

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

September 16, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Bhargava, Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis and Sumadiwiryia

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

Mayor Robinson said she wanted to take a few moments to comment on political violence in our country. She said everyone participating in the meeting is here to be a part of the local political process. She said one of the things she appreciates about Bellevue residents is the ability to see our neighbors as people despite our differences and to see our diversity of thought as a strength. She said political violence has no place in our society and it only damages our ability to hold important dialogues as we create a better future together. She requested a moment of silence to recognize the far-reaching impacts of political violence on all communities and to honor those affected by this violence.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

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

(a) Teen Mental Health Awareness Week Proclamation

Councilmember Hamilton read the proclamation declaring September 19, 2025, as Teen Mental Health Awareness Day in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to play a role in supporting the mental health and well-being of teens in our community.

Monik Martinez, Executive Director, 4 Tomorrow, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said mental health is at the heart of a thriving community and 4 Tomorrow works with youths and their families to navigate mental health concerns. She thanked the City for its leadership and partnership in this work.

(b) National Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian read the proclamation recognizing September 15-October 15, 2025 as National Hispanic Heritage Month in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to join in celebrating the traditions, stories and contributions of our Hispanic neighbors through programs, ceremonies and activities.

Tina Morales, Program Manager, Youth Eastside Services (YES), thanked the Council for the proclamation and expressed appreciation for City staff who are dedicated to public service and cultural diversity. She said she wanted to dedicate the proclamation to young people and noted that she has been working with the Latino/Latine community in Bellevue for the past 22 years. She said everyone in Bellevue should be proud of this community. She encouraged everyone to join in celebrations and events over the coming month.

(c) National Diaper Need Awareness Week Proclamation

Councilmember Sumadiwiryia read the proclamation recognizing September 15-21, 2025, as National Diaper Need Awareness Week in Bellevue. She urged everyone to support diaper banks, diaper drives and organizations that collect and distribute diapers to families in need to ensure that all children can thrive and reach their full potential.

Helen Banks Routon, Director of Development and Community Relations, KidVantage NW, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said diapers are expensive and essential for protecting babies and toddlers against infections and other health problems.

Diane Kuslich, Board Member and past President of KidVantage NW, thanked the Council for supporting and spreading awareness regarding the need for diapers throughout the community.

Angela Schmeil, a volunteer with KidVantage NW, thanked the Council for the proclamation and for supporting National Diaper Need Awareness Week. She said her children have also enjoyed volunteering with the organization, which allows volunteers as young as 12 years old.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis 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. 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 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) Julia Tai, representing the Harmony townhome community near the PorchLight campus, said she served on the City's PorchLight Good Neighbor Agreement committee in 2021 and has served on PorchLight's community advisory group since its formation in 2020. She said she supports their mission and wants them to succeed. She expressed concern about the recent murder near the facility. She said problems have been escalating around PorchLight's campus and the neighborhood in recent months and the community's concerns have not been fully addressed by the organization or the City. She noted a number of incidents including men sleeping on the sidewalks on 139th Avenue SE, men loitering and drinking on Eastgate Way and 139th Avenue SE, and multiple encampments on the greenbelt across from the townhomes. She said the townhome community was told that they are responsible for cleaning up their property adjacent to Sunset Park even though they did not create the mess left by individuals associated with the shelter. She said she has observed encampments inside the Eastgate Park and Ride garage, increased trash and food waste, and men sleeping in the bus shelters near Bellevue College's west entrance. She said most of these incidents are not reflected in local crime statistics. However, they have significantly affected the safety and security of the neighborhood.
- (b) Susanna Chung said she has lived one mile north of the PorchLight campus location for more than 25 years and has been active with PorchLight's community advisory group since its inception more than five years ago. She said the community supports PorchLight's mission. However, there have been negative impacts to the community. She said the seriousness of incidents has escalated, including two previous deaths and the recent murder near the shelter and Bellevue College. She expressed concern about public safety and about the men who are turned away from the shelter and left to roam in the neighborhood. She encouraged efforts to prevent people from sleeping in public spaces and requested increased police patrols in the area.
- (c) Melissa Danberg, a Newport Hills resident for 46 years, said she has been engaged in the recent Newport Neighborhood Area Plan update process. She and a number of residents attended the July 23 Planning Commission public hearing regarding the plan. She thanked Commissioner Carolynn Ferris for recommending that the commission not move forward with a vote until policies related to the commercial district can be discussed for inclusion in the plan. She said a list of items for consideration was submitted by the Newport Hills Community Club. She asked the Council to return the Newport plan to the Planning Commission for a discussion regarding the commercial district. She expressed concern that the sub-neighborhoods along the lake have different interests and priorities than the residents on the hill.

