

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

Date: May 21, 2025

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Teun Deuling, AICP – Senior Planner, Community Development

Subject: Great Neighborhoods: Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plan Updates
For information and discussion - no Board action requested

Staff request that the Parks and Community Services Board review draft policies for both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans, especially as they relate to parks, recreation and open space elements, and provide comments to help ensure that the draft policies provide clear and adequate direction to inform related services and investments in both neighborhood areas.

Staff will consider and incorporate input from the Parks and Community Services Board as part of staff's recommendation on final draft policies that will be reviewed with the Planning Commission in June. A formal recommendation is not necessary.

Background

The neighborhood area plans are in Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. A neighborhood area plan articulates a vision consistent with the citywide vision detailed in Volume 1, sets priorities, and identifies future actions to realize the community's vision at the neighborhood level. The scope centers around strengthening a neighborhood area's unique identity and community gathering places as Bellevue prepares and plans for its well-managed future growth.

The Parks and Community Services Board reviewed the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element of Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan and made a recommendation to Planning Commission on the updates on February 13, 2024. Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan on October 22, 2024.

In 2018, Council launched the Great Neighborhoods program that provides a strategic, community-driven process for developing neighborhood area plans. The Great Neighborhoods program provides a structure for developing plans for the sixteen neighborhood areas that cover the full extent of the city. See [Attachment A](#) for a map depicting the neighborhood area boundaries.

As part of the City's Great Neighborhoods program, Council initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs) to update the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans in 2024-2025 on September 17, 2024. The objective of the Great Neighborhood program is to adopt plans for each neighborhood area that are relevant to their community's distinctive identity, adaptability, social connectivity, and core needs with a high level of community ownership of the plan.

This study session is part of several Board and Commission meetings intended to inform the Planning Commission recommendation to Council for the CPAs for both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans during the summer of 2025. The review and adoption of a neighborhood area plan follows the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process as set forth in the Land Use Code.

Planning Process

Neighborhood area planning is consistent with Neighborhoods policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan (NH-17 and NH-19), which direct the city to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood area specific values and policies when implementing adopted citywide policies. As such, 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, 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.

The neighborhood area planning process takes place in four phases, following project initiation and relationship building, as depicted graphically in [Attachment B](#).

Community Engagement in Phase 1 (Discover)

Phase 1 (Discover) began in October and went through December of 2024, focusing on learning and discovery. The primary purpose of this first phase was to learn how the neighborhood community sees itself, their values, and qualities they enjoy about their neighborhood today and would want to see in the future.

Important values that came up in Crossroads included a desire for more play, creativity, sustainability, and access to green space. In Newport, key values that the community identified were a sense of beauty and quiet from the many trails and natural areas, and a desire for more community gatherings and social connections.

A full summary of engagement activities and inputs gathered during Phase 1 (Discover) is provided in [Attachment C](#) and [Attachment D](#), respectively.

Community Engagement in Phase 2 (Define)

Phase 2 (Define) engagement began in January and went through March of 2025. Shared values and unique elements contributing to a neighborhood's identity identified by the community in Phase 1 (Discover) informed draft plan elements, including a vision statement and key policy moves, that were developed during Phase 2 (Define). The draft vision statement and initial policy moves were shared with the community for their review and inputs through both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities.

One area of focus during Phase 2 (Define) was urban design. Urban design is the practice of planning and designing the physical environment of a community. Within the scope of neighborhood area plans, urban design can improve the design and function of

public spaces, including community gathering spaces, parks, plazas, streets, trails, natural areas, and public art. City staff hosted a public space event series in March and April consisting of activities and workshops to provide feedback on public space improvements the community wants to see in their neighborhood. An overview of the engagement activities in Phase 2 (Define) is provided in Attachment E.

Neighborhood Area Plan Policies: Current Progress

The city published draft policies for the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans on May 1 for public review that reflect community feedback from earlier engagement phases. This study session highlights a subset of draft policies relevant to the Parks and Community Services Board. Attachments F and G include a list of all draft policies for the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans, respectively.

Where citywide policies in the Comprehensive Plan (Volume 1) sufficiently address neighborhood-specific priorities, no neighborhood area plan policies are drafted to avoid duplication and misalignment. Neighborhood area plan policies need to be consistent with citywide policies and are meant to:

1. Localize citywide policies that reflect neighborhood priorities through extensive community engagement.
2. Develop local policies to address issues and opportunities to help the community grow in a unique way.

Draft Policies – Crossroads

A draft vision statement was developed for Crossroads.

