

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday
May 20, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Via Hybrid

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Clima, Vice-Chair Valverde; Boardmembers Chianglin, Clark, Drever, Kronoff

BOARDMEMBER ABSENT: Boardmember Chou

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Briar

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Betsy Anderson, Justin Panganiban, Camron Parker, Mariam Sarwary, Susan Ulep, Ryan Walker

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Chair Clima called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Kronoff and second by Vice-Chair Valverde to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Drever to approve the April 15, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

4. **ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

Chair Clima reviewed the guidelines for Oral Communications (Council Ordinance 6752).

Amy Hirotaka, representing Isan Bellevue, spoke in support of recognizing Bellevue's Japanese American history through the naming of the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE. A fourth-generation Japanese American (Yonsei), Amy Hirotaka shared family ties to Bellevue spanning more than a century and described Isan Bellevue's mission to preserve and share the history of Japanese American farmers and families who contributed significantly to the community. Recent partnerships with King County Parks and local artists to commemorate Japanese American

agricultural history were highlighted. Support was expressed for honoring the legacy and resilience of Bellevue's Japanese American community through the park naming process.

Scott Lampe, President of the Meydenbauer Bay Neighbors Association (MBNA), introduced the organization and expressed appreciation for collaboration between neighborhood representatives and Parks staff regarding Meydenbauer Bay Park planning efforts. Appreciation was extended to staff member Wyatt Thompson for conducting a recent site tour with neighborhood leaders. Comments addressed several changes to the park master plan supported by MBNA, including maintaining access along 100th Avenue SE and postponing or eliminating a proposed community building component. The importance of Meydenbauer Bay Park as a key element of Bellevue's park system and future Grand Connection corridor was emphasized, along with a desire for continued collaboration with Parks staff.

Alex Tsimmerman discussed concerns regarding public participation policies at Bellevue public meetings. Comments included criticism of City leadership, meeting procedures, and limitations on public comment opportunities. Chair Clima reminded Alex Tsimmerman to focus remarks on matters within the Board's authority and duties. Following the comments, Chair Clima stated that the Parks & Community Services Board does not condone hateful or offensive speech but respects individuals' First Amendment rights to express views regardless of agreement or disagreement with those views.

Heather Trescases spoke in support of the proposed naming effort for the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE and commended Parks staff for collaboration with Isan Bellevue in recognizing the contributions of Bellevue's Japanese American community. The naming effort was described as an opportunity to share an important story in Bellevue's history and honor the legacy of the Japanese American community.

Angela, a Bellevue resident, shared concerns regarding increasing demand for pickleball courts and resulting impacts on tennis court availability, particularly in the Somerset area. Suggestions included creating additional pickleball facilities or repurposing underutilized courts to better accommodate demand and reduce pressure on existing tennis facilities.

Nicole Myers provided comments supporting recognition of Bellevue's Japanese American community and suggested highlighting individuals, youth organizations, and community leaders associated with local Japanese American heritage. Specific references included the Bellevue Judo Club, Seinen Kai youth organization, and community leaders who contributed to the development of Bellevue's Japanese American community.

Ryan Walker, Senior Planner, reported receipt of written correspondence from Gordon Paulson regarding concerns related to the Bellevue Botanical Garden docent program. Staff indicated that concerns raised in the correspondence were under review and additional information would be provided as appropriate.

Janelle Martin, a former Bellevue Botanical Garden docent, expressed concern regarding the recent discontinuation of the docent program at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Comments noted the educational role of volunteer docents and the importance of preserving institutional

knowledge and historical interpretation for visitors. A request was made for Board and staff review of the decision and exploration of options for preserving the educational and historical contributions provided by the docent program.

5. **CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Councilmember Briar provided an update on recent City Council activities. Recent Council discussions included a study session presentation about the City's partnership with the community organization Isan Bellevue to develop a Japanese American commemoration project in the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE. Council interest was expressed in ensuring continued involvement by Isan Bellevue throughout the naming process for this park. Potential collaboration with the Arts Commission was also discussed should art be incorporated into the park as part of the design process.

Councilmember Briar reported Council approval of a letter to Sound Transit advocating for subarea equity and continued advancement of future rail service connecting Bellevue and Kirkland. Updates were also provided regarding Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas (HOMA), supporting additional housing and mixed-use development in areas including Crossroads and Newport Hills.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

A. **Parks CIP Project Status Report**

Assistant Director Camron Parker provided updates regarding Parks & Community Services activities and upcoming events, including the City's July 4th celebration. Appreciation was expressed for Boardmember Clark's eight years of service on the Parks & Community Services Board and contributions to Bellevue's parks system. Boardmember Clark's term on the Board has ended.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Drever reported attendance at community engagement meetings related to the Great Neighborhoods planning process for Eastgate and Factoria and commended staff efforts to gather broad public input. Attendance at the Prana Asian Indian Festival at Crossroads Park provided opportunities to learn about Indian culture and community traditions. Visits to Phantom Lake, Larson Lake, and Coal Creek Trail highlighted recreational use of local natural areas and identified storm-related trail obstructions. Upcoming participation in a Keep Bellevue Beautiful volunteer event was noted. Concerns were also raised regarding parking compliance and enforcement at the 40th Street Boat Launch during peak boating season.

Boardmember Kronoff reported visits to Phantom Lake and conversations with residents regarding recreational opportunities and park access. Concerns were shared regarding

availability of soccer fields and opportunities for informal recreational use by adults. Community interest in expanding native and pollinator-friendly landscaping within Bellevue parks was also noted. Appreciation was expressed for Boardmember Clark's leadership and longstanding focus on improving connectivity throughout Bellevue's park system.

Vice-Chair Valverde reported continued observation of strong community use of Bellevue parks through regular park visits. Increasing demand for playgrounds and recreational facilities during peak periods was noted. Interest was expressed in evaluating park lighting, recreational amenities, and opportunities to adapt underutilized facilities to better meet community needs. Reduced public access to certain school playgrounds was identified as an additional challenge contributing to increased demand at City parks. Observations were also shared regarding limited use of some basketball courts and potential opportunities to evaluate facility usage and future recreational needs.

Boardmember Chianglin reported recreational visits to Downtown Park and observations regarding the high quality of park maintenance and cleanliness. Concerns were noted regarding visitors feeding wildlife and observations of water clarity within the park's water feature. Commendation was given to Parks staff for maintaining a clean, attractive, and welcoming park environment. Appreciation was also expressed for Boardmember Clark's years of service and contributions to Board discussions.

Boardmember Clark reported that service on boards and commissions is an important component of government and community engagement. Emphasis was placed on the value of public participation, protection of First Amendment rights, and the importance of maintaining opportunities for community input. Appreciation was expressed to fellow Boardmembers, City Councilmembers, Parks staff, and community partners for years of collaboration and support.

Chair Clima reported participation in Earth Day volunteer activities at Wilburton Park involving removal of invasive ivy alongside community volunteers. Attendance at EarthFest and a BelRed Neighborhood Park community meeting was also reported. Public feedback regarding BelRed Neighborhood Park included interest in creating a unique and attractive park while balancing concerns regarding overcrowding. Community participation in the BelRed Park survey process was encouraged. Appreciation was expressed for Boardmember Clark's mentorship, leadership, and dedication to Bellevue parks and the community.

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

A. Great Neighborhoods: Eastgate and Factoria Neighborhood Area Planning

Senior Planner Justin Panganiban presented an overview of the Great Neighborhoods Program and draft neighborhood area plans for Eastgate and Factoria. Developed through extensive community engagement, the plans are intended to guide future growth, investment, and community development. Staff reviewed draft vision statements, policies, and concept maps addressing neighborhood identity, mixed use and neighborhood centers, community gathering

spaces, mobility and access, and the environment. Staff noted that Board feedback would be shared with the Planning Commission as part of the continued review.

For Eastgate, staff presented policies that included expanding parks and open space opportunities and connections, supporting implementation of the Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan and a future regional aquatic facility, improving Mountains to Sound Greenway trail access, strengthening community partnerships and programming, and enhancing natural assets.

For Factoria, staff presented policies that included enhancing the neighborhood's international identity, improving access to nearby natural areas and trails, increasing parks and open space opportunities, partnering with community organizations on gathering spaces, and supporting future redevelopment and neighborhood vitality by integrating plazas and public spaces.

Board Discussion

- Support for neighborhood threshold and wayfinding features that reinforce neighborhood identity and improve navigation between destinations.
- Importance of creating safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections between parks, schools, commercial centers, residential neighborhoods, and community gathering places.
- Public safety considerations, neighborhood walkability, and opportunities to incorporate safety principles into future neighborhood planning and implementation efforts.
- Equitable access to parks and recreation facilities, particularly opportunities to address neighborhood park gaps south of Interstate 90 and expand recreational access in underserved areas.
- Importance of partnerships with schools, faith-based organizations, commercial property owners, and private developers to create additional gathering spaces, recreational amenities, and community-serving facilities.
- Recognition of neighborhood identity, heritage, and community history through future planning efforts, park development, gateway features, and interpretive elements.
- Walkability, trail connectivity, access to regional trails, environmental stewardship, stream enhancements, and improved connections between existing parks and open space assets throughout both neighborhoods.

B. Name Recommendation for Park at Main St. and 112th Ave. SE

Betsy Anderson, Senior Planner, and Susan Ulep, Capital Project Coordinator, presented information regarding the name recommendation for the park located at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE. Background information was provided about the park's acquisition and development by Sound Transit and transfer to the City in 2024, as well as the City's partnership with Isan Bellevue to honor local Japanese American heritage through a commemoration project that will be installed at this site. The presentation reviewed the City's park naming policy and park naming process, potential park names generated through public input, and staff research and evaluation that resulted in nine names for Board consideration.

Name options presented for Board consideration included:

- Main Street Park
- Mountain View Park, Cascade View Park, or Rainier View Park
- Isan Park, Legacy Park, or Heritage Park
- Bellevue Japanese American Legacy Park
- Bellevue Nikkei Park

Staff noted that Isan translates to "inheritance," "heritage," or "legacy" in Japanese, and that "Nikkei" refers to people of Japanese ancestry living outside Japan. Staff provided the historical context for each option, described whether the park name had been used elsewhere, and indicated how each name met the City's park naming criteria. The presentation also highlighted opportunities to recognize Bellevue's Japanese American heritage through future interpretive elements, educational programming, public art, and storytelling associated with the park.

Board Discussion

- Support for a park name that is distinctive and does not use terms that may be found in other named parks in Bellevue or neighboring communities.
- Support for a park name ~~that is unique and that will~~ communicates a strong sense of Bellevue's heritage and connection to the Japanese American community.
- Support for interpreting the historical significance of Japanese American farming families and agricultural activities that contributed to Bellevue's growth and development prior to World War II.
- Importance of continued engagement with Isan Bellevue and community stakeholders to support historical accuracy and meaningful representation throughout the project.
- Opportunities to incorporate interpretive signage, educational displays, public art, and storytelling elements that provide historical context and enhance visitor understanding of the site.
- Recognition of the park as an opportunity to celebrate cultural heritage, promote community awareness, and acknowledge the contributions of generations of Japanese American residents to the Bellevue community.
- Clarifying that a recommendation to use the name "Isan" is based on the meaning of the word in relation to heritage and legacy, not as recognition for the community organization of the same name.
- Interest in including the Japanese character for "Isan" on park signage and the need to confirm that translated character is correct.

Motion by Boardmember Kronoff and second by Vice-Chair Valverde to recommend that City Council name the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE "Isan Park." Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

9. NEW BUSINESS:

Ryan Walker provided a preview of the June Board meeting agenda. Discussion included plans for a special meeting at Robinswood Park, which is expected to include a site visit highlighting youth cricket field orientation changes, future playground improvements, and a tour of the Bellevue Tennis Center. Ryan Walker also noted that budget discussions are anticipated as a primary topic for the June meeting. Additional meeting logistics and timing information will be provided prior to the meeting.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Clima adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Parks & Community Services Board meeting will be held on June 17, 2026.