

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

September 9, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian¹ and Councilmembers Bhargava², Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis and Sumadiwirya

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. Ms. Robinson said individuals are not allowed to disrupt the meeting, which includes talking out of turn or without permission, interrupting or making sounds while someone else is talking, or approaching Councilmembers or City employees who are staffing the meeting. If a person disrupts the meeting, Mayor Robinson will give a warning, end the person's remaining comment time, or ask the person to leave the meeting room for the rest of the meeting. She asked everyone to be civil and polite to each other and to express their opinions without being insulting or demeaning.

Mayor Robinson noted that Deputy Mayor Malakoutian was participating remotely and Councilmember Bhargava would be arriving shortly.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers except Councilmember Bhargava were present. Councilmember Sumadiwirya led the flag salute.

(a) Eastside Welcoming Week Proclamation

Councilmember Lee read the proclamation declaring September 12-21, 2025, as Eastside Welcoming Week in Bellevue. He invited the public to engage in opportunities to learn, connect across differences and to take joint action to achieve a welcoming, equitable and inclusive community.

¹ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian participated remotely.

² Councilmember Bhargava arrived at approximately 6:07 p.m.

Samuel Rodriguez, Founder and CEO of Bizdiversity, LLC, thanked the Council for the proclamation. He said his organization works to collaborate, educate and to promote diversity and inclusivity. He encouraged everyone to celebrate our differences.

(b) Hunger Action and Awareness Month Proclamation

Councilmember Bhargava read the proclamation recognizing September 2025 as Hunger Action and Awareness Month in Bellevue and urged everyone to take action against hunger in our community through donations (food or money), volunteering or advocacy.

Philip Peters, Executive Director, Renewal Food Bank, thanked Mayor Robinson, Councilmembers and Human Services Division staff for the proclamation and for supporting their efforts. He thanked the City's Leadership Team for volunteering recently at the food bank.

Ragini Gupta, Development and Public Relations Manager, Renewal Food Bank, said the organization serves approximately 500 families representing 1,500 individuals. She said the families are primarily immigrants and refugees. However, anyone may access their services located in the Crossroads neighborhood. Ms. Gupta said they specialize in high quality meat and produce and culturally relevant food to meet the community's needs. They also provide hygiene items, baby food and baby formula.

Mr. Peters said their partner organizations are struggling due to changes in federal funding. He said immigrants are struggling due to heightened harassment based on the color of their skin and the languages they speak. He said Renewal Food Bank will continue its work with greater passion and empathy than ever before. He thanked faith-based communities, policymakers and business leaders for working together to change the outcomes for those experiencing food insecurity.

(c) National Service Dog Month Proclamation

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation recognizing September 2025 as National Service Dog Month in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to celebrate the essential role of service dogs in promoting independence, well-being and dignity for individuals with disabilities. National Service Dog Month provides an opportunity to educate the community about the invaluable contributions of service dogs that allow individuals with disabilities to thrive.

Hennessey Owensby, a high school student and puppy raiser with Canine Companions for Independence in attendance with Kevin the Fifth, a service dog, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She, her mom Katie and her dad Keith are raising Kevin to be a service dog. She said that behind every service dog is a dedicated community of volunteers and trainers who give their time, energy and love to make independence possible for disabled individuals.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days. Ms. Arredondo said each speaker is allowed up to three minutes to speak and a maximum of three speakers are allowed to speak to any one side of a particular topic. In compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities, no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure or candidate.

Mayor Robinson suggested that if anyone is unable to speak tonight, they are welcome to submit their comments via email to Council@bellevuewa.gov.

