

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

October 14, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. She asked everyone to be civil and polite during the meeting.

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) Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month Proclamation

Councilmember Bhargava read the proclamation recognizing October 2025 as Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to celebrate the vibrant cultural and spiritual traditions of Hindu Americans and to continue building a community rooted in mutual respect, learning and shared prosperity.

Bitu Patel, speaking on behalf of the Hindu American community, accepted and thanked the Council for the proclamation to help educate all Americans about Hindu traditions. She commented on their activities including large donations of food to local food banks and shelters.

Susheel Kumar, representing Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA, thanked the Council for recognizing Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month. He thanked the City for its support of the Hindu community.

(b) Arbor Day Proclamation

Councilmember Sumadiwirya read the proclamation declaring October 18, 2025, as Arbor Day in Bellevue and urged all community members to plant and care for trees to help sustain the health, beauty and well-being of the environment for present and future generations.

Dustin VanNieulande, Park Ranger, introduced Sally Lawrence, a longtime Bellevue naturalist volunteer.

Ms. Lawrence thanked the Council and Bellevue residents for their support of Arbor Day. She described her volunteer activities including educating youth about bats and photographing amphibian eggs in local ponds for a Woodland Park Zoo citizen science project. She said trees protect streams and provide shade and habitat for birds and other wildlife. She invited everyone to participate in Arbor Day activities on Saturday, September 18, at Lewis Creek Park. She encouraged everyone to consider training as a Bellevue naturalist to learn more about nature and meet other residents.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

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

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Individuals speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days. Each speaker is allowed up to three minutes to speak and a maximum of three speakers are allowed to speak to any one side of a particular topic. In compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities, no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure or candidate.

- (a) Victor Bishop, President of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway Association, said he is also the legislative committee chair for the Eastside Transportation Association. He served two terms on the Bellevue Transportation Commission, including as Chair. He expressed support for the Council's draft 2026 State Legislative Agenda. He is pleased the Council has continued to include the completion of the I-405 Master Plan as a priority. He said the SR 520/124th Avenue NE interchange project should be the next logical project for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). He thanked the Council for including funding for that project as a priority in the legislative agenda. Mr. Bishop said the legislative agenda refers to the need to advance funding to implement the southbound on-ramp to I-405 from the Lake Hills Connector, which he supports. He suggested a third possible ramp connection to the downtown with a new off-ramp from southbound I-405 to NE 10th Street.
- (b) Mariya Frost, Vice President of Government Affairs, Kemper Development Company, commented on the draft 2026 legislative agenda. She thanked City staff for their efforts to shape a comprehensive agenda and strategy. She urged the Council to remove the

request to expand property tax levy lid lift options and real estate tax authority. Ms. Frost said higher property taxes directly raise housing costs. She expressed concern regarding higher housing costs and taxes. On a separate issue, Ms. Frost thanked the Council for including last year's language in this year's transportation policy statement to emphasize Bellevue's support for a statewide autonomous vehicle policy framework. She thanked staff for restating the City's commitment to reducing traffic congestion and suggested including traffic congestion and autonomous vehicle policy in the key priorities section of the legislative agenda.

- (c) Mason Ji, an attorney and member of the Board of Directors for the Friends of Bellevue Cross-Cultural Center, said the group is working extensively with the community and hears strong support for a cross-cultural center in Bellevue. He said this type of facility can connect people from different backgrounds and age groups. He urged the Council to make the development of a cross-cultural center a top priority.
- (d) Paul Rood said he has taken noise measurements with a decibel meter on various equipment including a chain saw. Gas-powered models reached 114 decibels and electric saws emitted noise measuring 10 percent of the noise generated by gas models. Additional measurements included a leaf blower (116 decibels for gas-powered model), Ford F-150 truck (74 decibels) and a Toyota Camry (78 decibels). Mr. Rood commented on the factors that influence the noise levels of different equipment and sources. He encouraged the City to improve its regulation of noise levels.
- (e) Eric Drever noted that he has a public safety background and expressed concern regarding King County funding for the Department of Public Defense. He said the proposed budget for that office is higher than what they are currently providing during a time of deficit. He acknowledged that it is important to have representation for people going to trial. However, the problem is the county is not being equitable in how it distributes funds to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. He said there are many more public defenders than prosecutors, which affects due process for every individual. He asked the Council to reach out to King County about this issue.
- (f) Sam Guyumdzhyan expressed concern regarding ongoing issues around schools, public parks, sidewalks and bus stops, including near The Sophia Way shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness and low-income housing. He said there have been incidents of hazardous waste spills, theft, littering, damage to private property, graffiti and drug consumption. He expressed concern about public safety and encampments throughout Bellevue. He said he would submit his comments in writing as well. He said he has contacted the City's code compliance staff.
- (g) Alex Tsimerman commented on the racial and ethnic groups in Bellevue, U.S. citizenship and employers in Bellevue.

Mayor Robinson directed him to avoid commenting on specific individuals, including Councilmembers. After additional comments by Mr. Tsimerman, Mayor Robinson asked staff to document that he violated the rules of oral communications.

- (h) Joe Kunzler thanked Mayor Robinson for standing up to Mr. Tsimmerman. Mr. Kunzler expressed confidence in City Councilmembers and their commitment to serving the community. He encouraged a six-month exclusion of Mr. Tsimmerman from Council, Board and Commission meetings. He concurred with Ms. Frost's earlier concerns about the cost of housing in Bellevue.
 - (i) Dustin *[no last name given]* said he was intrigued by the previous week's discussion regarding the 2026 World Cup in the Seattle area. He encouraged the City to take advantage of any opportunities that arise. He encouraged outreach to local businesses to involve them in preparing for the World Cup events and visitors.
- 5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
 - 6. Report of the City Manager

- (a) Mini City Hall Update

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the Mini City Hall at Crossroads shopping center.

Mike McCormick Huentelman, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, said the Mini City Hall serves as a reliable connection to provide services and programs for residents and businesses. In 2022, the Council successfully lobbied for state funding to expand the Crossroads facility. Mr. McCormick Huentelman thanked the Council for its leadership in helping Bellevue to be more resilient as a community.

Ying Carlson, Community Services Supervisor, said the presentation was for information only and no Council action was requested.

Ramu Ayyaluru, Program Administrator, Mini City Hall, said he is also a Bellevue resident and grew up in the Crossroads neighborhood. He said the Mini City Hall opened 30 years ago and provides multilingual and multicultural services regardless of economic and social barriers. He said they partner with local non-profit organizations to help bridge social services gaps in the community. He said the office serves approximately 20,000 residents and handles approximately 50,000 service requests annually.

The expansion of Mini City Hall was completed in 2024, which coincided with the 30th anniversary. Mr. Ayyaluru said more than 300 community members, including state legislators, attended the grand opening and anniversary celebration. He said the new space offers enhanced outreach capabilities with two dedicated partnership rooms and a multipurpose room, and all of the rooms are equipped for hybrid/virtual participation. He said the expansion led to growth in new partnerships with organizations that provide food, financial coaching, job search and resume assistance, social services enrollment and an English as a second language (ESL) course.

Mr. Ayyaluru said Africans on the Eastside and the Immigrant Women's Community Center provide free, in-person multilingual navigation services. He said the Mini City Hall connects community members with affordable transportation means around King County. He noted the expansion of Spanish services through the Chinese Information and Service Center, which also has a Chinese, Mandarin, Russian and Ukrainian interpretation center at Mini City Hall. Mr. Ayyaluru said the Mini City Hall and partnership staff all speak a second language along with English including Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Somali, Russian, Ukrainian, Hindi and others. City staff also utilize the Language Line service, which supports more than 240 languages for phone conversations. Mr. Ayyaluru thanked the Council for its support of the Mini City Hall staff and services.

Ms. Carlson said Mini City Hall staff deal with a wide variety of needs and issues on a daily basis. The most common requests relate to food, rent and utility assistance, affordable housing, homelessness, access to healthcare, cultural and language barriers, and immigration issues. She said there have been an increasing number of questions regarding reductions in federal funding for social services and enhanced immigration enforcement activities.

Ms. Carlson expressed appreciation for the expanded Mini City Hall. She said it provides more space for community organizations to provide direct services to residents. She said they are trusted partners with strong relationships and credibility within the community. She said they have made partnership room scheduling more flexible and added hybrid/virtual access to connect with Mini City Hall and providers. She said the office works to meet people where they are to provide services in a space and format most accessible to them.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the report.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

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

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

- (a) Resolution No. 10548 determining that a portion of a public utility easement located at 707 96th Ave NE is surplus to the City's needs and is no longer required for providing continued public utility service; and setting a time and place for a public hearing to consider the release of this easement.

9. Public Hearing

- (a) Public Hearing and Action on Resolution No. 10549 of the City Council of the City of Bellevue, Washington, denying the application for Public Benefit Rating

System Open Space Classification of the Timiri property located at 4277 137th Avenue NE, Bellevue, Washington (King County Parcel No. 8669400210).

City Manager Carlson said tonight's public hearing is a required step in responding to the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) application submitted for the Timiri property. She recalled that the Council previously received a briefing on September 23. Ms. Carlson said staff's responses to questions raised by the Council are included in the meeting packet.

Thara Johnson, Planning Director, Community Development Department, said staff is asking the Council to consider adoption of the proposed resolution denying the Timiri application for the PBRs Open Space Classification. The PBRs program was created following the Open Space Taxation Act in 1970 intended to encourage voluntary resource conservation on private property in exchange for a tax incentive.

Ms. Johnson said both King County and the City are responsible for evaluating the property and assessing whether it qualifies for the open space classification. Each jurisdiction must hold a public hearing on the application and both must approve the request for the classification to be granted. The King County Hearing Examiner's recommendation was issued on October 3 and recommended denial of the application. If both jurisdictions approve the application, an open space taxation agreement would be established.

Ms. Johnson presented an aerial view of the Timiri property and noted the section (up to 1.1 acres that could be eligible for the open space classification) that is the subject of the application. She said King County staff recommended designating a portion of the property as a public recreation area and a separate portion as an urban open space.

Katie White, Assistant City Attorney, said the application requested eligibility for 11 of 22 possible open space resource categories including active trail linkage, ecological enhancement, scenic resource or viewpoint, watershed protection, surface water quality buffer, and others. She said King County staff recommended approval of the following three classifications: public recreation area, significant wildlife or salmonid habitat and urban open space.

Ms. White described the City's review of the application using evaluation criteria from RCW 84.34.037(2) and King County Code 20.36. Despite King County's recommendation for the public recreation area designation, City staff determined that the trail easement is pre-existing and not controlled by the applicant, and the trail does not substitute for a public trail network or park. City staff further determined that the criteria for the significant wildlife habitat classification and the urban open space classification are not met.

Ms. Johnson highlighted additional details related to King County's recommendation. If King County staff's recommendation were approved, the annual tax reduction for the private property owner would be \$8,367.

Ms. Johnson said the King County Hearing Examiner recommended denial of the application citing that the trail easement is not a public recreation area and there is insufficient evidence of a

pileated woodpecker habitat. The Hearing Examiner opined that noncontiguous portions of the property cannot be combined to meet the acreage criteria.

Ms. Johnson said City staff concluded that the application does not meet the criteria under King County Code 20.36 for the requested open space categories or the intent of the Open Space Taxation Act. Ms. Johnson said staff recommends the adoption of a resolution denying the Timiri PBRs application.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to open the public hearing, and Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Barbara Hughes, President of the Bridle Trails Community Club, said there is no public benefit to granting the open space classifications proposed for the Timiri property. She said the property is not accessible to the public other than through the homeowners association's easement. She said the property could not be developed due to its proximity to power lines and the related easement. She encouraged the Council to deny the application.

Pamela Johnston concurred with Ms. Hughes' comments and said the property tax exemption should not be abused. Ms. Johnston commented on the original intent of the Open Space Taxation Act, which was to preserve greenbelts and recreation opportunities. Ms. Johnston encouraged the Council to provide feedback to King County.

An unidentified male spoke in opposition to the application, noting a lack of public benefit and the loss of tax dollars.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to close the public hearing, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Ms. White said the burden is on the applicant. She said there is a provision in the King County Code regarding the significant wildlife category that addresses whether there are studies about specific species on the property.

Councilmember Lee said he is inclined to deny the request. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Johnson said that while King County staff recommended granting certain classifications, the Hearing Examiner recommended denial of the application. Ms. Johnson said both the City Council and the King County Council must take action on the application.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt Resolution No. 10549, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

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

At 7:30 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:45 p.m.

10. Study Session Items

(a) Review of Recommended 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the recommended 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan.

Ms. Johnson said staff has been working over the past year to update the plan outlining the City's environmental goals and strategies. She said a draft plan was released in the summer for public comment and the final proposed plan will be discussed tonight. She said staff is requesting Council direction to prepare the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan for adoption at a future meeting.

Jennifer Ewing, Sustainability Manager, Community Development Department, said there were three phases of community engagement over the past year to review the goals and strategies and develop action items. The plan focuses on high-impact strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or increase the community's resiliency to climate change impacts. Ms. Ewing said the community and the Council have expressed support for ensuring that the plan will achieve the City's long-term climate goals.

Ms. Ewing said the plan identifies both municipal operations strategies and community strategies under five target areas: climate change, energy and buildings, mobility and land use, natural systems, and materials and waste. Top community priorities are community resilience, bold climate action, support for renters and multifamily buildings, waste reduction, transit access and walkability, and energy efficiency and grid resilience. Approximately 700 people, including more than 300 students, responded to two surveys. Community outreach included workshops, open houses and other public meetings.

Ms. Ewing recalled that during the July study session discussion, the Council asked about the most cost-effective strategies and how the City tracks progress toward sustainability goals. She said the City is reliant on the full implementation of a number of state and federal policies. She presented a graph depicting the impact of state policies on achieving greenhouse gas emission goals. She said it is unlikely the City can achieve a 50-percent reduction in emissions by 2030. However, it is possible to achieve that goal by 2035 if state policies are implemented through the City's plan. Ms. Ewing said achieving the goals will require decarbonizing existing homes, commercial buildings and multifamily buildings and reducing vehicle trips.

Ms. Ewing highlighted the key strategies in the plan and related action items. Climate change actions include a multifamily building sustainability program and resilience hub network planning. Energy and buildings actions include expansion of the Energy Smart Eastside program and the evaluation of building decarbonization policy options. Mobility and land use actions include evaluating funding options and focusing on last-mile transit solutions. An example of a

waste and materials action is renewing the waste hauler contract to implement zero waste goals. Natural systems actions include a policy evaluation for electric yard equipment and monitoring Tree Code implementation.

Ana Hagerup, Sustainability Planning Manager, Finance and Asset Management Department, commented on the municipal operations strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including energy retrofits, development of renewable energy, low carbon fleet and resilient City operations. Example actions include ensuring adequate backup power for facilities and the fleet, electrification of City facilities and replacement of charging stations and fleet electric vehicles.

Ms. Ewing said the foundational strategies in the plan address sustainability funding, embedding climate and sustainability practices in the City's operations, and ensuring equity. She noted plans for a sustainable funding analysis and exploration of new revenue options. She provided a brief overview of the action plan to address large building decarbonization incentives.

Ms. Ewing said there are action items recommended by staff that have not yet been fully funded. She said staff has been working over the past five years to implement the current environmental stewardship plan. She said plans for next year include expansion of the clean buildings incentive program, a new electric vehicle technical assistance program at multifamily buildings, expansion of the Energy Smart Eastside program to include weatherization assistance, and continuing actions related to municipal operations.

Ms. Ewing said staff will be developing cost estimates for budget proposals. She said staff will continue to engage with the community including businesses and residents. She requested Council direction to prepare the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan for adoption at a future meeting.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Johnson said budget discussions related to the plan will occur in 2026 as part of the 2027-2028 budget process.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for their work and expressed support for Bellevue's leadership in reducing emissions and environmental sustainability. He noted revisions to the plan reflecting accountability, equity and goal-related metrics. He said it was good to see so many youth involved in updating the plan. He said he appreciated that staff involved planning, transportation, utilities, finance and other department staff in the plan update.

Mr. Malakoutian recalled that People for Climate Action (PCA) created a document and it was his understanding that City staff planned to integrate it into the City's future action plan. Ms. Johnson said PCA members have been very involved and helpful throughout the process. She said many of the City's strategies incorporate many of PCA's action items. Ms. Ewing said PCA's 12 actions are consistent with the City's plan. She said some of PCA's policy recommendations would require further engagement with the City.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked whether the plan includes incentives for public education and community activities related to sustainability issues. Ms. Ewing confirmed that community engagement is a significant component and a key foundation of the work.

Mr. Malakoutian asked whether the City's operations and the community will be able to achieve the 2050 goals. Ms. Johnson said the framework established by staff focuses on achieving the 2050 emissions goal. She acknowledged, however, that things are always changing and staff can make adjustments. Ms. Ewing said staff has a good level of confidence in the plan. However, it is difficult to predict conditions and technologies in 2050.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Ms. Johnson said implementation metrics are under development. Staff's plan is to come back to the Council with an annual update. Ms. Johnson said staff will continue the City's greenhouse gas inventory reporting. Ms. Ewing said the metrics will address programs, projects and outcomes. Mr. Malakoutian encouraged identifying more output metrics to ensure the plan will meet the City's goals.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for the presentation. He thanked Mr. Malakoutian for his comments. Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Ewing said the Council will be asked to adopt the Sustainable Bellevue Plan, which includes goals, targets and strategies. The action plan outlines more specific details about tasks and activities. Mr. Hamilton said he is fully committed to achieving the City's goals. He said the plan reflects feedback and input from the Council and the community. He said the majority of Bellevue residents support climate change priorities. He commented on the importance of involving everyone in the community in sustainable practices.

Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Hagerup said the City participates in the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program and provides ORCA transit passes to employees. She said transit and multimodal travel (e.g., biking, walking) is expected to increase when light rail begins operating between Seattle and Bellevue.

Mr. Hamilton expressed support for the plan. He noted that many of the medium and high impact strategies are in the lowest cost column. He said the action plan is detailed, reasonable, impactful and measurable. He thanked staff for their work.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis concurred with his colleagues' comments. He expressed an interest in information regarding the cost-effectiveness of different strategies. He would like to see a cost-benefit analysis to help compare strategies and options. Ms. Johnson said tonight's presentation highlighted the strategies that staff believes will have the highest impact. She said different strategies and actions were discussed in July as well. Ms. Ewing said the cost-effectiveness of specific actions will become more evident over time.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked staff for the presentation and expressed general support for the plan. He noted the challenge ahead to meet the plan's goals. He suggested focusing on the local, controllable inputs while also supporting external inputs the City cannot control. He said he appreciated the focus on climate resilience and community engagement. He expressed support for establishing additional metrics.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Ms. Hagerup said the City is currently achieving its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for municipal operations. She said fleet electrification is the biggest challenge due largely to the lack of electrical infrastructure at City-owned

facilities. However, she said the City will continue to meet its targets if it follows long-range planning and investments.

Ms. Hagerup said the long-range and sustainability planning division is moving into the budget office. This will help identify budget proposals with efficiency components for tracking and monitoring.

Ms. Johnson referred to Councilmember Bhargava's involvement in the Wilburton vision implementation planning when he served on the Planning Commission. She said that provided the framework for a sustainable district in the Wilburton area.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryia thanked staff for their work on the Sustainable Bellevue Plan. She asked whether the strategies are prioritized. Ms. Ewing said that as staff develop their work plans for next year, they will be working on budget proposals to implement their projects. Ms. Sumadiwiryia commended the attention to community resilience. Ms. Ewing said resilience is defined in the plan and it relates to the ability to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change.

Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Ms. Ewing said staff works to attract the involvement of a diverse group of residents in the plan update process and ongoing plan implementation. Councilmember Sumadiwiryia thanked staff for their work with People for Climate Action and other residents and businesses.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their significant work to update the plan. He thanked his colleagues for their comments and questions. He expressed support for the plan. He said it will be helpful to collect more data to compare the costs and benefits of different actions. He encouraged trying lower cost actions first.

Mayor Robinson said she was hearing a strong commitment from Councilmembers in support of achieving the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to prepare the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan for adoption on a future consent calendar. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 9:00 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 9:12 p.m.

(b) Draft 2026 State Legislative Agenda

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the draft 2026 State Legislative Agenda.

Katie Halse, Assistant Director for Intergovernmental Relations, said staff is requesting input and direction on the State Legislative Agenda. She said the 2026 session begins on January 12 and is a short 60-day session. The legislature will be considering supplemental budgets (operating,

capital and transportation) for the second year of the biennium budget. She said the State Economic and Revenue Forecast will be released on November 18, and the Governor's Supplemental Budget will be released by December 20.

Ms. Halse said the State Legislative Agenda includes key legislative priorities. The State Policy Statement is intended to provide flexibility for staff to engage in policy and funding proposals discussions that arise during the legislative session. She said a new element of the State Legislative Agenda addresses economic prosperity and partnerships. This includes state and federal decisions that affect the economy, City services and affordability. Ms. Halse said the City is asking the state legislature to consult with staff regarding the economic impacts of tax proposals or budget packages. She said the proposals will be evaluated through a lens of fiscal sustainability and economic prosperity.

Ms. Halse commented on the key priorities of housing, including affordable housing, and streamlined permitting. She noted the strong need for partnership with the state legislature and for sufficient time to effectively implement new housing and land use laws. She said the state passed significant legislation over the past few years. She said Bellevue remains committed to encouraging affordable housing development and supporting flexible funding options for jurisdictions that address affordable housing.

Ms. Halse said Bellevue continues to lead in digital permitting innovation, streamlining processes and improving customer experiences. She said the City is asking the state to help modernize the MyBuildingPermit.com platform, which supports statewide priorities including accelerating housing production.

Ms. Halse said the State Legislative Agenda consistently identifies critical transportation priorities including the I-405/SR 167 corridor, business access and transit (BAT) bus lanes and the SR 520/124th Avenue NE interchange project. She thanked state legislators for supporting the Grand Connection crossing in Bellevue.

Ms. Halse said the State Policy Statement aligns with the Council's Strategic Target Areas (STAs): 1) high-performance government, 2) thriving people and communities, 3) vibrant economy, 4) safe and efficient transportation, 5) high-quality built and natural environment, and 6) community safety and health. The Association of Washington Cities' (AWC) legislative agenda prioritizes indigent defense, housing supply, transportation and shared revenues.

Next steps will be to advance key legislative priorities this fall leading to the beginning of the session in January. AWC's City Action Days are scheduled for January 21 and 22, 2026. Bellevue Day in Olympia will occur approximately mid-session and the session concludes on March 12.

Ms. Halse thanked Councilmembers for participating in the briefings over the past few weeks. As a result of that input, staff proposes an amendment to add at the end of the first paragraph under the economic prosperity and partnership section: "Bellevue may not be able to support tax proposals that could create a direct impact on Bellevue's employment base and that would give Washington a competitive disadvantage in a competitive marketplace."

Genesee Adkins, Deputy City Manager, noted that a number of Councilmembers suggested language consistent with staff's proposed amendment.

Mayor Robinson said she had two proposed amendments from Councilmember Hamilton, two from Councilmember Nieuwenhuis and two of her own, as well as an additional amendment developed by several individuals.

Councilmember Hamilton proposed revising the key legislative priorities related to the Grand Connection to add the following language: "...and we plan to request future ongoing state partnerships." Ms. Halse said this is consistent with staff's intent for a strategy moving into the 2027 state legislative session and staff concurs with the proposed amendment.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Ms. Halse said the use of the word "partnerships" is meant to demonstrate the City's interest in a joint action. She acknowledged however that the word "support" would be appropriate as well.

Councilmember Hamilton, referring to the thriving people and communities section, proposed striking the last sentence to replace it with: "We request strong state partnership to meet growing needs, strengthen human services infrastructure, and to support the workforce so individuals and families can live with dignity, stability and opportunity." Ms. Halse said the suggestion is consistent with the Human Services Plan and staff supports the recommended change.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis proposed an amendment to the safe and efficient transportation section to state that "Bellevue has concerns about the potential impacts of a retail delivery fee." He said this has been discussed in the past and is likely to be looked at again for the next session. He expressed concern regarding the negative impacts on employers and consumers.

Ms. Halse said staff reviewed the language and determined that it aligns with the language that prefaces the amendment about how to look at new potential revenue sources. She concurred with Mr. Nieuwenhuis that a retail delivery fee is a regressive funding mechanism.

Referring to the community safety and health section, Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested language that "Bellevue supports enhanced and improved state-mandated training for new and existing officers. Bellevue also supports full funding of the required basic training for new officers."

Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested removing the reference to the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) due to issues within that commission's current structure that lacks the transparency, responsiveness and operational clarity needed to justify further support from the City. He said police agencies across Washington have raised serious concerns regarding the commission and its unilateral decisions.

Ms. Halse noted the words "enhanced and improved state-mandated training" and said the proposed suggestion is consistent with the State Legislative Agenda. Mayor Robinson suggested using "state funding" instead of "full funding." Ms. Halse and Councilmembers agreed that would be appropriate.

Mayor Robinson referenced the section on high-performance government and suggested adding: “When state policies are achieving their goals at the local level, we encourage the state to recognize and preserve those local approaches, maintaining the flexibility that cities need to effectively meet the unique needs of our communities.” Ms. Halse said the language is consistent with how staff approached other issues within the State Legislative Agenda.

Under high-quality built and natural environment, Ms. Robinson proposed an amendment stating: “Bellevue supports exploring refinements to state regulatory requirements that provide more efficient and predictable pathways to develop housing including expanded State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) categorical exemptions to support residential projects, including conversions.” Ms. Halse said this is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and housing goals.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Halse referenced staff’s proposed amendment to add language to the economic prosperity and partnership section: “Bellevue may not be able to support tax proposals that could create a direct impact on Bellevue’s employment base and that would give Washington a competitive disadvantage in a competitive marketplace.”

Councilmember Hamilton suggested removing “may not be able to” and replacing it with “cannot.” He said he felt the Council and City staff were clear about how they felt regarding some of the tax proposals during the last legislative session. He thanked Mayor Robinson for working with other cities to emphasize this point as well.

Ms. Adkins said this issue was raised by multiple Councilmembers. She said the Council could make the revision. However, staff is hesitant to recommend the change because it could foreclose some options for the Council. Ms. Adkins proposed: “Bellevue urges the legislature to avoid tax proposals that could create a direct impact on our employment base and may put Washington at a competitive disadvantage in a dynamic marketplace.”

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said he liked the stronger language. However, he understood the concern about using “cannot” and limiting the Council’s options.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for the language proposed by Ms. Adkins.

Councilmember Hamilton reiterated his suggestion to use the word “cannot” to make a clear statement. He said he is not concerned that the City would be boxing itself in.

Councilmember Lee concurred with Councilmember Hamilton. Mr. Lee said the Council made it clear last year that it would not support certain tax proposals.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya encouraged strong language while also considering the impact on small businesses. She said it is important to protect businesses.

Councilmember Bhargava said he agreed with Councilmembers Hamilton and Lee and asked staff to comment.

Ms. Adkins said the City was very effective during the last legislative session in taking a clear position on the tax and revenue proposals that would have negatively affected job growth and economic prosperity. She said that did affect the City's other priorities with the majority caucuses, who indicated that Bellevue taking a very strong position potentially jeopardized partnerships and cooperation on other issues. She said it is okay to take strong positions. However, it is important to understand how they might be perceived.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Adkins confirmed that Bellevue's position had a challenging impact on some of the City's funding requests. Mr. Bhargava suggested using "strongly urge."

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian agreed with the Council's opposition to any tax that puts businesses at a competitive disadvantage. However, he said it is important to build relationships and trust and to be able to engage in negotiations for competitive funding opportunities.

Mayor Robinson said she is hearing Council support for: "Bellevue strongly urges the legislature to avoid tax proposals that create a direct impact on Bellevue's employment base and that would give Washington a competitive disadvantage in a competitive marketplace."

Councilmember Lee concurred with his colleagues' concerns about the impact of taxes on businesses.

- At 9:55 p.m., Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Lee said the president of Microsoft has been talking about the need to send a clear message to the state legislature that they cannot impose unreasonable taxes. Mr. Lee said taxes affect both businesses and individuals. He reiterated his support for Councilmember Hamilton's recommendation for stronger language.

Mayor Robinson summarized Mr. Lee's proposed wording: "Bellevue will not support tax proposals that unnecessarily create a direct negative impact on businesses." Councilmember Lee said he would be supportive of Mr. Hamilton's recommended language using "cannot."

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis proposed removing the fourth bullet point under high-performance government in the State Policy Statement. He said the statement refers to lifting the property tax levy lid options and expanding the real estate excise tax (REET). He said Washington just went through the largest tax increase in state history and affordability is a constant concern for residents. He noted the City has a banked property tax capacity. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said expanding REET would undermine affordable housing efforts, penalize non-profit developers and increase barriers to housing access. He said REET already imposes up to a three percent tax on property sales over \$3 million, making Washington's rate the highest in the

nation. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said this results in less capital for construction, land acquisition and supportive services for affordable housing providers.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Adkins said the full section on economic prosperity and partnership addresses the concern over the collective impacts of taxation coming from the state. Ms. Halse suggested additional options for revising the language highlighted by Councilmember Nieuwenhuis. Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Ms. Halse said the intent of the section is to ensure that cities retain local control and have the ability to respond to future needs without being constrained by statutory limits.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian suggested language focusing on the importance of retaining local control and flexibility. Ms. Halse suggested the following language for revising the fourth bullet point referenced above by Councilmember Nieuwenhuis: “The City requests that the legislature provide greater flexibility for local revenue decisions.”

Mayor Robinson and Deputy Mayor Malakoutian expressed support for Ms. Halse’s suggested language. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis concurred.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt the 2026 State Legislative Agenda, as amended this evening. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

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

11. Land Use Reports: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions: None.

13. Written Reports

(a) Intergovernmental Affairs Monthly Update as of October 14, 2025

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 10:09 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw