

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Meydenbauer Bay Park community design process and Phase 2 development

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Parks & Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**DIRECTION**

Staff will present a summary of the Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 community design process and a recommendation of the next, second phase of development. Council direction is requested to proceed to the architectural and engineering contract stage to support permitting and construction of Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council provide direction to proceed to the architectural and engineering contract stage to support permitting and construction of Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Background**

A public beach park on the shore of Meydenbauer Bay has existed in one form or another for over one hundred years. In the 1980's, the City established a vision of connecting the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront to Downtown Park to create a signature public park and waterfront destination. That vision held strong for decades as the city worked to acquire the properties necessary to make the vision a reality.

In 2010, the Bellevue City Council adopted the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan. The Plan provides the framework vision as well as planning and implementation principles that guide incremental phased development of the park.

More recently, the City Council identified Meydenbauer Bay Park as the anchor at the west end of the Grand Connection, a signature downtown place-making initiative. The Grand Connection route includes a series of projects and programming initiatives to improve the pedestrian experience from Meydenbauer Bay Park through downtown and across I-405 to the Eastrail regional trail.

In 2019, the City opened the first phased redevelopment of Meydenbauer Bay Park. That phase improved approximately 6.5 acres of the park west of 99th Avenue and the marina. The park has been tremendously successful providing greater public access to Lake Washington, offering residents and visitors many more options for enjoying water-oriented recreation.

Community Engagement

Planning and design to determine the next phase of master plan implementation began in 2023. An interdepartmental staff team from Parks & Community Services, Community Development, Housing and Transportation formed to collaborate on the cross-departmental facets of this project. The work program centered on engagement with the community to understand current priorities. City-wide engagement has been extensive, robust, and diverse. Outreach included a wide-ranging notification strategy to raise awareness about the project and to help create broad and equitable access to engagement and survey opportunities.

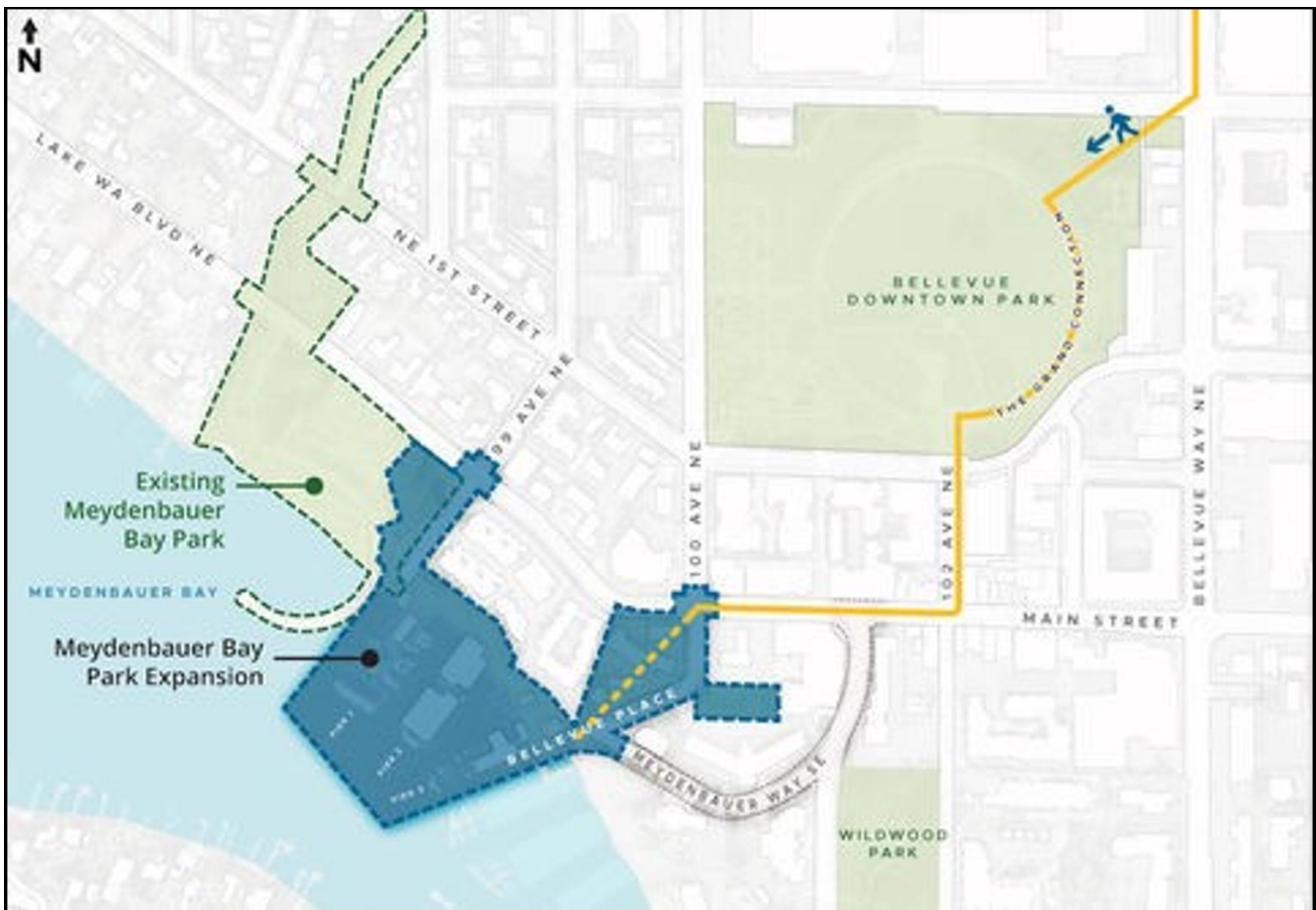
- Outreach notices are estimated at over 230,000 hits (including social media posts, mailers, website and radio advertisements and newsletters)
- Meetings and Pop-up events reached approximately 1,000 people
- Engaging Bellevue website received 13,610 views
- Multiple surveys collected responses from over 1,600 community members

For the duration of the engagement, project information and surveys were hosted on a project specific website and Engaging Bellevue with materials available in English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Russian languages.

Over 18,000 mailed pieces were distributed to the community along with social media, radio announcements and news article posts. Outreach opportunities were provided through Parks & Community Services Board public meetings, community meetings, webinars, pop-up events, as well as stakeholder briefings with nearby neighbors and downtown associations. More detailed information regarding community outreach is found in the *Meydenbauer Bay Park Phasing Report Appendices*.

Findings

To guide future phased development, the design team evaluated contemporary policies and realities including the adopted master plan, topography, current zoning, surrounding built conditions, emergency access needs, master plan implementation strategies, and current permitting and environmental regulations. From these sources, key opportunities and challenges were identified and presented to the community for their feedback and preferences.



Meydenbauer Bay Park expansion opportunity area

Community Priorities

Initial community engagement focused on confirming community needs and priorities. It was found that the 2010 planning principles still largely resonate, with desired improvements or changes focused on:

- **Mobility:** improve safe, accessible, and intuitive connections to and from the park.
- **Community Improvements:** create more accessible routes within the park, increase shaded areas, and add recreation and concessions opportunities.
- **Environmental Improvements:** prioritize nature, restore shoreline ecology and increase climate change resilience.
- **Parking:** make parking easier to find and appropriately scaled for park use.
- **Marina:** maintain transient slips, deprioritize leased private moorage.
- **Water access:** enhance public non-motorized watercraft launch facilities.