- (d) Mahogany Tyler said she has lived in Bellevue for five years, first in the downtown and now at Polaris at Eastgate. She expressed concern regarding open drug usage near the bus stop. She said groups of men occasionally block the sidewalks and she and her 7-year-old son are forced to walk in the street to pass them. She described a recent incident involving police officers with dogs running throughout the area. She said she monitors the police scanner and nearly every day sees incidents involving Polaris, PorchLight and the immediate area. She said residents are worried. She has lived there for one year and has observed an escalation in incidents.
- (e) Sue Baugh, a Lake Heights resident, expressed support for the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan update. She commended City staff for their outreach and work with the community including in-person and virtual meetings, surveys and public hearings. She said staff seemed open to new ideas and suggestions. She said staff highlighted throughout the process that the plan focuses on the public realm. She acknowledged that some residents would like the plan to also address commercial space. Ms. Baugh said she attended Planning Commission meetings and felt the commission fully addressed the plan. She encouraged the Council to approve the plan as presented.
- (f) Fay Hou, a Newport Hills resident, said the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan states that 80 percent of Newport homes are owner-occupied. She said that is false. She said there are 22 houses on her street and more than 60 percent are owned by investors. She said she communicated this to the Planning Commission a number of times but the information has not been corrected in the community profile. She noted businesses in homes along her street. She asked the Council to remand the plan back to the Planning Commission and to ask staff to correct or remove the information regarding home ownership in Newport Hills. She asked the Council to consider a policy to track investor ownership of homes, unlicensed rentals and unpermitted home-based businesses.
- (g) Martin Seelig requested that the Council remove from its September 23 Consent Calendar the Cedar Terrace Pump Station project to allow staff and the property owners to consider new information that will benefit the City. He proposed that the family that owns the property grant the City the sewer easement. The City would then enable the construction of the same number of apartments that could have been built if the sanitary sewer had not been constructed. The advantages to the City are: 1) eliminates ongoing maintenance of existing sewer pump station, 2) increases housing density, and 3) eliminates the time-consuming condemnation process. Mr. Seelig said they have been working with City staff and he is confident that a solution can be achieved between the parties. On another topic, he suggested the City create a faith and belief advisory committee.
- (h) Alex Tsimmerman commented regarding Agenda Item 8(b) related to an agreement with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to accept grant funding to implement heat pump incentives for income-qualified households. He asked why PSE does not provide discounts for low-income seniors and disabled individuals. He said the City of Seattle provides a 50-percent discount. He expressed concern about the overall cost of living.

- (i) Heidi Dean followed up on Melissa Danberg's earlier comments. Ms. Dean expressed concern that the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan lays the groundwork for HOMA (Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas) implementation. She said the plan does not take into consideration the importance of the neighborhood's commercial district. She expressed concern about a potential upzone in the district in the future that will result in a significant increase in housing and a small percentage of commercial space. She said the interests of residents on top of the hill differ from those of residents near the lake. Ms. Dean said she appreciated Carolynn Ferris, Planning Commissioner, for listening to residents and suggesting that the commission delay its recommendation. She said she and another resident submitted proposed language regarding the commercial district. She said the Crossroads plan includes a number of policies to protect its commercial district and small businesses. She said Newport residents have been working with the City for years requesting help related to preserving their commercial district. She would like to see policies that protect and honor Newport businesses.
- 5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
- 6. Report of the City Manager
 - (a) Fall 2025 Public Safety Update

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced staff's public safety update.