- (a) Darcey Eilers, City Attorney, City of Kirkland, commented regarding Agenda Items 10(a) through 10(c) related to the proposed boundary line adjustment between Bellevue and Kirkland. The adjustment will allow the entirety of the South Kirkland Park and Ride and the Cross Kirkland Corridor to be located in Kirkland. Ms. Eilers said the Kirkland City Council unanimously approved the boundary line adjustment and related interagency agreement on July 15, 2025. She encouraged the Council to support the proposed adjustment.
- (b) Keith Goodman commented regarding Agenda Item 8(f) related to the pass-through funding agreement with King County Metro to accept federal funds. Ordinance No. 6857 amends the agreement to increase the not-to-exceed amount from \$500,000 to \$569,000. He asked Metro and the City to use the funding for the restoration of Metro bus route 226 along Northup Way and NE 8th Street, which was eliminated on September 1 after operating for at least 20 years. He said residents in the affected neighborhoods must now walk 20-30 minutes up a steep hill to get to the nearest bus stop.
- (c) Dr. Sue Mercer said she wanted to comment on parking, potholes, traffic lights, mental health, permits for construction and permits for parking lots. She expressed concern about landscaped areas with curbs in the parking lot at Kelsey Creek Shopping Center that create tripping hazards. She expressed concern about areas (e.g., 148th Avenue) where watering is wasting water. She said she supports bike lanes but they should not eliminate parking (e.g., 156th Avenue SE between SE 16th Street and SE 20th Street). Dr. Mercer said there are a number of potholes on SE 16th Street and SE 22nd Street. She said she would follow up in writing to the Council.
- (d) Heidi Dean said the term gaslighting refers to a specific type of manipulative psychological abuse that causes another person to doubt their own reality perception and sanity. She said it includes lying, denying events that have occurred, and trivializing a

person's feelings with the goal of controlling and altering the victim's thoughts, actions and self-perception. She said she feels she and other residents are experiencing this behavior from City staff. She said she attended the HOMA (Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas) virtual information session the previous evening where she was told that things she witnessed with her own eyes and ears had not occurred. She said the Development Services Department was asked by the Planning Commission to conduct additional public outreach regarding HOMA planning. Ms. Dean said staff was not interested in listening to the public and, at the end of the session, announced that the issue would go back to the Planning Commission this week. She urged the Council to represent residents and businesses by directing staff to treat them with respect and to engage in meaningful interactions.

- (e) Alex Tsimerman said he has been trespassed and prosecuted by the City a number of times over the past 30 years. He expressed concern regarding the proposed changes to Council Rules, the Bellevue City Code, and board and commission bylaws related to excluding individuals from meetings.
 - (f) Joe Kunzler thanked the Council and staff for their public service. He condemned accusatory and insulting language directed at the Council. He encouraged the Council to amend the City's rules, codes and bylaws to exclude Mr. Tsimerman from Council, board and commission meetings when warranted. Mr. Kunzler said he has observed Mr. Tsimerman in board and commission meetings campaigning for his own candidacy and denigrating the Council. Mr. Kunzler expressed support for the proposed changes regarding exclusion of members of the public from City-related meetings.
- 5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
 - 6. Report of the City Manager: None.
 - 7. Council Business and New Initiatives
 - (a) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointment to Transportation Commission

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis recommended the appointment of Anthony Welcher to the Transportation Commission. He said Mr. Welcher brings a global perspective and local commitment through his experience with the U.S. Department of State, infrastructure development, intergovernmental affairs, community engagement and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said Mr. Welcher has extensive experience managing complex transportation and economic development initiatives across federal agencies.

- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to appoint Anthony Welcher to serve a full term on the Transportation Commission expiring on May 31, 2029. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

8. Consent Calendar

- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:
 - (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of July 22, 2025 Regular Meeting
Minutes of August 4, 2025 Special Meeting
 - (b) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period July 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025.
 - (c) Motion to reject bid protest submitted by Active Construction, Inc. and to award Bid No. 25022, Northwest Bellevue Walkways and Safety Improvement Project to Pivetta Brothers Construction as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, in an amount not to exceed \$7,250,166.10, plus all applicable taxes. This project is funded through the 2025-2030 General Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This project is partially funded by the Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy.
 - (d) Motion to award Bid No. 25062, On-Call Asphalt & Concrete Repair Contract to AA Asphaltting, LLC as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, for a three-year contract in an amount not to exceed \$1,728,425.00, plus all applicable taxes.
 - (e) Resolution No. 10532 authorizing execution of an agreement with Hughes Fire Equipment, Inc. to purchase one replacement fire engine for the Bellevue Fire Department, in an amount not to exceed \$1,458,926, plus all applicable taxes.
 - (f) Ordinance No. 6857: 1) authorizing execution of a second amendment to the pass-through funding agreement between King County Metro (KCM) and the City of Bellevue to accept additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for the 2023-2024 City of Bellevue Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Implementation and SchoolPool programs, thus modifying the agreement to increase the not-to-exceed amount from \$500,000 to \$569,000; and 2) amending the 2025-2026 Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund by increasing the appropriation by \$69,000.
 - (g) Resolution No. 10533 authorizing execution of an agreement with the State of Washington, Department of Ecology, to accept up to \$397,601 of state funding for the reimbursement of project costs associated with the Kelsey Creek Regional Detention Facilities Retrofit Study.

