

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting

April 21, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Malakoutian, Deputy Mayor Hamilton and Councilmembers Bhargava, Briar¹, Nieuwenhuis, Robinson and Sumadiwirya

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Malakoutian presiding.

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

2. Approval of Agenda

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

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

3. Oral Communications

Responding to Mayor Malakoutian, Councilmembers agreed to suspend the usual limit of three speakers on either side of a topic for tonight's meeting.

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. Individuals 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. Each speaker is allowed up to three minutes to speak. In compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities, no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure or candidate.

¹ Councilmember Briar participated remotely.

- (a) Kian Bradley, Eastside Urbanism, said the group is a member of the Streets Are For Everyone (SAFE) Bellevue coalition. He noted their support for the City's Vision Zero program and expressed concern regarding serious injuries and fatalities on Bellevue streets in 2025.
- (b) Vicky Clarke, Deputy Director, Cascade Bicycle Club, spoke in favor of multimodal streets that accommodate walking, biking, rolling, taking transit and driving. She said the SAFE Bellevue coalition urges the Council to fund projects and expand safety improvements citywide.
- (c) Christopher Randels, Director, Complete Streets Bellevue, encouraged the City to move quickly to provide complete streets projects in cost-effective ways. He expressed support for the creation of a transportation benefit district to fund the implementation of complete streets features and Vision Zero infrastructure.
- (d) Karen Armstead, a Vasa Park resident, noted residents' ongoing concerns about traffic and road safety and urged the Council to consider projects in their neighborhood. She said they have had good support from both the Transportation Department and the Bellevue Police Department over the past few months to address their concerns.
- (e) Bob Armstead said City staff have been professional, courteous and informative in working with the Vasa Park neighborhood regarding street safety. He noted the need for sidewalks and crosswalks and asked the Council to consider their neighborhood for transportation investments.
- (f) Tim Hay commented on the role of the automobile throughout U.S. history. He expressed concern about the elimination of parking requirements for certain housing projects and the narrowness of newer parking spaces.
- (g) Maria Hudson expressed concerns regarding the Bellevue Police Department and issues involving her daughter. She urged the Council to request that a third party conduct a review.
- (h) Juan Ramos expressed concern regarding traffic safety and fatalities.
- (i) Heidi Dean noted her interest in the transportation benefit district and encouraged the City to develop a project list if the district is funded.
- (j) Joe Kunzler said the Kirkland City Council is discussing new rules tonight based on the Bellevue City Council's handling of oral communications during meetings. He expressed concern, however, that the Kirkland City Council is not including the rule that the public may speak only about city government-related issues. He thanked Councilmember Nieuwenhuis for his comments expressing concern regarding increasing antisemitism.

4. Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following item was approved:
 - (a) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period March 1, 2026 - March 31, 2026.
 - (b) Resolution No. 10618 authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City of Bellevue and King County providing the city up to \$1,700,000 for construction of the South Kirkland Park and Ride Intersections project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-46).
 - (c) Motion to award Bid No. 26003, South Kirkland Park and Ride Intersections project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-46) to Kamins Construction as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, in an amount not to exceed \$994,956.26, plus all applicable taxes.
 - (d) Resolution No. 10619 authorizing execution of the Telecommunications Right-of-Way Use Agreement with SQF, LLC doing business as Verta.

5. Study Session

- (a) Budget Process and Transportation Investment Workshop

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced discussion regarding the upcoming budget process.

John Resha, Chief Financial Officer/Director, Finance and Asset Management Department, highlighted the components of the workshop discussion and set the broader context for long-term financial planning.

Ray Fleshman, Manager, Budget and Financial Planning, said three public hearings will be held for comments regarding the budget: June 23, September 15 and October 27. The preliminary budget will be presented on September 15 and budget adoption is tentatively scheduled for November 17.

Mr. Resha said the City adopts two-year budgets with a more in-depth analysis of basic operations every 10 years. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan provides a vision and policies for how the City intends to grow over the next 20-40 years.

Emil King, Director, Community Development Department, recalled that the Comprehensive Plan had a major update in 2024. The City's planning policies are also shaped by the

Countywide Planning Policies, Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050 plan and the state Growth Management Act. Mr. King said Bellevue's current population is nearly 158,000 people. The growth targets are to create 70,000 jobs and 35,000 housing units by 2044.

Thara Johnson, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, said numerous functional plans implement the policy guidance of the Comprehensive Plan. Functional plans address a wide range of topics including affordable housing, human services, parks and recreation, economic development, transportation improvements, municipal facilities and environmental stewardship and implement short-term and long-term actions.

Mr. Resha presented a timeline of the City's planning priorities and future levies as well as King County levies through 2036. The City's 2008 parks levy expires at the end of 2029 and the 2022 parks levy expires in 2032. The 2016 neighborhood transportation levy and the 2016 Fire facilities levy expire in 2036. Major planning efforts include the Grand Connection, Civic Campus, Fire Station 5, Fire Station 6 and the potential expansion of Meydenbauer Convention Center. The strategic target areas (STAs) for the budget are community safety and health, high-performance government, thriving people and communities, high quality built and natural environment, safe and efficient transportation, and a vibrant economy.

Councilmember Robinson noted some of her priorities: Safe Routes to Schools, West Lake Sammamish Parkway, transit connections and bike routes. She asked about the impact on taxpayers if the City decides to use its property tax banked capacity. She asked about the funding potential for a transportation benefit district (TBD) using vehicle fees of \$40 versus a \$20 vehicle fee and a 0.1 percent sales tax. She said she would like more information regarding a local improvement district for specific areas (e.g., Vasa Park neighborhood).

Mr. Resha said the City currently has approximately \$7 million in its property tax banked capacity, which would create an additional tax of \$84 annually for the typical Bellevue household. He said the Council may adopt a \$20 vehicle fee and any amount above that, up to \$100, requires a vote of the people. A \$20 vehicle fee would generate approximately \$2 million annually and a 0.1 percent sales tax would generate approximately \$11 million annually.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya said she wants to ensure that as Bellevue grows, the City can provide the infrastructure to sustain a multimodal transportation system, including robust public transit. She expressed concern that a \$20 vehicle fee would be a burden for some drivers.

Councilmember Briar thanked staff for all of their work. She commented on the importance of multimodal transportation and pedestrian infrastructure and suggested prioritizing the equal distribution of pedestrian amenities citywide.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed concern about decreasing local control and increasing mandates from state government. He said the inventory of homes for sale has increased and Washington has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. He said state revenues are \$76 million below expectations.

Mr. Resha commented on Bellevue's role in the region and its relationships with the business community and residents. Mr. Nieuwenhuis spoke to the importance of ensuring that infrastructure keeps pace with growth. He questioned the reliability of vehicle fees as a revenue source, noting that there are 600,000 state residents who do not register their cars and pay for car tabs.

Councilmember Bhargava commented on growing uncertainty in the world, including the implications of AI technology. He expressed an interest in implementing a TBD. He suggested creating a framework for prioritizing transportation investments with safety as the top criteria. He noted the challenge of balancing investments in different transportation modes and measuring the impact of the investments. Mr. Bhargava said affordability is a primary concern and he cautioned against additional taxes and fees.

Responding to Mr. Bhargava, Mr. Resha commented on the City's budgeting and prioritization approach over the past several budget cycles. Mr. Resha said all transportation projects include a focus on safety features and design. Mr. Bhargava said it is important to consider changing technologies and human behavior in planning transportation investments.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton encouraged a transparent, strategic and community focused budget process. He said Bellevue has a good track record of maximizing its return on investments. He expressed an interest in considering new revenue sources for transportation projects.

Mr. Hamilton noted that 43 percent of Bellevue's taxes account for 43 percent of the City's revenues. Mr. Resha said two major components of the other 57 percent are utility fees and intergovernmental contracts (e.g., fire services to other communities).

Responding to Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Resha commented regarding job and housing growth targets. City Manager Carlson commented on staff's efforts related to long-term planning based on previous discussions with the Council. In further response, Ms. Carlson said the public will provide input throughout the year and staff will develop options for consideration.

At 8:06 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared a break. The meeting resumed at 8:20 p.m.

Andrew Singelakis, Director, Transportation Department, described four levels of transportation planning: 1) Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) with all project concepts, 2) Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP) prioritizing projects, 3) Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP), a 20-year financially constrained plan, and 4) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) covering a six-year period. The program areas for transportation safety and mobility are vehicle mobility, pedestrian and bike mobility, neighborhood mobility, major projects and preservation/reconstruction.

Mr. Resha said the cost of the Grand Connection project is estimated at \$200 million to \$225 million. Kraemer was selected as the General Contractor/Construction Manager to advise on constructability and value capture through final design.

Mr. Resha highlighted the funding gap of \$10.5 million per year for the transportation CIP Plan and new maintenance and a gap of \$10.5 million for the Grand Connection crossing.

Mr. Fleshman listed general revenue tools including the property tax, Business and Occupation (B&O) tax, sales tax, utilities tax, impact fees, real estate excise tax (REET), user fees, levies, vehicle fees and others. He said TBD revenue tools include vehicle fees and a sales tax. Other transportation-specific options include tax increment financing (TIF), transportation impact fees, curb management and automated traffic safety cameras.

Mr. Resha described how implementing the TBD could provide funding for transportation mobility and safety investments and for the Grand Connection crossing project.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested splitting bike and pedestrian mobility into two separate categories. He expressed concern regarding the continually increasing cost of housing, groceries and other living expenses. He suggested a voter ballot measure instead of councilmanic action to consider additional transportation funding.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Mr. Resha commented on the challenge of balancing proposals for generating and investing tax dollars.

Councilmember Briar concurred with Councilmember Nieuwenhuis' suggestion to separate bike and pedestrian investments. Referring to slide 19, Ms. Briar asked whether allocating 20 percent of the transportation CIP to neighborhood mobility would be adequate to meet those needs. Mr. Singelakis said staff is interested in the Council's input regarding the appropriate percentages for the transportation CIP program areas. Ms. Briar reiterated her interest in providing pedestrian amenities throughout all neighborhoods.

Ms. Briar asked whether it would be possible to have a system for individuals to donate toward vehicle fees for lower income residents. Mr. Resha said he was not sure if that would be feasible or allowed under state law. However, he said staff will look at all options.

Councilmember Robinson emphasized the importance of safety as a factor for every transportation project. She said she shared Councilmember Nieuwenhuis' concern regarding increasing taxes. Ms. Robinson reiterated her priorities: Safe Routes for Schools, Spring Boulevard Zone 3, Lake Sammamish Parkway, transit connections, lined bike routes and Vasa Park neighborhood improvements.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya suggested public outreach regarding long-term planning and levy schedules. She expressed support for pedestrian and bike mobility, neighborhood mobility and major projects.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton concurred with Councilmember Robinson regarding the importance of safety and Vision Zero goals. Mr. Hamilton said he is open to considering new revenue tools for transportation funding. However, he acknowledged the concerns about affordability and taxes. He said Bellevue has a lower property tax rate than many cities in the region and state. Mr. Hamilton wondered whether parks levy funds could be used for the Grand Connection project.

Mayor Malakoutian concurred with his colleagues' comments regarding safety, adding taxes as a last option, finding efficiencies, establishing performance metrics, transparency, accountability and public benefits.

Councilmember Robinson commented on the need for safety improvements on West Lake Sammamish Parkway and suggested that new, limited term revenue tools be considered for specific projects and needs.

Councilmember Bhargava reiterated his priorities of safety, urgency of need, alignment with functional plans, balanced mobility investments, high-impact projects, connectivity, financial discipline and flexibility.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Singelakis said the TFP update will reflect specific projects and funding over the 20-year plan. Mr. Nieuwenhuis urged staff to conduct a robust public engagement process while developing the budget. Mark Poch, Deputy Director, commented on staff's strategy to involve residents, neighborhood associations and others. He said staff has reviewed public feedback regarding past processes.

Councilmember Briar noted her priorities of safety and accessibility.

6. Adjournment

At 9:45 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw