

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

Date: February 19, 2025

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Zachariah Collom – Capital Projects Coordinator
Pam Fehrman, Planning & Development Manager
Parks & Community Services

Subject: Ashwood Park Master Plan Update
Board action requested

Proposed Motion: The Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board recommends to the City Council Alternatives <<F or G, as presented> or <F or G, with modifications>> as the preferred update to the 1990 Ashwood Park Master Plan and that City Council adopts the name Ashwood Park for the name of the park.

At your February meeting, staff will provide the Parks & Community Services Board a status of work on the Ashwood Park Master Plan Update. We will share alternative master plans and community feedback that have evolved and the next steps. We are requesting the Board's preferred Master plan recommendation to Council.

Background

Ashwood Park is in north Downtown Bellevue in the Ashwood neighborhood, with the King County Regional Library to the east, dense urban housing to the west and south and McCormick Park and single-family housing to the north, (Attachment A). Ashwood Park is located on a portion of the former Ashwood Elementary School site that the City of Bellevue and the King County Library District jointly acquired from the Bellevue School District in 1986. The purpose of the acquisition was to provide a library and public park. As part of the acquisition agreement, a joint

planning effort was conducted to establish a plan to integrate a library, park, plaza, community center, parking, and green space.

In December 1990, Council adopted the current Ashwood Park Master Plan (Attachment B). A two-year public outreach process involving boards, commissions, and public input informed the master plan that reflected deliberate thought about how Bellevue and the Downtown neighborhood was likely to evolve and how to best address parks and community service needs into the future.

The adopted 1990 master plan includes a passive open green space on the north half of the site. The south half of the site includes a five-story building with a 35,000 square-foot community center on the first two floors and 58 units of affordable housing on the top three floors, all supported by underground parking.

By June 1996, the Library was constructed, the City had completed construction of the library plaza and interim development of Ashwood Park (the park property was leveled and seeded) had occurred. Today the park remains in largely the same undeveloped condition as in 1996 – an open lawn area with parking and benches.

Given community requests for development, the undeveloped state of Ashwood Park, and the significant urban growth that Downtown Bellevue has experienced over the last 30 years, the City Council directed a master plan update of Ashwood Park.

Community Engagement

In March 2024 staff kicked off the Ashwood Park Master Plan update with the community at the Parks & Community Services Board. Planning with the community has been extensive with staff working to:

- Provide a range of opportunities for the community to be included and informed of the process and feedback.
- Generate broad-reaching, cross-cultural, and multi-generational public input; and
- Keep the public and the Parks & Community Services Board informed.

A project web site was established to provide project process, status, survey and feedback information. The project website subscribers have since grown to 957

followers. To help bring attention to the Ashwood Park Master Plan update process, pop-up meetings were held at the Bellevue Library, and articles have appeared in *It's Your City*, and *Neighborhood News*. Postings have occurred multiple times in Facebook and X. Additionally, we have had the opportunity to share project updates with the Bellevue Downtown Association on two occasions. Three community planning meetings, one in April, September and the latest in December have been held. Prior to each community meeting we mailed 6,500 invitations, emailed our web-site subscribers, posted flyers in local business and residential buildings, and posted signage in the park.