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions

- (a) Resolution No. 10534 adjusting the boundary line between the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland, pursuant to RCW 35.13.340 and a petition filed by King County, so the entirety of the South Kirkland Park and Ride may be located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Kirkland; authorizing the City Manager, or her designee, to execute an interagency agreement as a condition for the boundary line adjustment; authorizing appropriate personnel to perform all administrative acts needed to finalize said boundary line adjustment; and authorizing appropriate personnel to perform all administrative acts authorized under the interagency agreement. The executed interagency agreement shall be substantially in the same form as the agreement in the Council Library.
- (b) Resolution No. 10535 adjusting the boundary line between the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland, pursuant to RCW 35.13.340 and a petition filed by the City of Kirkland, so the entirety of the Cross Kirkland Corridor may be located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Kirkland; authorizing the City Manager, or her designee, to execute an interagency agreement as a condition for the boundary line adjustment; authorizing appropriate personnel to perform all administrative acts needed to finalize said boundary line adjustment; and authorizing appropriate personnel to perform all administrative acts authorized under the interagency agreement. The executed interagency agreement shall be substantially in the same form as the agreement in the Council Library.
- (c) Resolution No. 10536 authorizing the City Manager, or her designee, to execute a boundary line agreement between the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland, pursuant to RCW 35.13.310, to adjust the common boundary line between Bellevue and Kirkland within the public right-of-way at the intersection of NE 38th Place and 108th Avenue NE. The executed agreement shall be substantially in the same form as the agreement in the Council Library.

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced discussion regarding three resolutions to adjust the boundary between Bellevue and Kirkland. She thanked staff for their work on this effort over the past few years.

Lacey Jane Wolfe, Intergovernmental Policy Advisor, City Manager's Office, said state law requires taking the above actions through separate resolutions. She said the boundary line adjustment is at and near the South Kirkland Park and Ride. She said the adjustment will benefit the region because light rail transit-oriented development (TOD) planning and regional trail planning can be developed in a more streamlined manner. She said for this type of boundary line adjustment, any decision by the City Council is exempt under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and does not require subsequent approval by the King County Boundary Review Board.

Ms. Wolfe said the Kirkland City Council approved the boundary line adjustment on July 15. She described the first action to adjust the boundary to extend Kirkland to include the full South Kirkland Park and Ride facility. The adjustment is authorized by RCW 35.13.340 upon receipt of a petition signed by the property owner and approved by the legislative body. King County, owner of the parcel, submitted a signed petition on June 27, 2025, which is included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Wolfe said the goal of the boundary adjustment is to streamline the permitting process for a future light rail station instead of requiring permitting in two jurisdictions. The interagency agreement allows the City of Bellevue to have a meaningful and substantial role in all permitting decisions related to the property. Ms. Wolfe said Sound Transit plans to construct two light rail stations (Richards Road and Eastgate) as part of this project.

Ms. Wolfe described the proposed resolution to adjust the boundary to place the entire Cross Kirkland Corridor parcel in Kirkland. The corridor is a 5.75 mile segment of the Eastrail, and a small portion is located in Bellevue. The goal of the proposed adjustment is to streamline the permit processes for future trail development. The interagency agreement provides a role for the City in permitting decisions related to the redevelopment of the South Kirkland Park and Ride and light rail station.

Ms. Wolfe said the boundary adjustment is requested by the City of Kirkland as property owner and receiving jurisdiction. She said the City of Kirkland plans future improvements such as paving and other pedestrian and bike amenities.

