collaboration, transparency, and accountability to foster entrepreneurial spirit.

- **Manage the area through the establishment of a four-district framework with supporting operating structure and guidelines.** Each district—TID, T2, Health and Wellness, and SoFo—emphasizes the unique characteristics of the area that will drive future growth.

The panel looks forward to seeing the city of Bellevue work with the Wilburton anchor institutions, businesses, and stakeholders to begin the city’s next chapter.
About the Panel

Andrew Irvine
Panel Chair
Denver, Colorado

Irvine is a principal and director of urban design and landscape architecture at RNL. He is an energetic, creative, and hands-on professional with a passion for design, strong communication skills, and a proven track record in building, motivating, and managing interdisciplinary teams. His proven ability in delivering high-quality projects and in achieving a high level of client satisfaction is key to his senior leadership role in the firm and on large projects.

Before his current position, Irvine was a senior landscape architect at EDAW Inc. with a broad range of project experience throughout the United States and Australia. He has specialized skills in site planning, master planning, and urban design guidelines. His range of projects includes major infrastructure, urban renewal, public domain, and traditional park design. He has worked on a numerous planning projects that include significant experience with transportation and waterfront development. Irvine also has completed projects that have incorporated comprehensive open space networks and ecological restoration areas into planned communities.

He has served on seven of the Urban Land Institute’s national Advisory Service panels and on one international panel. He has degrees in landscape architecture and environmental design.

Dan Conway
Denver, Colorado

Conway is a real estate marketing and research authority specializing in residential, commercial/industrial, and golf course developments. He has had over 40 years of experience as an urban land economist. Conway is a frequent guest speaker for economic associations and trade organizations and is a member and frequent speaker to the Urban Land Institute. He has been a real estate and urban land economic honorarium instructor at the University of Colorado and at the University of Denver. He has published many articles including the CCIM Magazine piece “Market Analysis, the Road to Profit, Prosperity and Peace of Mind.” Conway’s other professional and community activities have included membership on the board of directors of a federally chartered national bank and as a member of the Mile High Transplant Bank. He also participated on the Archbishop’s Inner City Sun School Committee to assess the future needs of elementary education in the inner city of Denver.

For the last 25 years as president and director of economics and market research for THK Associates, Conway has conducted numerous residential, commercial, industrial, and golf course economic feasibility and market studies, socioeconomic impact assessments, and financial planning studies in all 50 of the United States, as well as a number of foreign countries. Projects of particular interest include an international market center and industrial market analysis for the Dove Valley Business Air Park in Arapahoe County, a residential and related uses market analysis for the Parker City site, and numerous golf course feasibility studies throughout the country. Specific communities where Conway has completed a wide range of research and analysis include Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada; Oxnard, Palm Springs, and Carmel, California; Kansas City, Missouri; Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma; Austin, Texas; Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico; Seattle, Washington; and Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona.
Most recently, Conway has gained recognition as a sought-after speaker on the golf course development circuit. His numerous presentations at the Crittenden Golf Development Expos have been widely attended and universally applauded. His book *The Cost and Revenues of a Unique Golf Club* has furthered his reputation as one of the industry’s leading authorities. Under Conway’s guidance, THK Associates completes over 75 golf course feasibility studies and golf driving range market studies and appraisals each year.

**Allen Folks**

*Sacramento, California*

Folks is a registered landscape architect and urban designer with experience in urban revitalization and community planning assignments. In 32 years of practice, he has been responsible for a variety of assignments, including the preparation of plans for new towns and existing communities, transit-oriented development areas, reuse of military bases, design of corporate and civic campuses, and public open-space planning. He usually directs teams of engineers, environmental scientists, and economists to solve urban problems that have a creative vision and are economically feasible. Before joining Ascent, a multidisciplinary practice headquartered in Sacramento, California, in 2016, Folks spent over 28 years working at EDAW and AECOM in the San Francisco, Sacramento, and Singapore offices. During the period 2012 to 2015, he led the AECOM Southeast Asia Business Line for Buildings and Places with management responsibility for over 110 staff in Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Manila.

Folks has been involved with the revitalization of urban environments in many cities in the western United States and within Southeast Asia. He has prepared urban design plans for specific areas or neighborhoods within Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City, as well as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, and Manila. In many of those assignments, the focus was on developing a meaningful public realm as the organizing armature for private sector investment. Folks has led community visioning exercises for public sector agencies and developer-led consortiums.

Folks is a member of the American Planning Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the Urban Land Institute. He has served as the District Council Chair for Sacramento and has been a member on several national product councils, including most recently the Transit-Oriented Development Council. He has lectured in the United States and Asia on the benefits of transit-oriented development and livable cities. Folks is a guest lecturer at the University of California at Davis. He has participated in 12 ULI Advisory Services panels to assist in solving downtown and neighborhood redevelopment issues. He is a graduate of Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania.

**April Anderson Lamoureux**

*Boston, Massachusetts*

Lamoureux is president of Anderson Strategic Advisors LLC, a consulting firm that specializes in land use and development, government incentives, and building productive public/private partnerships that grow economies. Since starting her firm in 2013, she has helped her private sector clients secure more than $25 million in grants and incentives, and she has helped her municipal clients identify and implement key economic development strategies and local government reforms to support economic growth. Lamoureux has spent her career working to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of government and to assist businesses to successfully manage their interactions with government at all levels. She has held executive management roles within the administrations of Massachusetts governors Deval Patrick and Mitt Romney, served as the Pioneer Institute’s director of public affairs and director of the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship, and served in senior staff roles within the Massachusetts state legislature.

Lamoureux has extensive experience navigating federal, state, and local government regulations, with particular
expertise in land use and development, and she specializes in economic development strategy and incentives, infrastructure financing tools, public/private partnerships, and government relations. During her tenure in the public sector, she served as the state’s permitting ombudsman where she was responsible for breaking down silos within government and enhancing interagency collaboration to support economic growth and improved government efficiency. She served as Massachusetts’s first state regulatory ombudsman, where she implemented a comprehensive regulatory reform agenda that eliminated or streamlined hundreds of state regulations across all secretariats of the state government. She created and implemented the Chapter 43D Expedited Local Permitting Program enabling six-month local permitting in more than 80 cities and towns, and she created and implemented the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, a $350 million infrastructure grant program to support housing and economic development projects.

She was a 2013 judge for the nationally recognized Pioneer Institute Better Government Competition, and she sits on the Milton Hospital Board of Overseers. She is active in her local government, serving as an elected member of the Planning Board and Town Meeting in her hometown of Milton, Massachusetts.

Zane Segal
Houston, Texas

Segal is a developer, landowner, marketing consultant, and licensed real estate broker. He is knowledgeable about commercial, residential, hospitality, transit-oriented, and mixed-use properties in historic, urban, suburban, and resort areas. He has 38 years of experience in venture management, construction, project development, and brokerage on a range of property types, including investment land, development sites, custom homes, townhouses, condominiums, apartments, hotels, retail centers, office buildings, subdivisions, and sports facilities, as well as master-planned projects incorporating several uses. He received a BS in humanities with a minor in visual design from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MFA in cinema from the University of Southern California. Segal has studied graduate-level architecture and planning at the University of Houston and was initially licensed in Texas as a real estate agent in 1982 and as a broker in 1998. For his own account, Segal is currently developing two single-family subdivisions with 250 lots and a Sun Club & Resort and is joint venturing a mixed-use, urban-density, suburban project with 350 loft units above 14,700 square feet of retail and restaurants. He has been a principal/managing venturer for significant properties in Houston’s center city and in suburban areas to the west, northeast, and southeast of the city core. He has brokered many multifamily, single-family, investment, and commercial sites and arranged financing for a major resort.

At its 2008 Fall Meeting, ULI conferred upon Segal the Robert M. O’Donnell Award for outstanding contributions to the success of its Advisory Services program. He has chaired five and served on 11 additional national ULI Advisory Services panels, as well as chairing ULI Houston’s first two Technical Assistance Program panels and participating on others. Segal served on the ULI Houston board for eight years, as vice chairman of membership and of advisory services. Having participated on the committees of the first three ULI Houston Urban Marketplaces, he also instigated and led its initial Suburban Marketplace, the first such conference held by any ULI district council. He served on the Houston Planning Commission’s Mixed-Use/TOD Committee, chaired its task force on urbanizing the suburbs, and engaged in numerous other community visioning and planning efforts. Segal has often spoken, written for publication, and been quoted by the media on real estate, development, urbanity, and the arts.

Jamie Simchik
Boston, Massachusetts

Simchik is a principal planner with Fort Hill Places in Boston. Fort Hill Places is a division of the Fort Hill Com-
panies, a full-service architectural, engineering, and urban planning firm with offices in Massachusetts and Florida. Fort Hill Companies strives to identify key opportunities to improve architecture, infrastructure, and the urban form to promote livable, vibrant communities. Before this current role, Simchik was the founding principal of Simchik Planning & Development, an urban/transportation planning and real estate development consulting firm. He was also a public engagement assistant with Regina Villa Associates undertaking public outreach for transportation and infrastructure capital improvement projects in Massachusetts. In addition, Simchik was a research planner with Connor Holmes, an urban planning consulting firm in South Australia, collaborating on a variety of projects for government and private clients.

Simchik is a member of the ULI Boston Infrastructure Council and the ULI Urban Development/Mixed-Use Product Council (Purple Flight) as well as an active ULI Boston UrbanPlan volunteer. He is a ULI Michigan Larson Center for Leadership Class of 2015 alumnus and has participated in two ULI Technical Assistance Panels (West Dearborn, Michigan, and Westfield, Massachusetts). He has a master of urban planning, master of business administration, and graduate certificate in real estate development from the University of Michigan.

Melani Smith

Los Angeles, California

Smith has built and led vision-driven urban design and planning practices in southern California, most recently in her over 11 years as principal, president/CEO of Melendez in downtown Los Angeles. She has successfully led teams of designers delivering cutting-edge, accessible, and engaging urban open-space projects, including infill open space, a freeway cap park, and the first freeway closure/open-space conversion feasibility study in southern California. She has also led many multimodal complete streets, transit facilities, transit-oriented development, and station area visions, first-mile/last-mile access, and pop-up urbanism projects.

Smith also engages in numerous civic and professional activities and has spoken at a wide range of professional conferences locally and nationally. She is an invited member of Mayor Garcetti’s Great Streets Technical Advisory Committee and the Mayor’s Design Advisory Panel. She was a planning commissioner in the city of Long Beach from 2007 to 2014. She has cochaired the Central City Association’s Downtown 2030 Committee in Los Angeles for the past three years. She is cochairing the California State American Planning Association conference in Pasadena, California, in 2016. Finally, she is an active ULI member, currently serving as the chair of the Local Leadership group for the Van Nuys Boulevard Healthy Corridor project, cochairing the District Council’s Land Use Leadership Committee, serving on the program Committee for the Transit-Oriented Los Angeles conference for the past several years, and serving on multiple local technical assistance panels. She has a BA in history from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a master’s in urban and regional planning from the University of California, Irvine.