Community Feedback

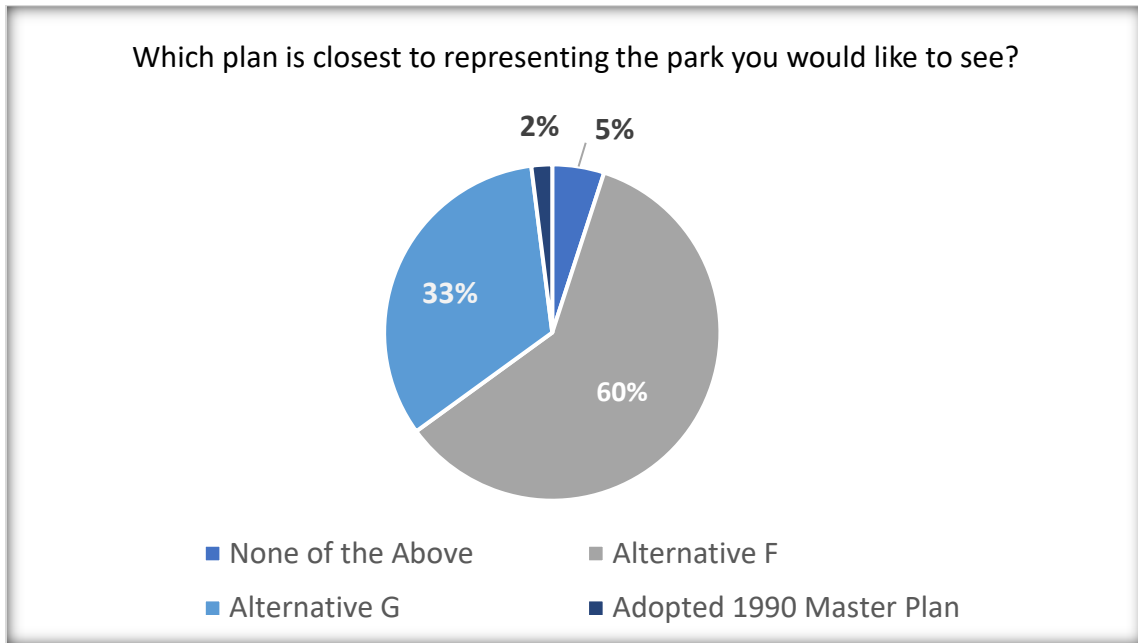
Our community and Park & Community Service Board meetings have been held in-person and on-line. We have shared the Ashwood Park acquisition and master plan history, Bellevue downtown demographics, park planning project timeline, park imagery, alternative design options and community feedback. Participants had opportunities to ask questions and share their thoughts that have been incorporated into the design of the park. Meeting participation ranged from 50 to 86 while preference survey responses were well over 200.

After the first meeting, and consistently shared throughout the planning process was the preference for an open green park with no building. Most desired park elements included landscaping, walking paths, picnic/shade shelters and a public restroom. 69% of survey respondents indicated that they would prefer no building to be included in the master plan update, 13% supported a smaller community building, 9% supported the 1990 MP building and 9% preferred not to answer.

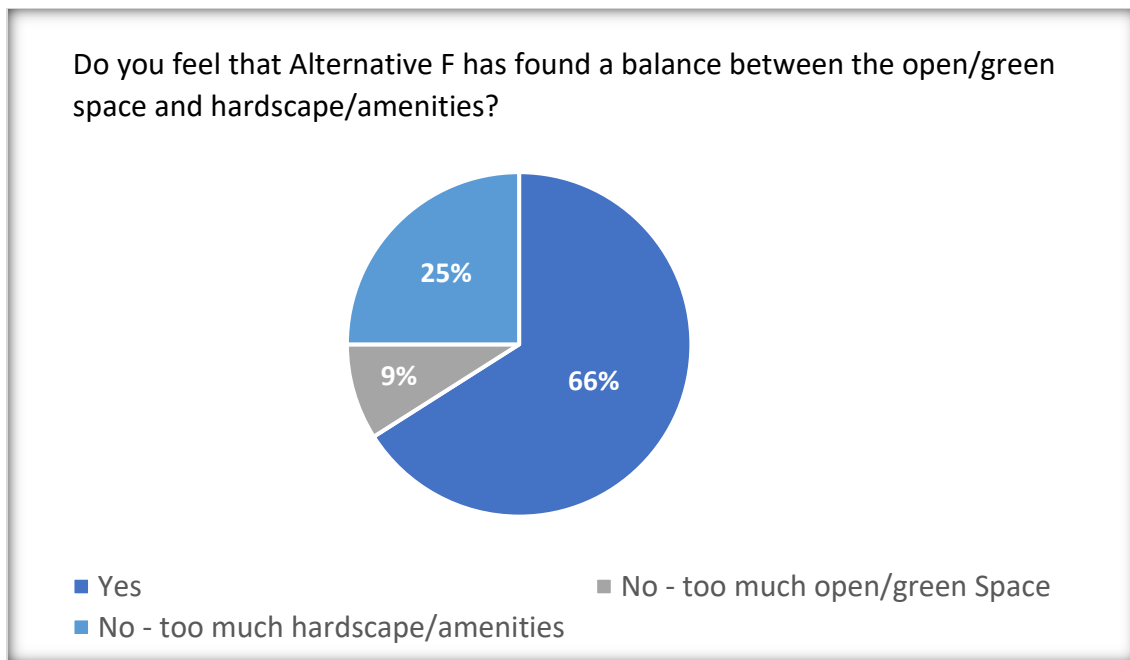
At our final community meeting in December, we shared two alternative plans Alternatives F and G as well as the adopted 1990 Ashwood Park Master Plan. The two Alternative plans were developed with information compiled throughout the year long planning process based on community preferences and Parks & Community Services Board feedback.

In our final survey we received 171 community responses to preference inquiries about the 1990 Ashwood Park Master Plan and the two master plan alternatives F and G. When asked, 60% of participants preferred Alternative F, 33% Alternative G,

2% the 1990 Master Plan and 5% indicated, they did not like any of the park designs.

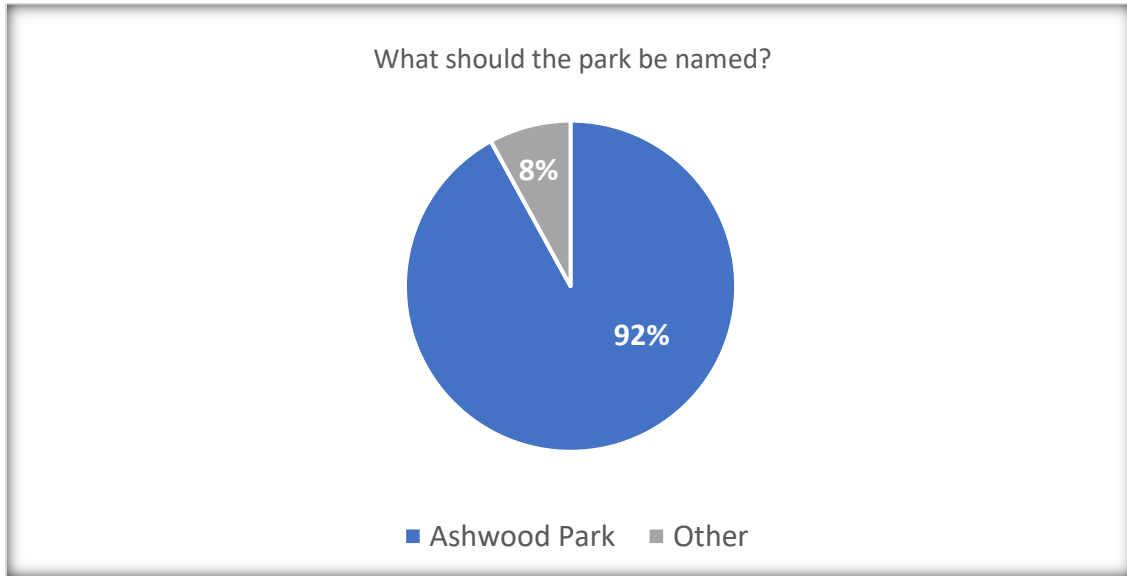


The majority of community members (66%) also indicated that the master plan Alternative F had found a good balance between open/green space and hardscape/amenities.



Park Name

Surveys also asked for park naming ideas and name preferences. The community overwhelmingly favored Ashwood Park at 92% support. Other suggested names included Library Park and Inclusion Matters Park with no or little support.



Next Steps

After receiving the Board's preferred Master Plan and name recommendations, staff will share the Master Plan Update with City Council for review and direction to proceed with the environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The City Council will be asked to adopt a preferred Master Plan and name for the park after completion of SEPA, estimated first quarter of 2026.

Attachments

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Ashwood Park Master Plan 1990
- C. Plan Alternative F
- D. Plan Alternative G