

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Resolution adopting the updated Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan.

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Parks & Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As initiated by Council in October 2021, a planning process to update the 2012 adopted Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan has been conducted and the required environmental review has been completed.

ACTION

At this stage, the Council can adopt the preferred Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan update based on multiple years of community engagement, the recommendation of the Parks & Community Services Board, expressed Council preference and environmental review.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Resolution No. 10414

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

At its April 3, 2023 meeting, the City Council reviewed community outreach feedback and the resulting community-supported and Parks & Community Services Board recommend Bellevue Airfield Master Plan update. Council identified a preferred design and directed staff to proceed with environmental review on that preferred master plan design. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review has now been completed and Council is asked to consider adoption of the updated Master Plan.

Background

In 2002, the City acquired an assemblage of three properties totaling 27.5 acres now known as Bellevue Airfield Park (BAP). The City recognized that the BAP site likely represented the last opportunity to acquire a large, undeveloped, relatively flat parcel of property in Bellevue. The Council's stated intent for the acquisition was to develop an active recreation-focused community park.

The Council adopted the current Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan in 2012, following an extensive community outreach process. At the time, most participants advocated for: 1) an off-leash dog facility; 2) a little league field complex; 3) a regional aquatic facility; or 4) a passive-use meadow.

That master plan provides: two lighted, synthetic-turf sports fields, wooded picnic areas, trail connections, playgrounds, restrooms, parking, an expansion of the off-leash dog area at nearby Robinswood Park from 1.75 to 5.75 acres, and preserved woodland buffers between the park and nearby residences. Without an update, this Master Plan would remain the plan to be implemented.

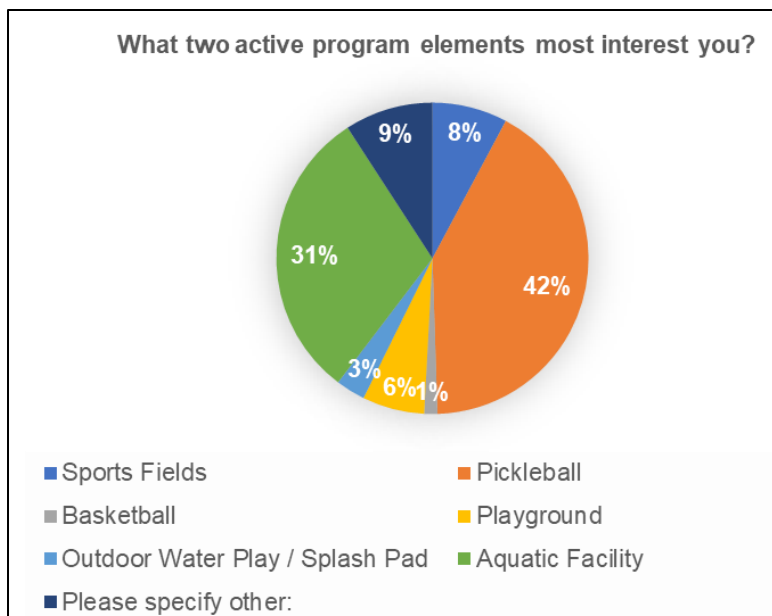
2022-2023 Master Plan Update

On October 18, 2021, the City Council directed Parks staff to update the 2012 Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan to understand current community preferences and study impacts of locating a new aquatic center on site. A goal of this work was to conclude a series of three progressive aquatic center feasibility studies that the Council had previously directed in 2009, 2017 and 2020. The Bellevue Airfield Park site is the only undeveloped, City-owned site large enough to accommodate the Council recommended aquatic facility concept (10-11 acres).

The existing and only public aquatic center, the Bellevue Aquatic Center, is reaching the end of its useful life. Built in 1970, it has served Bellevue's residents over the last 54 years, from an approximate population of 61,000 to over 155,000 residents today. Bellevue Aquatic Center's age, capacity, and inability to provide a full range of aquatic programming make it inadequate to meet the current and future demand for swimming facilities in Bellevue. Additional elements favoring an aquatic facility at the BAP site are 1) easy access off I-90, 2) existing shared parking agreements with owners of the surrounding office park, and 3) a site of sufficient size to allow for park and aquatic facility complementary uses.

Community outreach for this Master Plan update began at the June 2022 Parks & Community Services Board meeting, followed by a site walk with interested neighbors. Community-wide workshops were held virtually in July and in-person in September of 2022 and January 2023. The Board further studied the issue during two additional public meetings on October 11, 2022, and on February 14, 2023. The Council considered the community outreach, feedback, design considerations and the Parks & Community Services Board recommendations on December 5, 2022 and April 3, 2023.

The feedback obtained from community outreach events, correspondence, survey responses, the Parks & Community Services Board and City Council public meetings has been extensive. The community workshops were well attended, with over 170 attendees at the final community meeting, including neighbors and advocates for pickleball and aquatics facilities. Community feedback remained consistent throughout the public engagement process. Final survey responses from meeting and online survey participants asked what two active program elements most interested them, support for pickleball courts (42%), followed by support for an aquatic facility (31%) were favored as illustrated in the following graph.