The third area affected by the boundary line adjustment is at the intersection of NE 38th Place and 108th Avenue NE. Resolution No. 10536 adjusts the boundary so that 108th Avenue NE will be fully in Bellevue. She said the goal is to allow the City to make more efficient repairs to 108th Avenue NE and the traffic controls at the intersection.

Ms. Wolfe requested Council approval of the three resolutions.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian expressed support for the proposed resolutions.

Councilmember Bhargava asked about the references to the City having a “meaningful and substantial” role in the permitting process for the Park and Ride facility and the trail corridor.

Brian Wendt, Assistant City Attorney, said the phrase is pursuant to the interagency agreement included in the meeting materials. He said the City of Bellevue would have a voting member on any study/planning committee or group that the City of Kirkland might create in the future related to the boundary adjustment impacts. He said the City of Kirkland will provide periodic updates regarding development of the South Kirkland Park and Ride. He said the City of Kirkland is committed to providing a minimum notice of 90 days before any permitting decision is made to provide the opportunity for Bellevue staff to offer recommendations. Mr. Wendt said the City of Kirkland will make the final permitting decisions.

Councilmember Lee said it makes sense to be more efficient by placing the South Bellevue Park and Ride and the Cross Kirkland Corridor fully within one jurisdiction.

- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt Resolution No. 10534 (King County Parcel – South Kirkland Park and Ride) adjusting the boundary line between the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.
- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt Resolution No. 10535 (City of Kirkland Parcel – Cross Kirkland Corridor) adjusting the boundary line between the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.
- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt Resolution No. 10536 (Intersection Parcel – NE 38th Place and 108th Avenue NE) adjusting the boundary line between the City of Bellevue and the City of Kirkland. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 7:00 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:15 p.m.

11. Study Session Items

- (a) 2025 Economic Development Plan Data Analysis and Community Engagement Process Report

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the preparation of the 2026 Economic Development Plan.

Jesse Canedo, Chief Economic Development Officer, Community Development Department, said staff, the City's consultants and stakeholders have been working together over the past several months to analyze all of the possibilities for the future of economic development in Bellevue. He said staff plans to return with draft strategies on October 7 for discussion with the Council.

Mr. Canedo recalled that the Council initiated this work in December 2024 and a consultant began working with the City in early 2025. He noted an extensive data analysis and community engagement period from March through July. He said adoption of the 2026 Economic Development Plan is anticipated in December. Mr. Canedo highlighted the guiding principles established by the Council focusing on a diversified and resilient economy, small businesses, partnerships, the creative economy, tourism and public spaces.

Ellie He, Economic Development Specialist, said the data analysis used the peer cities (Sunnyvale and Irvine, California; Plano, Texas; Arlington, Virginia; and Cambridge,

Massachusetts) to provide valuable benchmarks for the data. She noted that Boulder, Colorado and Santa Monica, California were removed in favor of Irvine and Plano. She described the annual employment change and average annual job growth rate since 2010. She said Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan includes a target of adding 70,000 jobs by 2044.

Ms. He compared the economic diversity of the peer cities. She commented on small business growth, creative sector employment and office vacancy rates.

Corbin Hart, Business Development Manager, described the community engagement approach and activities. He said 416 stakeholders participated in the process to inform the update of the Economic Development Plan. Stakeholders discussed the high quality of life in Bellevue, growth potential, location and accessibility. Challenges include the high cost of living, regulatory environment, permitting and traffic congestion. Mr. Hart said stakeholders discussed opportunities for new business sectors (e.g., life sciences, AI, clean tech), investments in arts and cultural initiatives, transit connectivity, and enhancing and expanding public spaces.

Mr. Hart said the Economic Development Plan framework is consistent with the Council's Strategic Target Areas (STAs) and the Comprehensive Plan. He said staff proposes using the vision and goal language from the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan in the 2026 Economic Development Plan. Staff further suggests incorporating the Vibrant Economy STA objectives as they develop direct strategies and actions.

Mr. Hart said staff will return on October 7 to discuss the direct strategies and again in late October or early November to discuss actions and the implementation plan. Plan adoption is anticipated by December.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for the update. He commented on the fundamental need for economic vitality. He said economic development is interconnected with every part of the community. He commented on the importance of supporting small businesses.

Mr. Canedo said there are currently a number of programs focusing on small businesses and staff will return with new recommended strategies in October. Mr. Lee said many immigrants want to own their own businesses. Mr. Hart said small business is used as a very broad term for entities as small as one person.

Councilmember Lee expressed an interest in more information regarding the number of small businesses in Bellevue and the outcomes of City programs for small businesses.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Canedo said the citywide office vacancy rate is 20-25 percent. Mr. Canedo said staff is working with Greater Seattle Partners to address office vacancy. He said Bellevue continues to see a demand for office space. However, businesses are interested in smaller footprints.

Mr. Hart said the City works extensively with a number of regional groups to attract businesses. He said interest in the downtown remains steady. However, office buildings in the Eastgate area date to the 1980s or earlier and are not in demand.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said staff will return in October to discuss the draft strategies and in November to discuss the draft implementation plan.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed concern regarding Washington state's tax competitiveness for businesses. He said the Council and other cities argued against potential taxes that would have made the state's competitiveness even worse. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said businesses are leaving the state due to taxes. He expressed support for a stronger emphasis on small businesses. He identified permitting for small businesses as an area that needs to be addressed based on stakeholder input.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the consultants were given specific direction to engage a broad swath of stakeholders that reflected the guiding principles. Mr. Hart said the stakeholders included property owners and owners of small businesses. Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed concern that the City is not reaching enough of the small businesses.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed concern regarding office vacancy rates in the Eastgate and Factoria areas and in the overall economic health of the neighborhoods. He asked about the contributing factors to the high vacancy rates. Mr. Canedo said the commercial property in the Eastgate area is older office stock with no space for small businesses. Mr. Hart said high priorities in the Factoria area are walkability and community safety.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for the presentation. He expressed support for the strategic framework and overall process to draft the 2026 Economic Development Plan. He said he appreciated the focus on the creative economy and artists.

Mr. Hamilton expressed concern regarding the displacement of small businesses. Mr. Canedo said the strategies to be presented in October will address those issues and concerns. Mr. Hart said staff proactively tracks development activity to identify when a redevelopment project might impact existing commercial businesses. He said staff assists businesses in looking for alternative locations.

Mr. Hamilton suggested benchmarking Bellevue within the Seattle MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) to ensure our strategy is aligned with neighboring jurisdictions. Mr. Canedo said staff asked the consultants to help benchmark against national peers because those are more difficult data sets to collect. Mr. Hart said the City currently tracks certain metrics to compare itself with other cities in the Seattle MSA.

Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Canedo said the City tracks its revenue sources to understand trends. He said that will be reflected in the direct strategies to be developed by October. Councilmember Hamilton said he looked forward to hearing more about the Eastgate and Factoria areas.

In further response to Councilmember Hamilton, Mr. Hart said staff engages with property owners on an ongoing basis regarding their development planning. Mr. Hamilton requested a list

of specific recommended actions the Council could consider in support of the plan. He suggested discussing the topic during the annual Council retreat.

Mr. Hamilton said he would like recommendations on how to incorporate support for the Economic Development Plan into the legislative priorities for the next season. He said he shared Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's concern about tax impacts on businesses in this state. Mr. Canedo said staff asked the consultants to compare regulatory and tax practices in Washington with key competitor states.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryia said Bellevue continues to have strong growth and strong income growth. However, the cost of living continues to increase as well. Ms. Sumadiwiryia encouraged an emphasis on the Eastgate and Factoria areas to identify opportunities. Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Mr. Hart said the majority of the stakeholders through the community engagement process were small businesses.

Ms. Sumadiwiryia encouraged more robust community outreach to assist small businesses and improve permit processing. Mr. Canedo said the Development Services Department works to enhance the permitting process on an ongoing basis. He encouraged the Council to reach out to Rebecca Horner, director of the department, for more information.

Mayor Robinson expressed an interest in staff's plan to streamline and expedite permitting.

Ms. Carlson said the small business permitting program manager began working for the City approximately one month ago. She is starting to work to provide direct assistance to individual business owners.

Ms. Sumadiwiryia said the loss of major employers has a strong impact on small businesses as well. She suggested a discussion about the state's tax competitiveness. She asked about the potential for adapting office space in the Eastgate area into lower priced tenant space for small businesses. She asked about the potential for providing subsidies to help small businesses.

Mr. Canedo said the state constitution limits the City's ability to provide direct grants and subsidies to businesses. Mr. Hart said there are more affordable co-working spaces and first-time office spaces in some of the older buildings in the Eastgate area.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked everyone for the information and discussion. He thanked staff for the extensive community engagement. He expressed concern that 90 percent of Bellevue jobs are filled by non-resident commuters. He expressed concern about AI and how it might impact the workforce. He said he would like discussion this fall about how the City is strengthening its partnership with Bellevue College to prepare for an AI economy. He suggested forming an AI task force with businesses and organizations.

Mr. Malakoutian expressed support for robust engagement with small businesses. He encouraged more restaurants, art spaces and music venues and better late-night transportation options in Bellevue.

Mr. Malakoutian echoed his colleagues' concerns about the state's tax system. However, he encouraged focusing on what is under the City's control, such as the permitting process. He thanked staff for all of their work.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked staff for their great work and for selecting Irvine as a peer city. He said he lived there for nine years and appreciated the quality of life.

Mr. Bhargava expressed concern regarding the diversification in Bellevue's economy and encouraged active strategies to address related issues. He expressed concern about the cost of doing business in Bellevue. He said the office vacancy rate in the Eastgate area is alarming.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Mr. Hart said the number of small businesses in Bellevue is aligned with many of the peer cities. In further response, Mr. Canedo said staff will bring back more information in October on how to balance economic diversity.

Mr. Bhargava suggested affordable incubation space for small businesses. He suggested exploring strategies for access to capital for small businesses. He encouraged technical assistance to help small businesses become established.

Mayor Robinson commended staff's work with the consultant. She noted that some of the data goes back to 2022. Mr. Canedo said the job growth data is older but the office vacancy data is very recent.

Ms. Robinson said the report reflects the value of preserving neighborhood character. She asked how that might be applied to Old Bellevue. She would like to see a recommendation and plan from staff for that area.

Ms. Robinson noted the need to increase opportunities for people to live closer to where they work. She expressed support for the Grand Connection, investment in the arts and permitting improvements.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Canedo said the 2020 Economic Development Plan was intended to provide a broader based foundation for the variety of businesses in Bellevue. She said several new programs in recent years have helped to support tourism and small businesses. Mr. Hart confirmed that the industry diversity index for Bellevue has improved over the past few years.

Ms. Robinson asked whether there is a plan for how the City will prioritize job growth. Mr. Canedo said the 2026 Economic Development Plan builds on the Comprehensive Plan target of adding 70,000 jobs by 2044.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for Deputy Mayor Malakoutian's suggestion to create an AI task force.

Councilmember Lee asked what the City is doing to achieve the goal of "global business innovation." Mr. Canedo said the implementation of the Economic Development Plan, including

strategies, will reinforce Bellevue as a global innovation hub. In further response to Mr. Lee, Mr. Canedo said the strategies to be presented in October will include a range of actions locally and regionally.

At 8:11 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:25 p.m.

- (b) Discussion of Potential Changes to City Council Rules, Bellevue City Code and Board and Commission Bylaws related to Exclusion from Future Meetings and Consecutive Terms on Council Advisory Boards and Commissions

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced discussion regarding potential changes to the City Council Rules, Bellevue City Code, and board and commission bylaws.

Trisna Tanus, City Attorney, said staff is seeking changes related to meeting decorum, excluding individuals from future meetings and term limits for boards and commissions. She said the rules of decorum are intended to provide for the orderly conduct of meetings. The current exclusion rules have been in place for more than two years. Violations of the rules may result in exclusion from participating in or attending future meetings. The current maximum exclusion term is 60 days. Notices of exclusion may be appealed to the Council to be addressed at the next regular meeting.

The proposed changes increase the maximum exclusion period to 180 days and set any appeals to occur at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting that is at least three business days from the receipt of the appeal. This preserves constitutional and Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) rights and protections and provides a reasonable time period for staff to prepare appeal materials for the Council's consideration.

Ms. Tanus said the actions to implement the proposed changes include: 1) resolution to amend Council Rules and to repeal and replace Resolution No. 10369, 2) ordinance to amend sections in Title 3 Bellevue City Code for seven boards and commissions, and 3) revisions to board and commission bylaws.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Ms. Tanus said there are no prescriptive criteria for determining the length of an exclusion. The decision is based on the presiding officer's perceptions of specific behavior. The presiding officer should consider the seriousness and frequency of disruptive behavior, whether there are any threats to public safety, and the overall record of any individual.

Mr. Malakoutian recommended creating a tiered system that clearly defines specific behaviors and the number of days to be excluded for each behavior.

Mayor Robinson said the City has not had or needed specific criteria to date.

Councilmember Bhargava concurred with Mr. Malakoutian's suggestion to create more specific language regarding exclusions. Mr. Bhargava said he would be comfortable with a simple list of guidelines addressing public safety, level of disruption in the meeting, and other factors.

Mayor Robinson spoke in favor of retaining the City's current process leaving discretion to the presiding officer.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya suggested that more specific language would make the process more efficient and protect all parties. Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Sumadiwirya said no one in a meeting should have to feel afraid or unsafe.

Mayor Robinson agreed and said each situation is unique and therefore is best handled at the chair's discretion.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested setting a certain number of days based on the first, second or subsequent violations.

Mayor Robinson spoke in favor of the current process and suggested listing some of the factors that could be considered before issuing a notice of exclusion.

City Manager Carlson said that when situations have resulted in the exclusion of an individual from a meeting, the mayor meets with the city attorney to assess the situation before making a decision. She said this approach allows flexibility based on individual circumstances.

Responding to Councilmember Hamilton, Ms. Tanus said a notice of exclusion must include the rationale for the order, which can include previous violations. Mr. Hamilton expressed support for continuing the current process and noted that individuals may appeal the notice of exclusion. He said there are enough guardrails in place and extending the exclusion period makes sense as an extra tool. He said it will be used so rarely.

Councilmember Lee concurred with Deputy Mayor Malakoutian's suggestion to identify criteria for considering an exclusion.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said criteria would help guide an individual chairing a meeting when disruptive situations occur and enhance consistency in issuing notices of exclusion.

City Manager Carlson said the current approach is a serious process involving the mayor and city attorney and a thorough review of the record. She expressed concern about the potential for narrowly constraining the presiding officer's discretion and authority. She said the current rules have been applied with great care to ensure the City is following applicable laws.

- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to direct staff to prepare legislation, for action at a future meeting, to increase the maximum exclusion period to 180 days and to update the timing for the processing of appeals of Notices of Exclusion. Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Charmaine Arredondo, City Clerk, said that limiting the terms of service for board and commission members provides opportunities for broadening community participation on the six main boards and commissions: Arts Commission, Environmental Services Commission, Transportation Commission, Human Services Commission, Parks and Community Services Board and Planning Commission. She recalled that earlier this year during the Council retreat, the Council expressed an interest in expanding opportunities for residents to serve on advisory bodies.

Ms. Arredondo said the board and commission bylaws state that an individual cannot serve more than two consecutive full terms on the same advisory board or commission. The proposed change states that an individual cannot serve more than two consecutive full terms on any advisory board or commission. Partial terms of less than two years do not count toward the maximum limit.

Ms. Arredondo requested Council direction to staff to prepare legislation amending the Bellevue City Code to limit service to two consecutive terms on any Council advisory board or commission.

→ Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to direct staff to prepare legislation, for action at a future meeting, to amend the Bellevue City Code to limit service to two consecutive terms on any Council advisory board or commission. Councilmember Sumadiwirya seconded the motion.

Mayor Robinson confirmed that the Council discussed this topic during its retreat. She thanked staff for bringing the issue forward.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian suggested engaging board and commission members who reach their term limits in mentoring new board and commission members. He said there are people who want to continue to serve and to be involved, and he believes the City can continue to benefit from their experience and expertise. Ms. Arredondo thanked him for his suggestion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

12. Land Use Reports: None.

13. Written Reports

(a) Intergovernmental Affairs Monthly Update as of September 9, 2025

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 9:13 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw