



Great Neighborhoods: Neighborhood Area Planning for Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish

Engagement Plan Summary

PROJECT BACKGROUND & TIMELINE

Neighborhood area plans translate citywide policies adopted through the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update into local action by defining neighborhood-specific values, identifying community assets, and influencing urban design opportunities for neighborhood identity, connectivity, and gathering spaces. They will replace outdated subarea plans in Volume 2 and establish an updated neighborhood area vision and policies aligned with the city's broader goals. Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish are established residential neighborhoods with distinct development patterns and demographic characteristics. Lake Hills includes several neighborhood centers, supports a more multimodal transportation network, offers a wider range of housing types, and has experienced significant population growth, making it one of Bellevue's most racially and economically diverse neighborhoods. In contrast, West Lake Sammamish remains predominantly single family, more auto dependent, and has seen relatively limited growth over time. These differing conditions inform the planning approach for each neighborhood as Bellevue prepares for future mobility, housing, and community investment needs. Planning for Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish will begin late summer of 2026 and continue through 2027, with planning for two more neighborhood areas starting in the fall of 2027.

ENGAGEMENT SCOPE

Neighborhood area planning is consistent with Neighborhoods policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan, which direct the city to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood area specific needs, values, and policies when implementing adopted citywide policies. The neighborhood area planning process is organized to allow participants to participate in equitable, informed community dialogue about what is unique and distinctive in their neighborhood area, identify priorities around neighborhood identity, connectivity, and gathering spaces, and consider strategic options in a logical and transparent manner. Particular attention is given to historically underserved communities and identifying any missing voices and perspectives to have representative engagement.

STAKEHOLDER OVERVIEW

Residents of the neighborhood are the heart of the neighborhood area planning process, as they have lived experience and expertise about neighborhood issues and opportunities that need to be addressed in the planning process. Intentional outreach to homeowner associations, neighborhood groups, and individual households will be the core focus of outreach and engagement throughout the process. Within the broad group of residents in the neighborhood, it will be important to include community members that typically do not attend or are unable to participate in typical forms of outreach. Therefore, outreach will be adapted to better reach youth, older adults, foreign-born and non-English-speaking individuals, racial and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, and renters, among others. There are also other parties who work, play, and learn in these

neighborhoods that play an important role in the community that the planning team will seek to engage with, including neighborhood groups, local businesses, landowners, schools (including Bellevue School District), faith-based organizations, affordable housing providers, and nonprofit organizations.

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Phase 1: Discover (August– December 2026) focuses on setting expectations and building awareness about the neighborhood planning process. The planning team will gather community input through mailed and online questionnaires, a formal kick-off event, initial touchpoints with boards and commissions, tabling at community events, business walks, and public space assessments. Key activities will include sharing data, understanding community values, assets, and issues, and engaging with diverse groups to form a comprehensive policy framework that reflects neighborhood values and priorities.

Phase 2: Define (January – April 2027) involves defining and affirming the neighborhood vision, design principles, and priorities that will serve as building blocks of plan policies. Community members will review drafts of the neighborhood vision and policy priorities, and evaluate public spaces for potential improvements to reflect in an urban design framework. Engagement activities will include workshops, boards and commission reviews, and feedback opportunities to further develop draft plans.

Phase 3: Refine (May - August 2027) offers an opportunity for community to review and provide feedback on draft neighborhood area plans, which will include updated vision, goals, policies, and urban design concepts. The focus will be on ensuring community feedback has been incorporated and addressing missing elements. Engagement will involve in-person and online reviews, information sessions, presentations to city boards and commissions, and Planning Commission study sessions where the public can provide comments and ensure the draft plans accurately reflect their input.

Phase 4: Adopt (September – December 2027) is when the staff recommendation on the final draft plans undergo the legislative process with the Planning Commission and City Council for review, recommendation, and ultimately Council adoption. The community can provide comments throughout the legislative process. Unlike earlier phases, feedback will be directed toward decision-making bodies who may then provide direction to staff to incorporate feedback into updated plans. The draft plans will be available for review on relevant web platforms throughout the adoption process.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Successful engagement and communication includes: re-engaging with interested parties involved in earlier planning efforts; incorporating community input from engagement related to Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update (2024); and supporting equitable engagement. Engagement phases and activities will be scheduled to coordinate with the timing of other citywide initiatives so that updated plans are developed in relation to citywide goals, strategies, and outcomes. Since Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish are adjacent neighborhood areas with potentially shared planning issues and stakeholders, engagement will support efficient, coordinated outreach to increase collaboration opportunities between neighborhood areas and reduce community fatigue.

Staff seek to bring diverse perspectives to the process so that participation is representative of the entire neighborhood area. This entails intentional outreach with groups that are less likely or unable to participate

in more typical engagement formats. Touchpoints with organizations such as YouthLink, Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), and Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA) will help staff identify key messages and issues that resonate with people of color, renters, older adults, and younger people. The process will also entail the development of a Racial Equity Toolkit to help staff identify, incorporate, and measure racial equity outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY TABLE

TIME	PHASE	FOCUS	ENGAGEMENT GOALS	ENGAGEMENT TOOLS & ACTIVITIES
May – Jul 2026	0	Relationship Building	▪ Connect with key individuals, community partners, and neighborhood groups. ▪ Gain a broad understanding of neighborhood concerns and opportunities. ▪ Establish opportunities for collaboration on communication and events. ▪ Build list of contacts who want to engage once the project launches.	▪ One-on-one meetings ▪ Tabling at community events
Aug – Dec 2026	1	Discover	▪ Build awareness of Neighborhood Area Planning process, including plan development and privately initiated land use map changes. ▪ Build list of people and organizations who wish to participate in process. ▪ Engage with boards & commissions for their expertise on neighborhood issues to inform engagement opportunities. ▪ Set expectations and clarify timeline for community members. ▪ Understand the community's core values that should guide the neighborhood plan. ▪ Identify community features and assets that define neighborhood identity.	▪ Mailed and online questionnaire ▪ Kick-off event ▪ Presentations to neighborhood groups ▪ Presentations to boards & commissions ▪ Tabling at community events ▪ Business walks ▪ Public Space Assessment
Jan – Apr 2027	2	Define	▪ Share initial draft of neighborhood vision for review. ▪ Share key policy priorities for review. ▪ Work with community to identify urban design principles and opportunities for enhancing public spaces.	▪ Informational session ▪ Student workshops ▪ Public space workshops ▪ Community partner events
May – Aug 2027	3	Refine	▪ Share full draft plan for community review. ▪ Ensure community members know how their input shaped the draft plan. ▪ Incorporate additional community prior to review by the Planning Commission.	▪ Informational open house ▪ Presentations to boards & commissions ▪ Planning Commission Study Sessions
Sep – Dec 2027	4	Adopt	▪ Ensure community members understand the legislative process and know how to share comments with the Planning Commission and City Council.	▪ Review and recommendation by Planning Commission ▪ Review and adoption by City Council

DESCRIPTIONS OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLS & ACTIVITIES

- One-on-one meetings: Staff are available to meet with individuals and community groups interested in learning more about the planning process and opportunities to get involved.
- Tabling at community events: Staff will have a presence at city-led and community-led events to share more information about the planning process and have conversations with interested parties in a more casual setting.
- Mailed and online questionnaire: A questionnaire will be distributed to gain a broad understanding of neighborhood challenges and opportunities, and to build a contact list of people interested in participating.
- Kick-off event: A kick-off event will provide an opportunity for community members to learn about the planning team's approach to updating existing plans and policies and identify values and opportunities that are key to the neighborhood's identity and future vision.
- Informational session: Informational sessions provide an opportunity for the community to reflect feedback from earlier phases and share opportunities for them to get involved.
- Presentations to neighborhood groups: Staff are available to give informational presentations to interested parties, with opportunities for discussion and feedback.
- Presentations to boards & commissions: Beyond the Planning Commission, staff will visit boards & commissions for their expertise on neighborhood issues to inform engagement opportunities early in the process, and to provide feedback on draft policies later on. Formal recommendations from these bodies are not required.
- Public space assessments: Staff will organize staff-led and self-guided walks with community members to evaluate and document public space opportunities and challenges within the neighborhood.
- Community partner events: Staff will seek more targeted engagement with community partners to expand reach to audiences less likely or unable to participate in typical engagement formats, such as renters and non-English speakers.
- Collaboration with local schools: Staff will seek to partner with local schools to engage students through neighborhood walks and in-class planning workshops.
- Business engagement: In coordination with the city's Economic Development Team, staff will connect with both small and large businesses using mailers and in-person visits.
- Public space workshops: Staff will host activities during the Define phase for participants to explore different ideas and design strategies to improve public spaces in their neighborhood.

DESCRIPTIONS OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLS & ACTIVITIES

- Informational open house: An open house will provide an opportunity for the community to get an overview of the draft plan and provide feedback on key policy areas the plan addresses.
- Planning Commission and City Council study sessions: The public will be notified of and invited to Planning Commission and City Council study sessions to provide oral and written testimony directly to decision-making bodies.