Vision Statement

Crossroads is a complete, urban neighborhood with convenient access to a variety of destinations that fosters diversity and embraces its natural qualities. This vision sets the foundation for draft policies around parks and open spaces:

Neighborhood Identity

- S-CX-3** Integrate accessible signage and wayfinding into streetscapes and public spaces that use multiple languages and are culturally relevant to enhance neighborhood identity.
- S-CX-6** Connect Crossroads Park with the surrounding commercial and residential areas through a safe, active and functional pedestrian environment that is integrated with the architecture, landscaping and signage of the surrounding land uses.

Community Gathering Places

- S-CX-17** Acquire parcels suitable for mini-parks where such parcels can have active transportation access, especially west of 152nd Avenue NE.

- S-CX-20** Collaborate with the Bellevue School District to strengthen school sites' function in Crossroads as safe and welcoming community gathering places.

Mobility and Access

- S-CX-21** Recognize the mobility needs of people of all ages and abilities when planning and designing city streets, shared use paths and trails.

Environment

- S-CX-29** Encourage and support increased visibility and access to natural areas, especially the Kelsey Creek Basin, for their enjoyment by the community

Draft Policies – Newport

A draft vision statement was developed for Newport.

Vision Statement

Newport is a connected neighborhood with strong social bonds and a deep relationship with the natural environment. This vision sets the foundation for draft policies around parks and open spaces:

Neighborhood Identity

- S-NP-5** Preserve existing visual features such as trees and hilltops, public views of water, and open space in new development when feasible.

Community Gathering Places

- S-NP-13** Encourage the Bellevue School District to include community-serving uses in the redevelopment of its property and support the use of surplus Bellevue School District property as third places.

- S-NP-15** Support multi-functional, programmable parks and other outdoor spaces for sports, cultural activities and recreation opportunities that meet the needs of the community.

- S-NP-16** Acquire parcels suitable for mini-parks, especially where such parcels can be connected to the trail system.

Mobility and Access

- S-NP-21** Link trails across the neighborhood by expanding the public trail network as land and funding become available in collaboration with other public land owners.

- S-NP-22** Collaborate with King County and other managers of local trails to implement signage to help people identify entrances to and connect between trail systems.

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- S-NP-24** Work with Newcastle and King County to connect to trail systems across jurisdictions.
- S-NP-25** Work with school districts to enhance trails that pass through or are adjacent to school district property and connect them to the rest of the trail system.
- S-NP-29** Expand access to Lake Washington and its tributary creeks and streams in ways that support their ecological functions and contribute to educational or recreational opportunities for the community.

Environment

- S-NP-30** Work with partners to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat in Coal Creek Park, Newport Hills Woodlawn Park, Mercer Slough Nature Park and the riparian and green corridors between and adjacent to them.
- S-NP-33** Add information signage throughout the public network about the natural areas, the animal habitat, and how people can contribute to the health of the environment.

Discussion

At the May 21 study session, staff request guidance from the Parks and Community Services Board on the following:

- *Do draft Crossroads and Newport policies provide adequate direction to inform the development of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space services and investments to support the neighborhood area's vision statement?*

A formal recommendation is not needed from this discussion. Input from the Parks and Community Services Board will be incorporated into final draft policies.

Schedule and Next Steps

Community review of draft policies is occurring throughout the month of May as part of Phase 3 (Refine). Staff will consider and incorporate community input as well as from the Parks and Community Services Board into the final draft neighborhood area plans for Crossroads and Newport that will be reviewed with the Planning Commission in June.

The Planning Commission is anticipated to transmit a recommendation to Council on final draft policies later in the summer. Council is anticipated to review and take action on both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans in the fall.

Follow Our Progress

The community may follow and participate throughout the neighborhood area planning process by accessing the Great Neighborhoods webpage [Great Neighborhoods | City of Bellevue \(bellevuewa.gov\)](https://www.bellevuewa.gov/great-neighborhoods).

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People can also visit Bellevue's online engagement hub for separate project pages for Crossroads and Newport on Engaging Bellevue: [Crossroads | Engaging Bellevue \(engagingbellevue.com\)](https://engagingbellevue.com/Crossroads) and [Newport | Engaging Bellevue \(engagingbellevue.com\)](https://engagingbellevue.com/Newport).

Attachments

- A. Neighborhood Areas Map (Map N-1 in the Comprehensive Plan)
- B. Project Timeline
- C. Crossroads Engagement Report Phase 1 (Discover)
- D. Newport Engagement Report Phase 1 (Discover)
- E. Community Engagement Summary Phase 2 (Define)
- F. Crossroads Draft Neighborhood Area Policies
- G. Newport Draft Neighborhood Area Policies