Wendell Shirley, Chief of Police, said the Bellevue Police Department focuses on the reduction of crime, a reduction in the fear of crime and enhancing the quality of life for those who live, work and visit Bellevue. He noted the department's PIE philosophy: Prevention, Intervention and Enforcement.

Andrew Popochock, Assistant Chief of Police, presented current crime statistics and compared them to crime rates one year ago. He said there has been a significant reduction in crime in Bellevue. The three primary categories of crimes are persons crimes, property crimes and society crimes. Property crimes represent the largest percentage of crimes and have decreased by 34 percent. Persons crimes have increased by two percent and society crimes have decreased by seven percent.

Assistant Chief Popochock said shoplifting is down by 19 percent, motor vehicle theft is down by 69 percent, motor vehicle prowls are down by 40 percent and theft of mail is down 76 percent. In the area of persons crimes, rapes and sexual assaults are down by 38 percent, simple assault is down by 10 percent, violations of orders increased by 14 percent, aggravated assault increased by 17 percent and harassment increased by 23 percent. Mr. Popochock said the police department hired a Domestic Violence Advocate to address some of those trends.

Assistant Chief Popochock said the police department launched emphasis patrols in May after experiencing a 163 percent increase in speeding tickets. As a result, there has been a 117 percent increase in speeding tickets since that time and a 21 percent decrease in traffic collisions.

Chief Shirley said there have been 47,836 calls for service in 2025 versus 52,095 calls at this point in 2024. The average response time was three minutes and 52 seconds.

The Community Crisis Assistance Team (CCAT) was funded by the Council in 2023 and includes mental health professionals for crisis response team operations. The program has responded to assist 1,472 individuals and 59 percent of those are repeat contacts. Chief Shirley said the Bellevue Light Rail Unit (BLU) was established to create a positive, safe environment on Sound Transit's Link light rail system. He said there have been no major incidents in Bellevue on light rail and ridership is increasing. He noted that light rail usage is anticipated to increase significantly during the 2026 World Cup and other sporting events.

Drew Anderson, Public Information Officer, said community engagement activities include the police department's online dashboard of crime statistics and other information, Captains' weekly meetings with community stakeholders and non-profit organizations, firearms exchange, distribution of free steering wheel locks, self-defense course for women, BPD's summer youth camp and participation in the International School's Career Day.

Chief Shirley said the BPD continues to position itself to be prepared for the future. He said they continue to hire the best candidates they can find and to ensure that the organizational structure is ready to meet the community's needs. He thanked the Council, city manager and the community for their support and the men and women of the BPD for their hard work and dedication.

(b) Eastgate Housing Campus Update: PorchLight Shelter and Plymouth Crossing

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the Eastgate housing campus with the PorchLight shelter and Plymouth Crossing supportive housing.

Bianca Siegl, Director, Office of Housing, said a number of staff in different departments are involved in this work. She recalled that the housing complex with the PorchLight men's shelter, Plymouth Crossing permanent supportive housing with on-site services and Polaris at Eastgate affordable workforce apartments opened in 2023. She said the City works with agencies and surrounding neighborhoods to support the success of these services within the community. Plymouth Crossing houses 90 individuals who were formerly homeless and the shelter assisted more than 800 men last year.