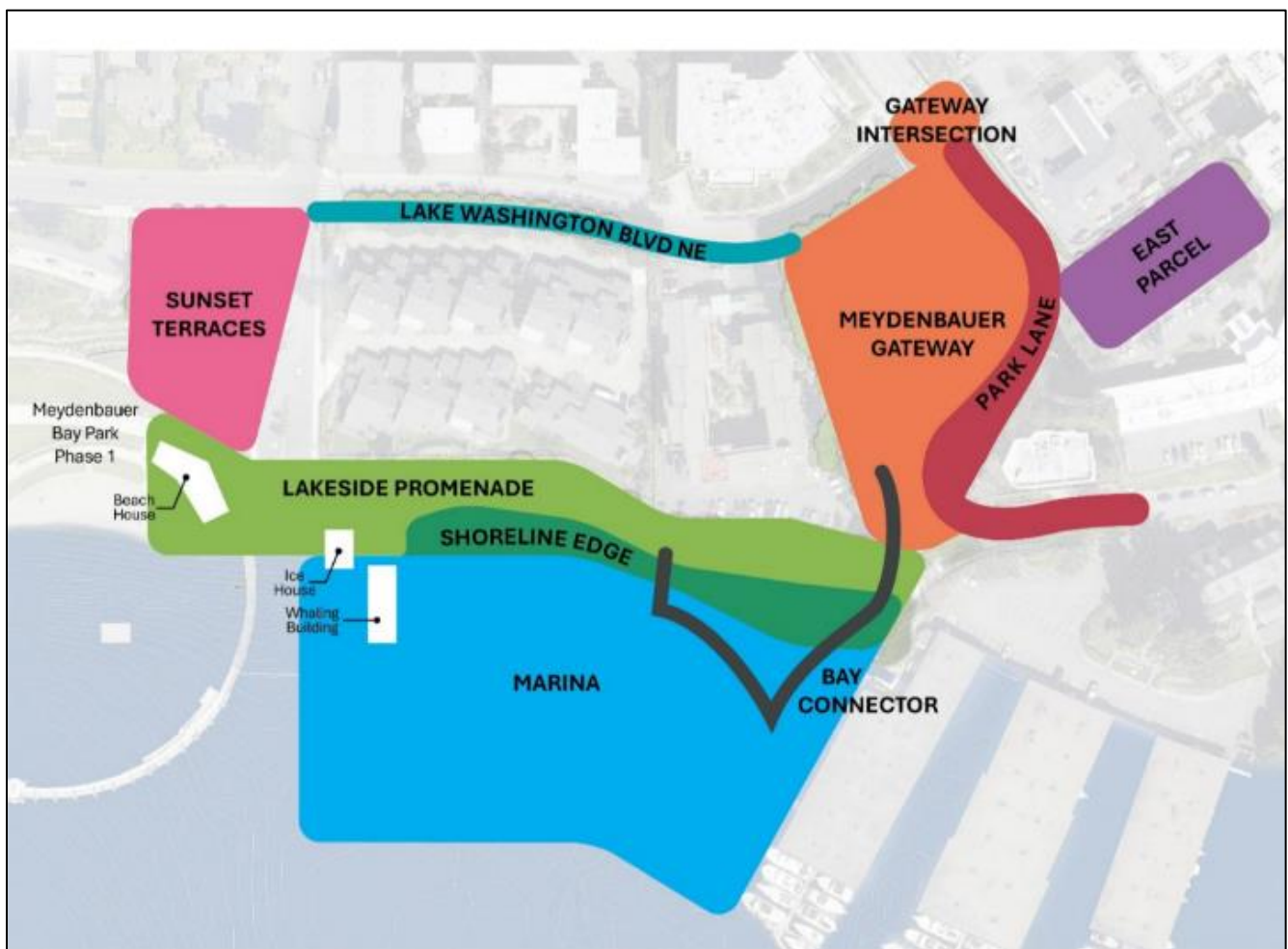
Phase 2 Opportunity Areas

The park areas yet to be developed (as described below) include:

- Meydenbauer Gateway
- Bay Connector

- Park Lane
- East Parcel
- Gateway Intersection
- Lake Washington Blvd NE
- Sunset Terraces
- Lakeside Promenade
- Shoreline Edge
- Marina

A brief description of each of the areas follows with more robust and detailed depictions of potential areas to be developed in the attached Meydenbauer Bay Park Phasing Report (2025).



- **Meydenbauer Gateway:** This site is a critical turning point of the Grand Connection, connecting the city to the bay and drawing the bay up to the city. Designed to provide sweeping vistas, informal community gathering spaces and intuitive, magnetic, and universally accessible experiences. The space can host a significant art installation as identified by the Grand Connection vision, providing a combination of open pavilion, terrace, and covered and enclosed

building spaces that provide shade and protection during inclement weather. It's a community plaza, a gathering space that complements the vibrancy of Old Bellevue and Main Street.

- **The Gateway Intersection:** 100th Ave NE, Lake Washington Blvd NE, and Main St become part of the arrival experience to the park, prioritizing a functional and safe intersection for all pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. This intersection is part of the Grand Connection and is identified in Bellevue's Downtown Transportation Plan as a key intersection for enhanced treatments to prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Park Lane (100th Ave SE)** - While the master plan envisions the closure of 100th Ave SE to vehicle traffic, today's zoning and development conditions do not allow for this. As such, 100th Ave SE is re-envisioned as a two-way park lane supporting the park's parking facilities and existing adjacent property access points. Park Lane also prioritizes new pedestrian crossings at locations where slope and sight-distance create safe conditions.
- **Lake Washington Blvd** – This streetscape is enhanced to add pedestrian connections and plantings, connecting the Phase 1 park frontage to the future Meydenbauer Gateway. Transportation is designing an interim improvement that includes a new bike lane along the south edge of the street in place of existing parking. Future improvements will be prioritized and funded with Transportation taking the lead.
- **The Bay Connector** - This element connects the Lakeside Promenade to the Meydenbauer Gateway, linking the two by bringing the promenade up and over the water as an elevated experience looking out to the bay and providing universal, ADA-compliant access from the Phase 1 Park ravine parking area to Main Street. The 2010 Plan proposed an elevator tower for access between Meydenbauer Gateway and the shoreline. The current plan removes reliance on an elevator, which assures accessibility in the event of an elevator closure and decreases future elevator maintenance costs.
- **Lakeside Promenade** - A continuation of the Master Plan, the Lakeside Promenade is first and foremost a pedestrian amenity looking out at the bay as it provides emergency service access.
- **Sunset Terrace/99th Ave.** - The original master plan proposed an activity building and associated parking off 99th Ave SE. This building was not found to be a high priority for the community during recent engagement. An interim budget-friendly option is designed to provide spaces to pause and view the water with easier connections down the steep hill.
- **The Marina and Shoreline** - The proposed marina balances the spirit of the master plan with 2025 in-water regulations and best practices of environmental stewardship. The proposed marina removes Pier 2 and reworks Piers 1 and 3 in place. Pier 1 becomes the public-focused pier. The historic Whaling Building continues to function similar to today, newly celebrated with a public plaza, while still providing a kayak vendor, restroom, and small gathering space.

In surveys, the community was asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each area of the park design to help assess if the designs were adequately responding to the community's priorities. Park area designs were well supported, with overall satisfaction ranging between 58% to 77% for each area's refined park design.

Nearby neighbors expressed appreciation that the designs leave 100th Ave SE open to vehicular traffic and that there is no community building proposed on the Sunset Terrace. Neighbors expressed continued concern primarily about the designs for the marina redevelopment and Bay Connector feature. Overall, there are also concerns regarding construction impacts, access and traffic, crime and safety, and decreased privacy.

Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 Recommendation

Based on community feedback, prioritization, design opportunities, constraints and available funding, the Meydenbauer Gateway is proposed to be the main area of focus for Phase 2 of Meydenbauer Bay Park. When remaining park phases needed to complete park development are initiated, re-engagement with the community and evaluation of contemporary policies and realities will inform that future design.



For this second phase, the Meydenbauer Gateway will create a strong anchor to Main Street and turning point for the Grand Connection vision. It will bring more intuitive vehicular circulation and create pedestrian-centric spaces. While the future full build out delivers low-barrier ADA accessibility to the shoreline, the phasing approach provides stair access with accessible routes provided from parking available at the shoreline. The next proposed phase of development includes the following:

- Meydenbauer Gateway: including canopy walk, parking and adjacent frontage improvements, with stair access to the shoreline. (Pavilion, and Park Lane to be in later phase)

- Gateway Intersection: improvements at Main Street
- East Parcel: developed for parking.
- Lakeside Promenade: interim development to prioritize safe park pedestrian access.

Next Steps

The next steps involve development of construction documentation and securing necessary city, state and federal permits. We anticipate construction documentation and permitting will take approximately three years before construction can begin. Staff will negotiate an architectural and engineering contract and return to Council for approval.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

PA-17 Use a community informed planning process to guide substantial development or redevelopment of park property.

PA-20 Support development of elements of the Grand Connection that provide spaces for gathering and recreation, such as the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront and a lid park over I-405, as well as connections to parks and greenways.

PA-43 Develop parks and facilities in a quality manner to assure attractiveness, full utilization and long-term efficiency.

CE-10 Encourage and support engagement with the entire community, including residents, employees, business owners and visitors to the city or area of the city under consideration.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this direction. Funding for the design and development of Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 is funded by the voter approved 2022 Parks and Open Space Levy.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to proceed with architectural and engineering contracting to support permitting and construction of Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2.
2. Do not direct staff to proceed and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Meydenbauer Bay Park Phasing Report (2025)

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Meydenbauer Bay Park Phasing Report Appendices (2025)
Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan (2010)