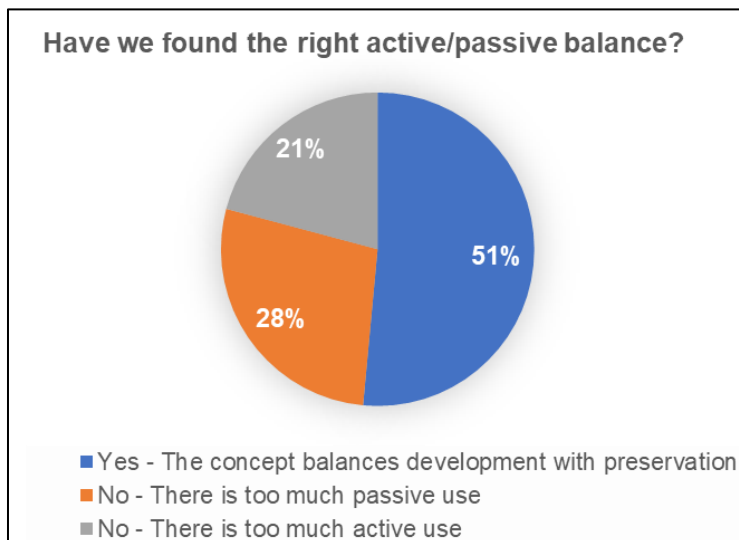


When meeting participants were asked what two passive program elements most interested them, preferences for Trails (40%), Natural areas (28%) and Picnic Shelters (20%) were most supported.

Objections to park development and requests to not develop certain portions or the entire park were received as well. Specifically, the City received petitions advocating no development on the 10-acre northwest forested parcel and the landfill area meadow, citing:

- Loss of tree canopy, habitat, open space
- Concerns of increased nefarious activities,
- Concerns regarding disturbing the landfill material, and
- Traffic impacting neighbors.

When the community was asked if the preferred Master Plan concept found the right balance of active and passive use, responses indicated the desired level of active use was balanced as shown on the following graph.



On February 14, 2023, the Parks & Community Services Board reviewed parks and open space needs, the Master Plan update process and community feedback. After thorough deliberation, the Board unanimously recommended the City Council adopt an updated Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan (Attachment A) that provides:

- Accessible picnic facilities, including shelters and parking, in the wooded northwest area of the site;
- Improved trail connections;
- An aquatic facility in the southwest part of the open meadow/former landfill area;
- Eight pickleball courts with the potential of providing cover;
- Restrooms, children’s playgrounds/splash pad, multiuse flex field, a picnic shelters, and basketball court that could be full-size
- A terraced lawn on the sloped area south of the stormwater ponds; and.
- Parking to support park activities.

At the April 3, 2023, Council meeting, the City Council concurred with the Parks & Community Service Board and directed the recommended Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan to continue through environmental review prior to adoption.

The SEPA environmental review process offered additional opportunities for community engagement and comment throughout the year long process. On August 1, 2024, the Environmental Coordinator of the City determined that the master plan, as conditioned, does not have a probable significant adverse impact upon the environment. This decision was made after the Environmental Coordinator reviewed and assessed a variety of environmental conditions, such as air quality, water quality, and soil contamination etc. The determination found that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required but includes a condition that any landfill-related development be reviewed and informed by Washington State's Department of Ecology per the Model Toxics Control Act.

Next Steps

SEPA environmental review is now complete for the Master Plan. Staff is seeking Council approval of a resolution that adopts the Parks & Community Services Board recommended and Council preferred updated Master Plan.

While observing the SEPA appeal period following Council action to adopt the Master Plan, staff will initiate procurement steps for park design and engineering work to support the permitting and construction of a first phase of Bellevue Airfield Park development. This first phase will allow the city to advance commitments of both the 2008 and 2022 Parks levies.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Comprehensive Plan

- CF-2 Plan for the long-term renewal or replacement of aging capital facilities as needed to maintain target service levels.
- PA-1 Establish a coordinated and connected system of open space and greenways throughout the City that provide multiple benefits including preserving natural systems, protecting wildlife habitat and corridors, and providing land for recreation.
- PA-16 Designate active and passive recreation uses and cultural use of parkland through the master plan approval process.

2022 Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan

Park Facility Objective 10: Phased development of Bellevue Airfield Park

Active Recreation Facility Objective 16: Add new aquatic facility.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. Initial phased elements of park design, permitting and construction are funded by the 2008 and 2022 Parks Levies.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Resolution adopting the updated Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan.
2. Do not adopt and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Preferred Bellevue Airfield Master Plan
 - B. Vicinity Map
 - C. CIP Project Description (P-AD-83)
- Proposed Resolution No. 10414

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Bellevue Airfield Park Non-Project SEPA Review Determination