

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 9, 2024
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Goepple Vice Chair Cálad, Commissioners Ferris, Khanloo, Lu, Villaveces

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Commissioner Bhargava

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Teun Deuling, Thara Johnson, Kate Nesse, Nick Whipple, Kirsten Mandt, Brooke Brod, Department of Community Development; Matt McFarland, City Attorney's Office

COUNCIL LIAISON: Deputy Mayor Malakoutian

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Goepple who presided.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:31 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
(6:31 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khanloo and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
(6:32 p.m.)

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said the City Council is focused primarily on the 2025-2026 operating budget and 2025-2030 Capital Improvements Program. The importance of the budget was stressed in terms of community safety, health, utilities and transportation.

Commissioner Ferris asked when the Council will actually be voting on the budget and the answer given by Deputy Mayor Malakoutian was by the end of the year.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(6:33 p.m.)

A. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Senior Planner Dr. Kate Nesse took a few minutes to review the Commission's schedule of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

The November retreat was discussed and it was noted it will be centered on economic development and possibly updating the city's economic development strategy relative to the intersection of economic development and planning, particularly around housing needs and job growth projections. The Commissioners were asked to provide feedback on areas of interest, and it was suggested the presentation should include updated industry growth data and an analysis of the types of housing needed for anticipated future growth. It was agreed that more details would be shared via email. The retreat is expected to feature presentations, development trends, and reflections on the Commission's accomplishments.

6. WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

(6:44 p.m.)

Chair Goepple took a moment to note that under Ordinance 6752, the topics about which the public may speak during a meeting are limited to subject matters related to the city of Bellevue government and within the powers and duties of the Planning Commission. Additional information about the new rules of decorum governing conduct of the public during meetings can be found in Ordinance 6752.

A. Written Communications

(6:45 p.m.)

Dr. Kate Nesse stated that in addition to the communications included in the packet, two additional communications were received, one from the Master Builders Association on middle housing, and one from an individual in regard to the Great Neighborhoods project, particularly Newport.

B. Oral Communications

(6:46 p.m.)

Fay Hou addressed the Great Neighborhoods program for Newport and shared concerns about developments in the area that threaten the character and environmental integrity of the neighborhood. Photos were shared showing examples where site plans failed to acknowledge significant trees, resulting in their removal. For one property, the site plan listed a large tree as being much smaller than it actually was. New houses are being built larger than allowed by the code, and that is leading to significant changes in the neighborhood. Many properties are being bought by investors who tear down existing homes, cut down trees, and build massive houses for profit, leaving the neighborhood with constant turnover. The situation is becoming unsustainable.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty damn Nazi fascists and banditas before stating that housing has become a problem in Bellevue. Over the last six years under Mayor Robinson more white people have left and they are being replaced. White people are now the minority and the policies of the mayor and the Council have led to the

situation. The city is being taken over and people like Deputy Mayor Malakoutian have pushed their agendas. Bellevue is becoming unrecognizable.

Chair Goepple asked the record to reflect that the previous speaker's comments were in violation of Ordinance 6752. It was a racist rant unrelated to the Commission's business. Alex Tsimerman was deemed out of order and was asked to leave or face being removed.

Heidi Dean offered kudos for the manner in which the Chair handled the earlier interruption. Building on the comments offered by Fay Hou, the speaker said there is an additional home on SE 32nd Street where an illegal action to divide the lot was started in 2022. That is what led to the discovery that Newport Hills has protective covenants buried in title reports that are meant to preserve neighborhood aesthetics. Many investors, however, are buying houses in the neighborhood for rentals, and that is leading to a constant turnover. It is frustrating because the residents face having illegal short-term rentals all around. The city has not addressed the issues that have been reported. Additionally, the neighborhood has concerns about the potential rezoning of the Newport Hills Shopping Center. There is a clear need to ensure that the neighborhood's input will not just be a formality while developers push their own plans.

Jessie Clawson asked the Commission to keep in mind while considering changes to single-family zones that there are development standards such as Floor Area Ratio (FAR), height limits, setbacks, and so forth. Currently, one way to incentivize Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) is by making them FAR-exempt. There are homebuilder clients who are actually taking advantage of that provision, so it is achieving the intended goal of encouraging ADU construction without altering neighborhood character. The houses still look like single-family homes, even with an ADU, whether it be for a relative, a nanny, or a tenant. In considering middle housing changes, the Commission should think about ways to guide the staff in incentivizing the type of behaviors the city wants to elicit from developers. FAR exemptions have been effective in encouraging the development wanted while maintaining neighborhood character. If the aim is to preserve neighborhood character while allowing for two or three units per lot, the strategy should be considered.

7. PUBLIC HEARING – None
(7:06 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Middle Housing Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) and Bellevue City Code Amendment (BCCA) to Implement House Bills HB-1110 and HB-1337
(7:06 p.m.)

Assistant Director Nick Whipple stated that HB-1110 was signed into law in May 2023. It requires cities to implement middle housing standards by June 30, 2025. If local regulations are not implemented by that date, a model ordinance developed by the Washington State Department of Commerce will apply until such time as local regulations are adopted. The bill mandates new density requirements that allow for four units on each lot that permits residential projects, and six units within a quarter-mile of frequent transit if two of the units are affordable. There are also

parking limitations near frequent transit, and the city must allow for separate ownership through a unit lot subdivision process or a zero lot line subdivision. Cities are limited in regard to the types of controls they can apply to middle housing types, Standards cannot be implemented if they are more restrictive than those required for detached single family, but the city can set objective standards around lot coverage, setbacks and FAR.

HB-1337 focuses on ADUs (accessory dwelling units). The Commission worked on ADU reforms in the spring of 2023 that were adopted in July of that year. The bill requires allowing two ADUs on lots zoned for single-family, removes owner-occupancy restrictions, and limits impact fees. There are also limitations on site features that can be required, and there are requirements on parking standards.

Senior Planner Kirsten Mandt noted that there are many factors involved in development, including land acquisition, permitting costs, site improvements, fees, and more. The list can be extensive. Depending on the site, there might be requirements related to setbacks, grading, or stormwater. In looking to encourage middle housing, all of those factors will need to be considered.

Four main project goals have been identified, beginning with making the code clear and concise to benefit both applicants and reviewers, followed by encouraging middle housing in alignment with the intent of HB-1110; a focus on implementation, particularly since middle housing spans different types ranging from single-family to multifamily permits; and regional consistency without simply copying adjacent jurisdictions.

The city already allows some middle housing components, such as attached ADUs, unit lot subdivisions, and parking reductions for specific housing types. However, the city needs to update its code to meet the new requirements, such as allowing four units per lot citywide and up to six in certain areas or with two affordable units included. One option that likely will be necessary in order for the approach to make sense will to remove regulating single family land use districts by dwelling units per acre. There will also need to be attention given to how to handle density in the multifamily land use districts. Care will need to be taken to avoid undercutting lot sizes where the dwelling units per acre might end up being less than four units per lot, and to make sure the parking requirements are consistent with the new law.

Continuing, Kirsten Mandt explained that the city is considering going beyond the minimum requirements of HB-1110 in areas near frequent transit and in the growth centers, and exploring ways to simplify the permitting process through things like offering pre-approved ADU designs. The bill allows for picking six of the nine types of middle housing, a confusing approach given that a fourplex could be stacked flats or a one-story structure with four units fronting a courtyard. For flexibility and simplicity, the intent is to permit any type of middle housing provided they meet the development regulations for the underlying zone.

The bill is not prescriptive relative to regulating site design for cottage and courtyard-style buildings. Things important to both designs include open space relative to the number of units, how the units front the open space, where to locate pathways, how to site buildings relative to

each other, and where parking is located. There are simple site design regulations that can be adopted.

With regard to development regulation flexibility, things to consider include rear and front yard setbacks, lot coverage, impervious and hard surface coverage, building height, building façade height, minimum lot size, landscaping and tree retention.

Another area under consideration for potentially going beyond the minimum required densities under HB-1110 involves frequent transit, the neighborhood center areas, regional growth centers, and candidate countywide growth centers. Draft policy language will help in identifying opportunity areas to focus more middle housing beyond the six-unit number.

Kirsten Mandt said the notion of having pre-approved DADU designs, both for homeowners and developers, is an exciting opportunity to expedite the permitting process, reduce costs and barriers to homeowners, and engage local architects.

The city has built on the community input process for the Comprehensive Plan update. The goal is to target specific questions, especially around gaps and where the city may expand density beyond the base requirements. Discussions are planned with the development community to focus on regulatory barriers that could feasibly be reduced to encourage middle housing.

The staff have also been reviewing the approaches being taken by other jurisdictions, including Bothell, Kirkland, and Redmond, some of which are taking phased approaches and considering additional density.

Bellevue is working toward having a draft ready by February, ahead of the required date of June 2025.

Commissioner Lu asked what definition is used to identify a major transit stop. Kirsten Mandt said there are a couple of definitions depending on the context, like parking reductions, but there is a need to make sure the city definition aligns with what was adopted for HB-1110. There was a clarifying bill passed in June that clarified that stops under construction can also be counted. There is flexibility allowed that would allow for including future planned stops, such as those along I-90, for flexibility.

Commissioner Lu called for some consideration of the timing given that there is a big difference between a stop planned for 2030 and one opening next year. In regard to the regulation that disallows being more restrictive than for single-family homes, the question asked was how that applies to parking. Kirsten Mandt said parking requirements are a bit separate, and the reduction imposed is more prescriptive. The main intent is to ensure not imposing more stringent design requirements on a fourplex than one would on a single-family home.

Commissioner Lu what the current breakdown of different housing types is in Bellevue. Nick Whipple allowed that the city does not have a history of permitting multifamily in predominantly single-family areas, so there is not much variety currently. Additional data will be gathered and

shared with the Commission at the next study session. Commissioner Lu voiced a particular interest in seeing the breakdown across single-family, multifamily, and existing middle housing to better understand the current landscape.

Commissioner Villaveces asked for clarification on the size limits and height restrictions. Kirsten Mandt said the bill is clear about not limiting an ADU below a certain site, about 1000 square feet, to prevent jurisdictions from being overly punitive about the scale of ADUs. There is also a restriction on imposing height limits below 24 feet unless the primary unit is that height.

Commissioner Lu said if the intent is to allow for three stories, consideration should be given to heights closer to 38 or even 40 feet to accommodate reasonable ceiling heights. The difference can significantly improve quality, allowing for features like rooftop decks or larger windows.

With regard to the different housing typologies, Commissioner Lu stressed the importance of classifying housing by size and form because the different typologies shape the city. When developing multi-units in a single-family area, the city should consider unifying the street frontage to maintain neighborhood character. Houses with porches are great for neighborhood scale, but they are often sacrificed due to development constraints. If exceptions for porches could be allowed to extend into setbacks, more transitional spaces between public and private areas could be encouraged.

Commissioner Khanloo asked staff to elaborate on the issue of trees and how the current rules interact with the middle housing plans. Nick Whipple said the tree code as reviewed by the Commission was designed with middle housing in mind. The shift to a tree credit system based on lot size accommodates the changes. Currently, no special exceptions for middle housing are proposed, but as the standards are finalized steps will be taken to ensure the tree code aligns with the new housing regulations.

S04: If I have a significant tree on my lot, can I remove it to build additional units?

S10: Yes, the adopted code allows for the removal of significant trees as long as the minimum credit requirement is met, which can be achieved through replanting. The system incentivizes retaining existing trees because it requires more plantings if trees are removed. The tree code as adopted does allow for the removal of significant trees provided the minimum credit is met, though more credits are given for retaining trees.

Commissioner Khanloo asked many additional housing units could be added to the inventory should all property owners choose to opt for ADUs. Kirsten Mandt said closest data would come from the Environmental Impact Statement. Nick Whipple said staff could track down some of the data in terms of historical ADU production and trends since the code changes in June 2023 to get a sense of what has happened.

Commissioner Ferris referred to the public testimony offered in regard to a development where trees were removed and asked if the rules in place prevent that. Nick Whipple allowed not knowing the specifics of the site in question, including when the project vested, but voiced the

assumption that approval was obtained under the prior code, which required a 30 percent tree retention based on tree diameter. It is also possible trees were removed in the absence of a minimum credit requirement to meet on each lot.

Commissioner Ferris also referenced the long letter forwarded to the Commission from the Master Builders in which some reasonable-appearing suggestions were made. A response from staff to their points would be appreciated.

Commissioner Ferris asked what "zero lot line subdivisions equal to permitted unit density" means. Kirsten Mandt said one of the provisions of HB-1110 allows for the subdivision of lots, regardless of minimum lot size, to match the number of allowed units. For example, a lot with four units could be subdivided into four separate plots, possibly with shared walls. The approach can be thought of as a minimum lot size exemption that allows more dense housing types to become fee simple.

Commissioner Ferris asked if it would be reasonable to eliminate the FAR for middle housing. Kirsten Mandt said that would be reasonably easy to accomplish. Currently, the FAR language is specific to single-family housing, but it would not be difficult or unreasonable to extend an exemption from FAR to middle housing. Setbacks, coverage, and other requirements would still apply to regulate the massing of structures. Commissioner Ferris commented that the more things can be simplified the better.

Commissioner Bhargava asked if there are absolutely no minimum lot sizes under HB-1110. Kirsten Mandt said the bill is not specific as to whether or not minimum lot sizes can be removed. It is something that can be taken into account, particularly for multifamily housing since the product differs from single-family zoning. Density per acre might be a factor we look at, but that is optional.

Commissioner Bhargava expressed excitement to see the potential for higher density and more housing choices, but allowed that there are concerns about maintaining neighborhood character. Incentivizing design features like porches and adjusting height limits is a good idea, but the stricture against imposing stricter design standards than those for single-family housing raises the issue of how to achieve a balance. Kirsten Mandt stated that some of the suggestions made would not be considered to be more restrictive since they offer flexibility rather than adding limitations. The city could encourage wanted features without imposing stricter regulations.

Commissioner Bhargava said it would be helpful to have some sense of what the default regulations will look like if nothing is implemented by June. Kirsten Mandt agreed to summarize the information and provide it to the Commission.

Commissioner Bhargava asked if a framework has been considered that would address the issue of parking regulations for higher-density scenarios, like sixplexes, that might vary based on the underlying density. Kirsten Mandt said the focus is primarily on what the bill requires regarding parking. It does set limitations, like capping off-street parking requirements at two spaces per unit. Beyond that, adjusting parking regulations may be outside the scope of the process. Nick

Whipple clarified that the bill specifies that cities cannot require more than two off-street parking spaces per unit. When the parking issues is discussed with the Commission, we can be explored whether it makes sense to require fewer spaces than that. Staff will provide some analysis on different options.

Commissioner Cálad said it cannot be known exactly how much people and developers will take advantage of the new approach. Even so, there are concerns around the potential impacts on traffic, parking, and neighborhood character. Absent solid data, it will be hard to predict what the future will look like. Two examples were put forward, the first involving six units that would have only limited impacts on traffic. The second, however, involved a scenario with 17 units under which the neighborhood could experience significant changes. The question asked was how the city can balance the goal of creating more housing with the goal of preserving the neighborhood character. Kirsten Mandt said staff could try to provide some information in regard to what might be expected in terms of development under the new regulations and the potential impacts.

With regard to incentives, Commissioner Cálad asked if there will be any penalties for property owners who choose not to build anything on their lots, such as higher taxes. Nick Whipple said there is no penalty for not developing one's own property. The bill sets a minimum level of housing that must be allowed, but property owners are not obligated to build. Additionally, the bill does not override existing restrictive covenants that may limit density in certain communities. New restrictive covenants to prevent density increases would not be allowed under the bill, however.

Commissioner Cálad asked if the city has data on how many neighborhoods have such restrictive covenants. Nick Whipple said it would be challenging to gather that data since many of them are private covenants that the city does not enforce or oversee. The city does not have input on them as they are separate from city regulations, but staff can try to see if there is any way to get a general sense of how many there might be.

Chair Goeppele voiced appreciation for the idea of having standardized DADU designs to help reduce costs. With regard to tree and parking regulations, Chair Goeppele asked for more information on how they interact with middle housing. The city will need to make sure the tree code aligns well with enabling middle housing without overly restricting it.

Chair Goeppele urged caution about going further than the HB-1110 requirements in terms of the number of units allowed since the city is already at the highest tier as a Tier 1 city. While open to considering different standards for various sites, Chair Goeppele indicated not yet being convinced about allowing more units than what the bill mandates.

Chair Goeppele noted that HB-1110 deals with density per lot, while the city's residential land use regulations deal with it on per acre. The question asked was how to reconcile the two systems that are so different from each other. Kirsten Mandt said the most straightforward way will be to base it on units per lot for single-family areas, especially where subdivisions may occur. For multifamily zones, it is trickier because switching to units per lot could effectively

downzone areas already zoned at R-10 or R-30. One approach could be to use the existing dwelling units per acre as the baseline, but with a footnote allowing the higher number between units per lot and units per acre. While not the most elegant solution, it could work.

Commissioner Villaveces pointed out that some zoning designations do not have density limits, with limits instead based on practical considerations like setbacks and lot coverage. In Seattle for instance, rowhouses have no density limits while townhouses do. The city should look into that approach. In the neighborhoods, the bulky “boxy” houses are usually not the nicest houses in that they are devoid of detail. They often get built because the city’s incentives for pitched roofs are not effective. If there were incentives for additional height with pitched roofs, it could improve neighborhood character and allow for more usable space like mezzanines or higher ceilings.

Commissioner Lu asked if there will need to be separate land use codes for each housing type. Kirsten Mandt said the only specific codes under consideration are for site considerations related to cottage and courtyard housing.

Commissioner Villaveces noted that there have been questions raised by housing professionals about the city considering a peer review system for architects where certified professionals familiar with the city’s zoning code could help optimize the permitting process through pre-review.

****BREAK****

(8:03 p.m.)

B. Great Neighborhoods Program: Initial Briefing and Overview of the Neighborhood Area Planning Process for Crossroads and Newport

(8:08 p.m.)

Acting Planning Director Thara Johnson was joined by Senior Planner Teun Deuling, who will lead the Crossroads update, and Community Engagement Lead Brooke Brod. Senior Planner Dr. Kate Nesse will oversee the Newport planning effort. The City Council launched the process just over a month ago and the focus will be on enhancing community connections and strengthening neighborhoods.

The Great Neighborhoods Program was initiated by the Council in 2018. The work on the Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue neighborhood areas kicked off in 2020 and was adopted in 2021. The process was paused to facilitate the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. The program objectives are to localize citywide policies that reflect neighborhood priorities through extensive community engagement, and to develop local policies to address issues and opportunities to help the community grow in unique ways.

Teun Deuling said Bellevue consists of 16 neighborhood areas for planning purposes, each covering multiple smaller, diverse and vibrant neighborhoods. With Northeast and Northwest Bellevue already addressed, this iteration focuses on Newport and Crossroads. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update serves as an important background for the Great

Neighborhoods Program. Volume 1 of the update addressed citywide policies across various elements like housing, transportation, and human services. Volume Two, which contains the neighborhood area plans, is the main focus of the Great Neighborhoods Program. Some updates were made to Volume 2 to align with state law and ensure consistency with the policies in Volume 1.

The Commission played a key role in reviewing and finalizing the Northeast and Northwest plans. Based on community feedback, the scope for the Crossroads and Newport iteration was expanded. The goal is to complete the final review and adoption in the summer and fall of next year. At its September 17 meeting, the Council recommended focusing on Eastgate and Factoria in 2025-2026, followed by Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish in 2026-2027.

Teun Deuling said the current planning process is divided into four phases: Discover, Define, Refine, and Adopt. The Discover phase is underway and is about building awareness and engaging diverse groups to identify core values and priorities for each neighborhood. A virtual kickoff event for Crossroads and Newport is scheduled for October 10. Earlier relationship-building efforts have included meetings with community-based organizations and individuals involved in previous city planning efforts.

The Define phase will take place in early 2025, during which the city will work with the community to develop strategies and draft plan elements. In the Refine phase, the focus will be on gathering feedback to address any outstanding issues and revising the draft plans before the final Adopt phase, where the plans will be presented to the Planning Commission for study sessions and public hearings, followed by City Council approval.

There are five key elements for each of the neighborhood plans: land use, urban design, neighborhood identity, public realm, and neighborhood connectivity. The elements aim to strengthen the unique character of each neighborhood and support future growth. The goal is set the direction for future land use through extensive community engagement. During the planning process, property owners may propose amendments to the future land use map, provided they meet specific criteria to ensure changes support gathering spaces, neighborhood identity, and pedestrian experiences. The Land Use Element will also align with ongoing city initiatives, like the FAR Phase 2 Land Use Code Amendment, which was initiated by the Council in 2022 to allow for higher densities for residential to incentivize residential development, including affordable housing, over commercial development in mixed-use areas.

The urban design framework will provide guidance for creating and strengthening vibrant community gathering spaces in the two neighborhood areas. The framework will include concept maps and policies tailored to the identity of each neighborhood. The neighborhood identity and public realm elements are essential in that they recognize the unique characteristics of both the built and natural environments, including gateways and natural edges. The public realm encompasses streets, sidewalks, trails, and other public spaces that play a critical role in community life. Improvements could include new sidewalks, street lighting, park connections, and more. Neighborhood connectivity focuses on integrating different modes of transportation and improving local accessibility. It may involve creating mobility hubs that serve as focal points

for transit, biking, and pedestrian access, all designed to increase accessibility and safety.

Turning to community engagement, Brooke Brod said the aim is to strive for equitable and inclusive engagement that reflects the demographics of the neighborhoods. While the primary audience is the neighborhood residents, there is also a desire to hear from people who work or own a business in the neighborhoods.

The Cultural Outreach Assistant Program was recently expanded by bringing on a new assistant to help connect with the Korean community, especially in Newport. The decision was based on school district data and feedback from dual language programs in the Bellevue School District. There has been targeted outreach to community groups, HOAs, and individual nonprofits, and there will be a range of different engagement activities, both in-person and online.

Over the summer, pre-launch work focused on relationship-building was undertaken. There were more than 25 meetings involving Bellevue Essentials alumni, HOA board members, and property managers in multifamily buildings in Crossroads. There has also been a presence at events like the farmers market and school curriculum nights to build awareness.

Brooke Brod said the Discover phase will host a virtual kickoff combined event on October 10 for both neighborhoods. Based on the success relative to updating the Northeast and Northwest plans, questionnaires will be mailed to every household; they will also be available in multiple languages online. In-person "Ideas Fairs" are planned for November in Crossroads and Newport.

During the Define phase, starting in early 2025, hands-on workshops will be conducted on urban design and public realm improvements, including some potential in-school workshops. The Refine phase will involve presentations to community groups and non-profits on the draft policies, seeking their feedback before bringing them to the Commission for study sessions and public hearings.

More than 90 persons have registered for the upcoming October 10 engagement opportunity. The in-person Ideas Fairs are scheduled for November 14 at the Crossroads Community Center and November 20 at the Newport Swim and Tennis Club. Registration helps staff prepare for the events, but it is not required for attendance.

Commissioner Lu voiced support for the neighborhoods connectivity element and noted the need to include safety. It is great that different outreach methods will be utilized to reach the various communities, including the Korean and Chinese communities. Brooke Brod said the cultural outreach assistants bring to the process their cultural knowledge and connections to determine the best ways to reach people and how to design culturally relevant experiences.

Commissioner Ferris commented that it would be difficult to identify two more diverse neighborhoods than Crossroads and Newport. It will take a lot of work to tailor the outreach program and it will be interesting to follow.

Commissioner Ferris asked what is included in the expanded scope based on the successes

realized in the Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue neighborhoods. Thara Johnson said the launch for those two neighborhoods was very limited in scope. Land use map changes were not part of the scope and the focus was specific to just policy and vision updates. Much was heard from the community about the update not feeling as meaningful to them, and about the overall schedule of the work. The work was done during Covid making it necessary to pivot to a virtual environment. The communities did not feel as though they had enough time to provide feedback on the policies. All of those comments were taken into account when developing the process for Crossroads and Newport.

Commissioner Ferris asked if the public realm includes a coordinated effort with the parks department. Teun Deuling said staff are working together with staff in Parks & Community Services as well as the Department of Transportation. The work will not target any park improvements; Parks has their own planning processes for those, though there will be a focus on connecting residential neighborhoods and mixed use areas to the parks.

Commissioner Ferris voiced support for including the schools in the outreach efforts. Students use their communities even more than their parents do and pulling in their ideas and opinions is a great idea. Brooke Brod said to date there has been interest expressed in holding events at Newport Heights Elementary and Stevenson Elementary Schools, and there has been an ongoing relationship with staff at Newport High School. Commissioner Ferris said it is always a good idea to get high school students engaged in making the city a better place.

Commissioner Cálad encouraged giving priority to the comments made by the residents of the two neighborhoods instead of outside voices. The staff were also encouraged to include in all presentation materials information on how people can sign up for newsletters and communications.

With regard to the map amendment process, Chair Goeppele asked if it is a fair assumption that there is a fairly high bar involved, and as such it is unlikely to see a large number of them proposed. Teun Deuling said there is indeed a high bar that requires meeting certain established criteria to even be entertained as part of the Great Neighborhoods program. It is different from Comprehensive Plan amendments that can be initiated outside of the Great Neighborhoods program. There are criteria spelled out in the Land Use Code that must be adhered to, including significantly changed conditions.

Commissioner Khanloo asked how residents can know they can ask for materials in languages other than English. Brooke Brod said the mailers include a portion translated into the top languages for the neighborhoods. A QR code is included where they can provide their feedback in their specific languages. Commissioner Khanloo asked if the city tracks those requests and updates its database to indicate which households need information in different languages. Brooke Brod said if that data is tracked it would be done through the city's GIS system.

Commissioner Lu urged the staff to highlight during the process to highlight the qualitative characteristics of the neighborhoods, such as any potential major risks over the next 20 years, and potential under-enrollment due to a lack of younger families in the area, to help the

Commission to better understand the planning context.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None
(8:46 p.m.)

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
(8:46 p.m.)

A. September 25, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khanloo and the motion carried unanimously.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None
(8:47 p.m.)

12. ADJOURNMENT
(8:47 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villaveces and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Goepple adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.