Ms. Siegl said safety and community engagement were an early focus of the housing complex project with the development of the Good Neighbor Agreement and advisory committee for the shelter. She acknowledged the community's concerns regarding unhoused individuals in the surrounding neighborhood and said the City is working with its partners to improve outcomes for residents in and around the campus. She said there are multiple weekly visits to key areas around the housing campus and the community. When unhoused individuals are encountered, they are assisted in moving to a more appropriate or safer location. Ms. Siegl said the men's shelter maintains the Good Neighbor Agreement and engages in monthly community advisory board meetings, which include staff from the BPD and Plymouth Crossing.

Plymouth Crossing provides 92 apartments for formerly homeless adults as well as supportive services (e.g., behavioral health clinic, nurse on site, case management). The building is staffed 24 hours per day and has controlled access. More than half of the units are filled via local referrals.

Ms. Siegl said the City's response to issues and concerns related to the housing complex include outreach, BPD's CCAT program, Bellevue Fire Department's CARES (Community Advocates for Referral and Education Services) program, community advisory group meetings, agency staff coordination, monitoring of nearby greenbelt areas, human services contract monitoring and roadway restriping and lighting. The action plan for the PorchLight shelter includes establishing an ad-hoc advisory group action subcommittee, improving the shelter's bed reservation system and seeking funding for an additional outreach position. Residents will no longer need to be on campus in the morning to secure a bed that night and the shelter has increased the consequences for violating the code of conduct. Plymouth Crossing plans to launch enhanced on-site medical support services and to begin documenting shared expectations with the BPD.

Ms. Siegl said the City monitors metrics related to program outcomes and first responder calls. Earlier this year, the BPD conducted a safety analysis of the King County Metro park and ride site and is working with Metro staff to enhance safety. The BPD is also exploring assigning staff to the Eastgate and Factoria substation, which has not been provided over the past few years. The City's outreach staff is increasing its weekly visits to the Eastgate area. Ms. Siegl said frequently asked questions have been updated on the City's website and the City is evaluating community transparency and expectations tools for the permanent supportive housing.

Ms. Siegl said homelessness and housing instability are complex, regional issues and the City continues to seek the best possible outcomes for everyone in the community. She encouraged residents to use the MyBellevue app to report concerns about unhoused individuals in the community who are in need of support.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the report and requested another update in approximately one month. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested a future study session discussion about the status and issues. Mayor Robinson noted the format of the item would be discussed with staff.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Bhargava seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Ordinance No. 6858 to amend BCC 4.32.070 to allow the City to dispose of surplus personal property originally acquired for public utility purposes without a resolution or hearing, provided the surplus property to be disposed has an

estimated value of fifty thousand dollars or less; to provide for severability; and to establish an effective date.

- (b) Ordinance No. 6859 to: 1) authorize execution of an Agreement with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to accept \$400,000 in grant funding from the PSE Decarbonization Program for Energy Smart Eastside (ESE) to implement heat pump incentives for income-qualified households; 2) amend the 2025-2026 budget of the Operating Grants, Donations, and Special Reserve Fund to increase the appropriation by \$400,000; and authorizing expenditures of said grant funds.
- (c) Ordinance No. 6860: 1) approving an update of the City of Bellevue Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Plan for 2025 through 2029; 2) authorizing execution of a two-year interlocal funding agreement (and supplements if necessary) with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to accept up to \$515,000.00 of state funds to support the City of Bellevue's CTR Program; and, 3) amending the 2025-2026 Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund to increase the appropriation by \$515,000.
- (d) Resolution No. 10537 authorizing execution of a professional services agreement with Site Workshop in the amount of \$501,515, plus all applicable taxes, for architectural design and engineering services to develop a master plan for a new neighborhood park in the BelRed neighborhood.
- (e) Resolution No. 10538 authorizing execution of amendment to the Energy Smart Eastside Boost Heat Pump Reimbursement Contract with Hopelink, increasing the contract from \$4,810,090 to an amount not to exceed \$8,278,810 and extending the end date from December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2026.

At 7:18 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:32 p.m.

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Study Session Items

- (a) 2025 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments: Downtown Center Redesignation - Update the Downtown Subarea Plan to redesignate Downtown Bellevue as a Regional Growth and Metro Center as part of the Puget Sound Regional Council's Regional Centers Monitoring and Redesignation process

City Manager Carlson recalled that the Council initiated an update to the Downtown Subarea Plan in January 2025. She said tonight's agenda item would focus on the Planning Commission's recommendation. Ms. Carlson said staff is seeking Council direction to return with an ordinance to adopt amendments to the Downtown Subarea Plan.

Thara Johnson, Planning Director, Community Development Department, said the plan update focused on supporting the redesignation of Downtown Bellevue as a regional growth and metro

center by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The designation qualifies the City for federal transportation funding, is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policy to maintain the metro regional growth center designation, and meets the requirements for regional centers under PSRC's Vision 2050 growth strategy. Ms. Johnson said if the Council approves moving forward, the next steps are to advance this through the PSRC process, which includes review by the Growth Management Policy Board and the Executive Board. Ms. Johnson recalled that the Council previously provided direction to focus the update on PSRC's criteria for the redesignation of Downtown Bellevue.

Kate Nesse, Planning Manager, said the Planning Commission held two study sessions regarding the PSRC designation and held a public hearing on July 9. The regional growth center redesignation request involves: 1) update of data and descriptions of growth and development, 2) add description of equitable engagement, 3) update of maps, and 4) update of policies to address residential and business displacement, planning for historically underserved communities and environmental impacts. Due to the narrow scope of the update, public engagement was targeted at downtown stakeholders, including small businesses.

Negin Khanloo, Chair, Planning Commission, said the commission voted to recommend adoption of the amendments to the Downtown Subarea Plan by the Council. She said downtown Bellevue is a cultural, commercial, entertainment and residential center for the Eastside and the region. She said the commission heard from the public and made revisions based on that input.

Ms. Johnson requested Council direction to direct staff to return with an ordinance to adopt the amendments to the Downtown Subarea Plan.

Mayor Robinson said Bellevue has experienced tremendous growth in the downtown core over the past five years. She asked staff to comment on the pros and cons of the regional growth center designation.

Ms. Johnson said Bellevue has had the designation for many years. She said one advantage is the City's ability to be competitive in pursuing federal transportation funding. She said Bellevue is both a growth center and a metro center, which is a higher designation than growth center. She said the housing and job targets reflect ambitious goals. However, the City is making progress and anticipates it will be able to meet the targets.

Responding to Councilmember Sumadiwirya, Ms. Johnson confirmed that access to federal funding is a significant advantage of the designation. She said the City has been successful in obtaining federal funding through the PSRC process. Ms. Johnson said the designation is consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies and the City's growth strategy. Ms. Sumadiwirya asked how the designation benefits the overall community. Ms. Johnson said a number of the proposed Downtown Subarea Plan amendments are consistent with citywide policies in multiple sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for pursuing the redesignation, noting that Bellevue's growth is focused in the downtown. He asked whether there are disadvantages to the growth center designation. Ms. Johnson said it sets ambitious goals and the City could lose the

designation if it fails to meet those goals. Councilmember Lee asked about the definition for historically underserved communities. Dr. Nesse said the term refers to communities that have typically been left out of local planning processes or have not benefited from growth. She said there is a specific definition in the Comprehensive Plan and PSRC requires planning to address underserved populations. In further response to Councilmember Lee, Dr. Nesse said landmarks include Bellevue Square. She said Bellevue Square representatives have indicated that the current description of the facility is outdated.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked everyone for their hard work and expressed support for the regional growth center designation. He noted that Downtown Bellevue is the third most dense regional growth center following South Lake Union and Downtown Seattle. He said he appreciated the Council's past and current leadership in this area, staff's professionalism and stakeholder involvement. Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Johnson said a comprehensive review and update of the Downtown Subarea Plan will be conducted after all of the neighborhood subarea plans are updated.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the thorough presentation and expressed support for the proposed amendments. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Johnson confirmed that the amendments address both residential and commercial displacement. She said similar policies are in the Comprehensive Plan to be applied citywide. She said the economic development plan update currently underway includes strategies to address small business displacement as well. In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Dr. Nesse said the scope of this Downtown Subarea Plan update was very narrow. She said staff was careful in its stakeholder outreach to manage expectations about the targeted nature of the amendments.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked staff and the Planning Commission for their work. He asked about significant infrastructure needs that could result from growth. Dr. Nesse said the updated growth targets in the Downtown Subarea Plan are the same as those reflected in the last Comprehensive Plan update. She said the subarea plan amendments provide resources to support that growth.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Chair Khanloo said the Planning Commission had an extensive discussion about displacements and revised the displacement policies to avoid mandates. Ms. Khanloo said there was discussion about Kemper Development Company properties and related landmarks as well. Mr. Malakoutian thanked staff for the presentation.

Mr. Malakoutian said the Downtown Subarea Plan is a foundation for Bellevue's future. He said he appreciated the commission's thoughtful approach to aligning the plan with the City's equity, sustainability and growth management goals. He commented on the importance of the downtown to growth, livability, economic vitality and as a cultural center. He thanked members of the public who were engaged in the update process.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Ms. Johnson said PSRC's Vision 2050 plan sets the stage for future planning efforts. She said PSRC is midway through the process of updating the regional transportation plan, which is the primary regional mechanism for allocating federal funding. She said PSRC is sponsoring a number of public outreach meetings related to the regional

transportation plan over the next couple of months. Ms. Johnson said she could follow up with more information if desired.

Regarding displacement, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked how the City can plan to measure and implement the equity and displacement prevention policies. Ms. Johnson said one tool is the economic development strategic plan, which is currently being updated. She said the economic development team has a number of programs where they work with small businesses to address displacement and assist in finding alternate locations. Planning staff will work on residential displacement in conjunction with the City's Office of Housing and affordable housing programs. Mr. Malakoutian said he would like to set a goal of no business displacements. He concurred with Councilmember Bhargava's concern regarding infrastructure capacity to support growth.

Mayor Robinson thanked Chair Khanloo and staff for the presentation and discussion.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to return with an ordinance adopting the amendments to the Downtown Subarea Plan and with the general documenting ordinance for all proposed 2025 annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs). Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

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

(b) 2025 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments: Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the 2025 annual CPAs adopting the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans.

Ms. Johnson said staff is seeking direction to return with ordinances approving proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the two updated neighborhood plans and approving the general documenting ordinance for all 2025 annual CPAs. She said the Comprehensive Plan provides citywide policies (Volume 1) and neighborhood-specific goals and policies (Volume 2). This long-range plan sets policy that guides the City's actions, decisions and capital investments. The Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue neighborhood plans were adopted in 2021, and the Eastgate and Factoria neighborhood planning efforts are underway.

Dr. Nesse noted that the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan was last updated in the late 1980s and the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan was updated in 1994. She highlighted the planning process for the two neighborhoods since the work was initiated in October 2024.

Teun Deuling, Senior Planner, said staff conducted an equitable and inclusive engagement process focusing on neighborhood residents and involving a variety of activities and meetings, targeted outreach, online engagement opportunities and broad communications to raise awareness about the planning effort.

The Neighborhood Area Plan elements include neighborhood identity, environment, neighborhood and mixed use centers, mobility and access, and community gathering places. The plans include a vision statement, community context, demographic profile, policy summaries for each plan element, concept maps illustrating the urban design framework, and overarching goals and policies for each element.

Planning Commission Chair Negin Khanloo said the Planning Commission discussed the Crossroads plan during three study sessions (October 9, 2024; April 9 and June 11, 2025), followed by a public hearing and final action on July 10. The commission voted unanimously to recommend the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan presented for consideration tonight. Ms. Khanloo said the commission recognized the important role of the Crossroads area as a cultural and transportation center. She said key updates of importance to the commission were policies to support active transportation, transit access, mixed uses and the Crossroads shopping center as a neighborhood gathering place. During the public hearing, the commission heard support for the proposed updates.

Mr. Deuling said the recommended policies resulted from an iterative process with the community and that feedback informed a range of changes and refinements up to the July public hearing. Policies in the Crossroads plan address small business retention, strengthening the business district, the designation of the Crossroads area as a countywide center, strengthening community gathering places, and improving mobility options. He said Crossroads residents value the proximity to services, amenities and transportation options. He said the community supports pedestrian, bike and transit amenities. Mr. Deuling said the community expressed support for increased coordination with the Bellevue School District for access to neighborhood schools as community gathering spaces.

Chair Khanloo said the commission discussed the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan on October 9, 2024 and on April 9 and June 11, 2025. Following a public hearing, the commission voted unanimously in favor of the proposed plan on July 23. She said a key focus of the update for the commission were policies to support a neighborhood center anchored by a shopping center. She said the commission honored the close-knit and connected character of the neighborhood and the strong connection to nature. Prior to the public hearing, many residents asked for more time to review the proposed updates to the plan. The commission heard a number of suggested revisions during the public hearing and made certain changes based on that input.

Dr. Nesse commented on the difference between the neighborhood plans and the HOMA planning initiative. She said the HOMA program implements policies found in the citywide plan. However, it will have an impact on parcels in the Newport neighborhood center. She said the planning process did not address any land use changes. Dr. Nesse said the Newport plan focuses on supporting a walkable community with a strong connection to nature and to convenient shopping and service opportunities. She said there are six policies focused on the continued evolution of the neighborhood center as the commercial heart of the neighborhood. As a mixed use center, the policies support a mix of commercial spaces that support small businesses and residential space. Dr. Nesse said the plan element dedicated to community gathering spaces focuses on providing for the evolving needs of residents.

Dr. Nesse said the themes heard through the Newport planning process included an appreciation of the community's friendliness, safety and convenience and the many trails and natural areas. She said residents expressed support for improved access to green spaces and for working with the Bellevue School District regarding the future of their property. Residents strongly support a vibrant neighborhood shopping district, more indoor gathering spaces and cultural facilities, reducing traffic congestion and improvements to walking connections, bike lanes and sidewalks.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff, the Planning Commission and the community for their work. He said both of the neighborhood plans highlight the unique character of the areas and align with citywide priorities.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Chair Khanloo said the commission had extensive conversation about the need for enhanced pedestrian connectivity in the Newport area, bike amenities and traffic. Crossroads residents were similarly interested in pedestrian amenities and connectivity.

Mr. Malakoutian asked whether there are policies to mitigate the displacement of small businesses. Chair Khanloo said the commission included policies about how to encourage and provide incentives for small businesses. She said the City's economic development staff work with small businesses facing potential displacement.

Mr. Malakoutian noted a low response rate to a mailed survey and asked whether staff has addressed ways to increase responses in the future. Mr. Deuling said the Eastgate and Factoria planning efforts were recently launched and the community questionnaire was sent out approximately a month earlier in the process to allow more time for public engagement.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian suggested it would be helpful for the public if staff could provide a narrative summarizing how the community's input was incorporated into the Neighborhood Area Plan policies.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for the presentation and commended them on the public engagement process including 20 meetings with neighborhood leaders and groups and targeted outreach to youth, older adults, foreign-born and non-English speaking individuals and racial and ethnic minority groups. He noted significant community involvement in the planning processes.

Mr. Hamilton commented on policies S-CX-25 and S-CX-26, which recommend improvements to the pedestrian and bike network facilities for access to frequent transit network stops and light rail stations. He opined that the policies are too narrowly focused and suggested revising the language to refer to pedestrian and bike facilities that connect to a wide range of destinations (e.g., shopping, medical offices, library).

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said the Crossroads area does not have a formal neighborhood association. He suggested that staff work with residents to help them organize and increase their involvement in City planning efforts.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Johnson said there was strong support for the neighborhood policies in the Crossroads area. She said the Newport area contains a number of sub-neighborhoods with differing interests.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis recalled Fay Hou's comments during oral communications regarding home occupancy rates in the Newport area. He noted she requested that staff revise the home occupancy rate reflected in the neighborhood plan. Dr. Nesse said the demographic information reflected in the plan was based on 2018-2022 data. She acknowledged that rates have likely decreased since that time, as noted by Ms. Hou. Dr. Nesse said the City wants to provide the same neighborhood whether people rent or own their housing.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he would like to see staff follow up with the Bellevue School District regarding residents' interest in collaborating with the district and accessing school facilities for community events and activities.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked staff, the Planning Commission and the community for their work and involvement. He asked how staff ensured that underrepresented populations were successfully engaged in the process. Mr. Deuling said staff uses demographic information to understand the composition of the community. He said they often work with community organizations to reach individuals and groups that might not traditionally be involved in local government. Dr. Nesse said staff's approach is to build long-term relationships within the community.

Responding to Mr. Bhargava, Ms. Johnson said that any development proposal would go through a review process and traffic impacts would be assessed at that point. She said staff is currently updating the Mobility Implementation Plan, which will address how the City can prioritize and improve multimodal connections and reduce vehicle traffic. She said any development proposal must mitigate transportation impacts.

Councilmember Lee complimented the Planning Commission's review and engagement with the public. He expressed concern, however, that working with the same community organizations could miss other underrepresented individuals or groups. He suggested finding ways to generate new contacts in the community.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Johnson said the Crossroads and Newport neighborhoods had different priorities, which resulted in different policies for each area. Dr. Nesse acknowledged that there were differences in opinions between the Newport sub-neighborhoods. She said the planning process focused on the areas of agreement to provide a path forward that most residents can support. Regarding the role of community organizations, Dr. Nesse said the City values its longtime partners and is always trying to identify and engage with new individuals and groups. For the Newport planning process, this included meeting with a group of Korean American moms at the library.

In further response to Mr. Lee, Mr. Deuling said a central element of the planning work was urban design. He said the plans include concept maps, which were instrumental in gathering

feedback throughout the neighborhood areas to identify priorities related to public spaces and community gathering spaces.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryia thanked the community for their extensive involvement in the planning process. Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Ms. Johnson said staff will evaluate the low survey response rate and consider other options that might increase involvement, including smaller group meetings. Mr. Deuling said the survey was provided in the top languages identified for each neighborhood. In further response to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Ms. Johnson said the City can provide survey assistance to individuals with visual disabilities.

Ms. Sumadiwiryia noted that residents of both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhoods identified an interest in more community gathering spaces and in accessing Bellevue School District facilities. She suggested considering further exploration to determine common priorities across different neighborhoods citywide. Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Ms. Johnson said the plans focus on sustainability and limiting environmental impacts. Ms. Johnson said that any development application will be required to go through an environmental review.

Mayor Robinson said the Crossroads and Newport neighborhoods are very different but have similar needs and concerns. They both value their commercial areas and want more bike and pedestrian connections in their neighborhoods. Ms. Robinson said she was pleased to see the interest in bike lanes. However, she wondered whether the City will be able to provide those and other elements identified in the plans.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Councilmembers indicated support for Councilmember Hamilton's suggestion above to revise the language regarding bike and pedestrian connections.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to prepare ordinances for final action at a future meeting to adopt the proposed amendments to the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan and the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan, including Councilmember Hamilton's recommendation, and to adopt all of the 2025 annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs). Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

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

11. Land Use Reports: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions: None.

13. Written Reports: None.

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 9:14 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw