

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

July 23, 2024  
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn<sup>1</sup>

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

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

(a) Disability Pride Month Proclamation

Councilmember Stokes read the proclamation declaring July 2024 as Disability Pride Month in Bellevue and urged community members to support disability equity, recognize the contributions of disabled individuals and to commemorate the historical passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Dr. Lisa Greenwald, CEO of Kindering, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said she is the mother of a son with disabilities who is a Kindering graduate. She said Kindering is one of the largest and most comprehensive neuro-developmental centers in the northwest serving thousands of individuals and their families. Last year they served approximately 600 children with disabilities in Bellevue and provided support to other child care programs. Dr. Greenwald expressed appreciation for the City's human services funding and thanked the Council for advancing equity and inclusion in the community.

Dr. Greenwald introduced Andrew, an alumni of the Kindering program who has been an integral part of that community for many years since graduating from the program as a youth. Andrew thanked the Council for its support of Kindering and recognition of Disability Pride Month.

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<sup>1</sup> Councilmember Zahn participated remotely.

(b) Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week Proclamation

Councilmember Hamilton read the proclamation declaring July 22-26, 2024, as Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week in Bellevue and encouraged the community to honor probation professionals and to recognize the vital services they provide. The Probation Division supported 2,170 clients in 2023, providing an alternative to incarceration and reducing recidivism rates.

King County District Court Judge Lisa O'Toole said she has presided over Bellevue cases for the past eight years. She thanked the Council for recognizing probation professionals with the proclamation. She said probation officers are in the business of changing lives and establish positive relationships with individuals on probation. Probation staff help individuals address substance use, stable housing and employment. Judge O'Toole expressed gratitude to the Council for the proclamation.

Craig Fritz, Probation Manager, thanked the Council for its support of the Probation Division and acknowledgement of their good work. He said they provide a holistic approach to client accountability and support services. He said staff ensures that there is effective supervision of individuals on probation. The Probation Division supports the City's community safety and health strategic area by ensuring that all people feel safe, valued and welcomed in Bellevue. Mr. Fritz said the City provides electronic monitoring and other types of programming. Allowing individuals to be on probation enables them to retain housing, employment and community ties when safe to do so. The program represents a jail cost savings for the City, which was nearly \$1 million in 2023. He said the program's level of support and focus on accountability has led to a relatively low recidivism rate among clients.

3. Approval of Agenda

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes 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. Persons 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.

Mayor Robinson asked everyone to be civil and respectful and to avoid personal attacks.

- (a) Barbara Braun, representing People for Climate Action, commented regarding the Wilburton Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA), Agenda Item 12(a). She expressed

support for identifying Wilburton as a sustainability district. However, she expressed concern that a strong sustainability framework to guide development is not included in the CPA. Ms. Braun recommended a similar framework for the BelRed area and expressed concern about the effectiveness of an incentive-based development approach. She expressed concern that Bellevue will not be able to meet its 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. She asked the Council to postpone the adoption of the CPA tonight and to direct staff to develop stronger language for a more sustainable future.

- (b) Neal Mulnick, a property owner in the Wilburton area, said they have been involved in the planning process for many years. He praised the City's staff team (Community Development Department Director Emil King, Planning Manager Janet Shull, Senior Planner Justin Panganiban, Senior Planner Caleb Miller and others) for their work with stakeholders and the community. Mr. Mulnick expressed support for the good work on the Wilburton subarea plan and future land use map and encouraged the Council to adopt the CPA tonight. He noted that the production of affordable housing is a top priority for the Council. He expressed concern that the related draft Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) imposes costs that will make it harder to provide housing in the current development environment.
- (c) Bill Finkbeiner, representing the Wilburton Property Owners Group, expressed support for the Wilburton subarea plan and future land use map. He thanked staff for their work with stakeholders and for listening and for providing the rationale for their decisions. He thanked Emil King, Janet Shull, Justin Panganiban and Caleb Miller for their collaboration. He said the CPA reflects a vision for the future of the Wilburton transit-oriented development (TOD) area that will serve the community well. He said the policies represent sufficient flexibility to craft Land Use Code amendments for future development. Mr. Finkbeiner said redevelopment is currently very difficult in the economic and development environment. He said a financial analysis indicated that rents must be increased by 30 percent before a developer can break even with new development.
- (d) Alex Tsimerman said he is a disabled man and he believes the Council is discriminating against him. He began insulting individual Councilmembers.

At 6:31 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 6:33 p.m.

- (e) Todd Woosley, an Enatai resident, Wilburton property owner and former Vice Chair of Bellevue's Transportation Commission, thanked the Council for all they do for the community. He expressed support for the Wilburton CPA, noting that his family has owned property in the Wilburton area since the mid-1960s. He thanked the City for the strong investments in the transportation system, particularly through the TIFIA (Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act) loan projects. Mr. Woosley referenced the economic analysis that indicates low economic feasibility for housing projects. He encouraged the Council to take the time to ensure that the CPA is economically viable. He suggested that the City use the community attributes model and

confirm that the assumptions are accurate to ensure that the code amendments are economically viable now and into the future. That would help to determine the ability of developers to provide public amenities through an incentive system.

## 5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions

### (a) 2025 Recommended Budget and Strategic Plan for Bellevue-Redmond Tourism Promotion Area

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the recommended budget and strategic plan for the Bellevue-Redmond Tourism Promotion Area (BRTPA).

Lorie Hoffman, Arts and Creative Economy Manager, said tourism plays a vital role in the local economy and has significant potential for growth opportunities. She said tourism in Bellevue has traditionally been focused on business travel and conventions. However, progress is being made to attract leisure travelers.

Lizzette Flores, Cultural Tourism Specialist, said staff is requesting Council direction to return with legislation as part of the 2025-2026 budget process to support expenditures consistent with the annual budget and strategic plan recommended by the BRTPA Advisory Board.

Caroline Dermarkarian, BRTPA Advisory Board Chair, recalled that the BRTPA was approved by the Council in February 2023. The TPA collects fees through lodging charges (\$2.50 per night) to promote tourism, and the charges collected in the Bellevue or Redmond zones are used within their respective zones. She said overnight visitors spend an average of up to two and one half times the price of their lodging cost in the community for restaurants, shopping and other activities. Chair Dermarkarian said the fee collections are submitted to the Washington State Department of Revenue, which remits the funds to the City of Bellevue as the legislative authority for the BRTPA. The funds are maintained separately from City funds.

Chair Dermarkarian said the BRTPA Advisory Board began meeting in August 2023 and has four representatives from each city. Members from Bellevue are Chair Dermarkarian, Vice Chair Wade Hashimoto and Rocky Rosenbach, with one open seat pending appointment. Members from Redmond are Rashed Kanaan, Kim Saunderson and Cassandra Lieberman, also with one open seat pending appointment.

Ms. Flores highlighted the Bellevue Zone's 2024 achievements including the updated Destination Development Plan, overseas marketing campaign, culinary tourism tours, improved visitor communication and the Bellhop transportation shuttle. Achievements in the Redmond Zone include updates to their Tourism Strategic Plan, the hiring of dedicated tourism staff and the development of tourism programming.

Chair Dermarkarian said each zone's budget reflects its needs and priorities and both strategic plans are similarly structured. Bellevue's strategic plan was approved by the Council in October 2023. The funds may be used for tourism promotion as allowed under the interlocal agreement (ILA).

Chair Dermarkarian said the Bellevue Zone 2025 goals are to: 1) attract 2.4 million visitors by the end of 2025, which is an increase of 600,000 visitors, 2) increase citywide hotel occupancy by nine percent to 72 percent, and 3) increase weekend hotel occupancy by five percent to 66 percent. This would result in approximately \$300 million in local economic impact. Initiatives and programs included in the strategic plan include a mobile welcome center, culinary tourism, sales missions, water tours, outdoor tours and Bike Hop electric bikes available at specific hotels.

The Redmond Zone 2025 goals are to: 1) increase overnight visitors by eight percent based on 2024 annual hotel occupancy, 2) create and market programs that will attract overnight stays, and 3) develop the Tourism Master Plan. The strategic plan includes a special events shuttle, master plan, concierge program and marketing to enhance awareness of the area as a tourism destination.

Chair Dermarkarian highlighted the 2025 budget expenditures for marketing and communications, destination sales, tourism development, festivals and events, administration and research, and contingency funds. Projected collections, after administrative fees, total \$2.9 million for the Bellevue Zone and \$828,418 for the Redmond Zone.

Chair Dermarkarian requested Council direction to staff to return with legislation as part of the 2025-2026 budget process to support expenditures consistent with the annual budget and strategic plan recommended by the BRTPA Advisory Board.

Mayor Robinson thanked Chair Dermarkarian and staff for their work.

Councilmember Lee thanked Chair Dermarkarian for her service and said he appreciated staff's work on behalf of Bellevue. He expressed support for the Bellhop program and noted its popularity. Mr. Lee said global tourism is important as well, with a large portion of the area's population coming from different countries and cultures.

Mr. Lee commented on the importance of maintaining an economic connection with the technology industry and noted that tourism is very volatile. He encouraged a focus on how to attract people to bring businesses to Bellevue. He expressed support for the proposed budget and strategic plan.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed support for the budget and strategic plan. He shared that a family member is involved with a national organization of school communications professionals that booked their annual conference in Bellevue. The conference sold out quickly and they had to find additional space to accommodate the high demand. Mr. Hamilton said they appreciated the support they received from Visit Bellevue.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, liaison to the Bellevue Convention Center Authority (BCCA) Board, expressed support for Visit Bellevue and their accomplishments to date. He said every municipality on the Eastside now wants a Bellhop shuttle, which in Bellevue has served 70,000 travelers with 50,000 rides over a 10-month period. He said the water tour uses an electric boat.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis noted that in June, Bellevue hosted 210,000 overnight visitors (hotel occupancy rate of 82 percent) generating an estimated economic impact of \$163 million.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed support for the proposed budget and strategic plan. He noted that the Vancouver Sun newspaper in British Columbia recently featured an article on Bellevue. He expressed support for the culinary program and looks forward to its expansion. He thanked everyone for their hard work.

Councilmember Stokes expressed enthusiastic support for the work of the BRTPA. He commented on the importance of arts and cultural activities in attracting visitors. He noted that he is the Council liaison to the Arts Commission and he commented on the progress related to the arts in Bellevue over the past 10 years.

Councilmember Zahn said the BRTPA is important to Bellevue's competitiveness. She expressed support for the culinary focus and for continuing the Bellhop service. She noted the annual chocolate festival and said the continued development of the Grand Connection and Meydenbauer Bay Park will attract future visitors.

Regarding the Destination Development Plan, Ms. Zahn encouraged developing the BelRed Arts District as a destination for visual arts as well as theatre and music venues. Ms. Hoffman said staff is working with Visit Bellevue to determine how the BelRed Arts District will be featured and described in the plan.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for the presentation. He asked about the connection between the goals and initiatives, including whether there are specific metrics to track the effectiveness of investments toward the goals. Ms. Hoffman said staff could follow up regarding how the individual goals are tracked against metrics and deliverables.

Mr. Malakoutian said he hopes the BRTPA will benefit the broader community, not just the hotels and tourism business. He said he was happy to see funds budgeted for research and marketing and suggested identifying innovative market strategies and emerging technologies to attract visitors. He encouraged the consideration of ways to attract visitors during the low travel season.

Mayor Robinson said she has heard a lot of positive feedback from visitors and from organizations that hold meetings and events in Bellevue. She concurred with Councilmember Lee about the value of cross-cultural connections through restaurants, festivals and events, and arts and culture programs. Ms. Robinson said she would love to see an online community calendar listing all events in Bellevue.

Ms. Robinson said she liked the idea of bike rentals at hotels. However, she noted current issues related to electric bike usage on sidewalks. She encouraged staff to partner with the Cascade Bicycle Club to publicize e-bike rules and laws.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to return with legislation as part of the 2025-2026 budget process to support expenditures consistent with the BRTPA annual

budget and strategic plan, as recommended by the BRTPA Advisory Board.  
Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

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

6. Report of the City Manager

(a) 2024 Neighborhood Walks

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson introduced and thanked Mark Heilman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, and Sarina Miller, Community Relations Coordinator, for their work on the neighborhood walks program. The walks provide an opportunity for residents to interact directly with Councilmembers, the city manager, directors and other staff in their own neighborhoods to discuss issues and priorities.

Mark Heilman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, Community Development Department, said the annual neighborhood walks were initiated in August 2017. He thanked his colleagues for their participation in the program. The purpose of the walks is to give residents and city leadership the opportunity to engage in informal and productive conversations about their neighborhoods and priorities. With the completion of the 2024 walks, City representatives have visited all 16 neighborhood areas in Bellevue.

The 2024 neighborhood walks were held in Lake Hills, West Lake Sammamish, Factoria and West Bellevue/Surrey Downs areas. Mr. Heilman said residents shared concerns and ideas about traffic patterns and volumes, public safety (including mailbox theft and unsafe driving), housing affordability (especially for senior adults wanting to age in place), increased property taxes, changing demographics, assistance for young adults, and community engagement. Over the years, the City has heard input from residents about how much they enjoy and care about the community and their immediate neighborhoods.

Mr. Heilman said there is an emerging desire, especially among young adults and residents new to the region, for opportunities for connection and civic engagement. He said one resident shared that there is a strong feeling among the 18-35 age group, who are enthusiastic about Bellevue's amenities, that there is a need for more public spaces for both fun activities and intellectual conversations.

Sarina Miller, Community Relations Coordinator, shared comments from the previous week's neighborhood walk in the Lake Hills area. Residents said they were happy to be able to interact with City staff. Ms. Miller said there were many comments about housing affordability, including the desire of senior adults to stay in their current homes. Young people and families are finding it more difficult to afford living in Bellevue. Ms. Miller said there was a conversation among residents and police officers about fireworks and the damage that occurs around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday. She noted comments about traffic speeds and reckless driving in neighborhoods. She said two new residents commented on the walkability and safety of the Lake Hills area. However, they expressed concern about limited public transit services.

Ms. Miller said residents in the Factoria area expressed concerns about increasing traffic volumes related to the increase in housing. She said one resident requested lowering the speed limit on 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. Several residents asked for an organized Factoria advocacy group to include businesses and interested residents. Some residents said it was great to be able to meet elected officials they had voted for in person.

Ms. Miller said the final walk was in West Bellevue, starting at Surrey Downs Park. Several residents talked about the benefits of the light rail 2 Line. There was also an emphasis on Sound Transit being stewards of their property. Ms. Miller said there were many comments about the number of residents who have moved out of the neighborhood as well as an interest in connecting with new residents.

Mr. Heilman said one resident commented that City officials are often described as not caring about or paying attention to residents. They said meeting with City representatives in person helped to put that type of attitude to rest. Mr. Heilman said that residents enjoy and are committed to their neighborhoods and greatly appreciate Bellevue's amenities. However, over the years, residents consistently share concerns about traffic, affordability and the desire for connection, belonging and community service.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

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

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

- (a) Council Minutes  
*Minutes of July 9, 2024 Regular Meeting*
- (b) Resolution No. 10395 authorizing the execution of an interlocal agreement with the City of Redmond for cost sharing for the design and construction of improvements to the intersection of 148th Avenue NE and NE 40th Street as part of the NE 40th Street Improvements Project. The City of Redmond will be contributing approximately \$275,000.00.
- (c) Resolution No. 10396 authorizing execution of all documents necessary for the acquisition of a portion of the property with the address of 3560 W. Lake Sammamish Parkway SE, including a purchase and sale agreement, in the amount of \$2,100,000, plus related costs.
- (d) Resolution No. 10397 authorizing the write-off of eighty uncollectable accounts from Probation totaling \$146,604.34.

- (e) Resolution No. 10398 to adopt the name Vasa Open Space for the park property located at 3560 W. Lake Sammamish Parkway SE in conjunction with the property acquisition.
- (f) Ordinance No. 6800: 1) authorizing an increase in the construction contract with Active Construction, Inc. (ACI) (Bid No. 22000) by \$2,303,209.05 for a total contract amount of \$25,449,039.05 plus all applicable taxes, for the 124th Avenue NE - Ichigo to Northup Way Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-191); and, 2) amending the 2023-2029 General Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan to decrease the budget for the 130th Avenue NE - Bel-Red Road to NE 20th Street (CIP Plan No. PW-R-170) by \$2,100,000.00; 124th Avenue NE - NE 12th Street to NE Spring Boulevard (CIP Plan No. PW-R-169) by \$1,000,000.00; and NE Spring Boulevard, 130th Avenue NE to 132nd Avenue NE (CIP Plan No. PW-R-174) by \$400,000.00; and increase the budget for the 124th Avenue NE - Ichigo to Northup Way Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-191) by \$3,500,000.00.
- (g) Ordinance No. 6801 amending Ordinance 6793 to replace the previously adopted job classification listing with pay grades with an updated classification listing that includes non-represented public safety classifications in the Executive (E) and Mid-Management (M) Pay Plans.

At 7:18 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a break. The meeting resumed at 7:29 p.m.

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Study Session: None.

11. Land Use Reports: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolution and Motions

- (a) Ordinance No. 6802 adopting the 2024 Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA (22-106096-AC) amendment to the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Bellevue pursuant to the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW, and Chapter 35A.63 RCW; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion and Council action to adopt the 2024 Wilburton Vision Implementation Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA).

Emil King, Director, Community Development Department, recalled that the Planning Commission's recommendation for the CPA was discussed with the Council on June 25. The polices focus on cultural and economic opportunity, affordable housing, sustainability, open space and natural systems.

Janet Shull, Strategic Planning Manager, presented the future land use map for the Wilburton transit-oriented development (TOD) area. The new mixed use districts will allow and encourage

the development of a density and mix of uses that supports transit use and provides an opportunity to live, work and play in a walkable and vibrant community. The CPA provides guidance for outcomes and opportunities in addition to the built environment changes that are anticipated under the land use designations. The policies help to transform the Wilburton area from an auto-oriented community to one that will be walkable and transit- and trail-oriented with affordable housing, multimodal access and a sustainable district framework.

Ms. Shull recalled the launch of this initiative with the Council in 2022. She said the work has been shaped by the input and insight of the City's Boards and Commissions, including most notably the Planning Commission. She said staff was able to facilitate and support a variety of outreach activities and events including open houses, walking tours, tabling events, youth engagement and stakeholder engagement. Many of those events were coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan periodic update process. Ms. Shull said the One City approach has contributed to the development of the CPA with the involvement of staff in the Community Development Department, Development Services Department, Transportation Department, Parks and Community Services Department, City Manager's Office and Diversity Advantage Team, Information Technology Department and others.

Mr. King requested Council action to adopt the Wilburton Vision Implementation CPA ordinance.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, liaison to the Planning Commission, said this is an exciting milestone. He thanked the commissioners for their involvement in numerous meetings to review the CPA to implement the Wilburton TOD vision. He noted the multimodal transportation elements, environmental improvements, open space and pedestrian amenities reflected in the plan. Mr. Malakoutian expressed support for the CPA.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for their public outreach and noted that he has received similar input in his interactions with the community. Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. King said there are a number of tools to implement the CPA including the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA), and discussions with stakeholders will continue through the Planning Commission process. Mr. Hamilton expressed support for moving forward.

Councilmember Stokes said the development of the Wilburton area will have a positive impact on the rest of the community. He thanked everyone for their hard work and said he was eager to move forward. He acknowledged public comment regarding climate change and environmental sustainability.

Responding to Mr. Stokes, Ms. Shull said the Vision section of the CPA addresses the creation of a sustainability district, which is also supported by the Environmental Stewardship Plan. Additional policies in the CPA related to sustainability are in the Environment section, beginning with policy S-WI-42. She said a sustainability district framework is not included in the CPA because the framework will be developed as a tool to implement the policies contained in the CPA. Ms. Shull said staff will provide an update during the July 24 Planning Commission meeting regarding the sustainability district opportunity.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for addressing the environmental concerns. He thanked the Planning Commission and staff for their hard work and the robust community outreach. He expressed support for moving the CPA forward.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff and the Planning Commission for expediting the Wilburton CPA before the completion of the Comprehensive Plan periodic update. She said the new urban neighborhood will help the City achieve its overall goals, including to create housing. She anticipates that the future land use map will produce a vibrant community. She expressed support for the CPA.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their work. He said this is a major milestone for Bellevue with a proactive vision and product. He said the BelRed subarea plan was the first planning product to include multimodal transportation and land use elements. He expressed support for moving the CPA forward. He thanked staff for their robust engagement with stakeholders and the broader community and noted his interest in the sustainability district concept.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Shull said the LUCA will incorporate both state and local requirements regarding environmental sustainability. She said the amenity incentive system in the LUCA will encourage the desired outcomes as well.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6802, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Robinson congratulated staff on their work and said this is a huge step forward for Bellevue.

13. Written Reports: None.
14. Unfinished Business: None.
15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.
17. Adjournment

At 7:56 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw