

NEWPORT

The Vision

Newport is a connected neighborhood with strong social bonds and a deep relationship with the natural environment.

The future of the Newport neighborhood is built around supporting connections between neighbors and with the natural world. Newport is home to residents from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds. Residents often experience the area through smaller sub-neighborhoods and value the hometown atmosphere of the neighborhood. Residents, business owners, and visitors work together to build and maintain the social fabric of the area. The neighborhood-serving commercial center ~~Neighborhood Center~~ on 119th Avenue SE between SE 56th Street and SE 60th Street is a unique commercial area that contributes to the identity of the neighborhood as a tucked away gem. The neighborhood is anchored by wild areas full of life. It is connected internally and to the region through well-designed roads, convenient transit, trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and paths. Newport's future Growth ~~of residents and businesses~~ is supported by transportation infrastructure, environmental amenities and community facilities.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The Newport Neighborhood Area Plan contains policy direction consistent with the citywide policies in Volume 1 but with details specific to the Newport context. Some of the features that give Newport its character are the neighborhood center and its strong connection to natural areas and Lake Washington.

Community Context

The Newport neighborhood area is a ~~primarily~~ a residential area in the S ~~s~~outhwest corner of Bellevue. It straddles I-405 s ~~s~~outh of I-90 to the S ~~s~~outhern boundary of the City. It is bounded to the west by Lake Washington and to the east by the ~~the~~ Factoria and Somerset neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Area Planning

Planning for the 16 neighborhood areas in Bellevue is directed by 3 ~~three~~ policies in the Neighborhoods E ~~e~~lement (NH-17, NH-18, NH-19) of Volume 1.

- NH-17. Use the neighborhood area planning process to implement citywide policies adopted within the comprehensive plan.
 - NH-18. Periodically update neighborhood area plans consistent with the planning boundaries shown in Map N-1. For any given site, the 2014 subarea plan policies remain in effect until and unless they have been superseded by new planning area boundaries and policies.
 - NH-19. Use the neighborhood area planning process to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood area specific values and policies.
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History and Continued Evolution

Prior to farming by Europeans, there is evidence that the area near the mouth of Mercer Slough, now known as Newport Shores was a settlement and port used by native people into the 1850s. Mercer Slough was the terminus of the trail leading east to Lake Sammamish and Snoqualmie prairies beyond. Fishing and drying of food were common at settlements in this area. When Europeans took control of the area, it was converted to farming and natural resource extraction. Newport's early settlement by Europeans was tied to the logging industry and the discovery of coal around nearby Cougar Mountain in 1863. Later coal was extracted within the neighborhood area at Newcastle Mine which contributed to the booming local coal industry in the 1870s and 1880s. A railway connected the coal mines to the shores of Lake Washington in Newport where it would then be barged over to Seattle. That rail line and the interurban rail line that connected to Kent, Auburn, Puyallup, and Seattle was the basis for the route of the road that is now I-405 and Eastrail, the active transportation route that runs parallel to it through the Newport neighborhood area.

Newport Landing became a population hub revolving around the ferry service to Seattle and the railroad in the late 1800s. The mining and timber industries were central to the local economy.

In 1916 Lake Washington was lowered by approximately ~~9~~ nine feet through the completion of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, the Montlake Cut, and the Chittenden Locks. ~~This~~ These transformative infrastructure projects had a dramatic impact on the local environment as land that was previously submerged became developable and important ecological features such as the Mercer Slough were changed by the lower water table.

The completion of the original Lacey V. Murrow floating bridge (I-90) in 1940 laid the foundation for a dramatic increase in residential development that began in the 1950s. This

coincided with the regional “Boeing Boom” which drew thousands of workers and their families to the area. The real estate company White and Bollard platted and planned the subdivisions of Newport Hills in 1958, and five years later the Newport Hills Shopping Center was completed.

Compared to the big evolution of the area in the first half of the 20th Century, the contemporary neighborhood's built environment has largely remained ~~largely static~~ unchanged over the past 50 years. The total population of the neighborhood has increased ~~only modestly (Figure NP-1)~~, however, the needs of residents have changed. Many of the original residents were white families with young children. The current demographic profile is much more diverse in age, race, and family status. Recent developments in recreation facilities such as Eastrail and the completion of the Newport Hills Woodlawn Park provide ~~current residents~~ community members with enhanced recreation opportunities and access to nature.

Community Profile

Population 10,175

Households 3,700

Homeowner status

Own 80%

Rent 20%

Age & Disability

Under 18 15%

18-34 14%

35-44 15%

45-64 30%

Over 65 16%

Persons with a disability 9%

Race & Language

White 45%

Asian 34%

Hispanic/Latine 11%

Black 3%

All other races 7%

Speaks a language other than English 40%

Commuting

Drive alone to work 62%

Carpool, transit, bike, walk or other to work 27%

No car in household 4%

Source: US Census Bureau. 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Neighborhood Conditions and Built Form

Newport has historically been a major node in the regional transportation system with its access to Lake Washington as a site of native people's settlement and later as a transfer point for moving coal and timber out of the neighborhood. The residential development of the area, however, was designed to turn the area into self-contained neighborhoods with limited connections to regional destinations, even as some of those routes continue in different forms~~were carried forward~~. The old interurban rail line is now Eastrail, ~~and I-405 developed from a road that connects~~was a road that provided connection to the areas on either side of it and it has become to a highway that facilitates transportation through the area but can be a barrier with limited access points into the area. The neighborhood ~~area~~ is made up of many sub-neighborhoods that developed in the middle-20th cCentury to follow ~~the its topography of the hilly area~~. I-405 bifurcates the neighborhood and limits connections between the sub-neighborhoods to the ~~West-west~~ and those to the ~~East-east~~.

Many Newport residents identify closely with their sub-neighborhood, usually defined by unique signage and other features, housing styles and the boundaries of the original development. -The sub-neighborhoods ~~East-east~~ of I-405 revolve around the Neighborhood Center at the top of Newport Hills and the sub-neighborhoods ~~West-west~~ of I-405 maintain a strong connection to Lake Washington.

Because of the geographic ~~challenges of~~features like the hills, streams, ~~and~~ the lake and the presence of I-405 and its interchanges, access to and from the neighborhood is limited, especially by car. There are primarily 4 ~~four~~ street access points on and off the hills east of I-405 and 2 ~~two~~ street access points in and out of the area west of I-405. The local street

network is typical of suburban development with winding streets focused on fitting in with the area's topology and natural area features.

Neighborhood Challenges and Opportunities

Community Change

Newport community members value community interconnectedness. The residents of the newly built neighborhood in the 1950s were largely young families. This is reflected in the development of three school facilities in Newport. As young families age and residents' jobs and family situations change, the uniformity of the early community has changed. Today, residents are more diverse in age, race and family make-up. The social life of the early neighborhood revolved around the swim and tennis club and the yacht club, the retail commercial area -- now designated identified as a nNeighborhood cCenter -- and the schools. Today, with the more diverse neighborhood, these places remain important but social connections are made in more contexts. However, and the social life of the neighborhood remains a priority for many people, both new and old residents.

Connectivity Challenges and Transit Access

Historically, connectionconnections to other places was were primarily across the lake both for native people and early settlers that transported the coal and lumber across the lake. Those early routes have been supplanted by other connections needs. Walking paths wind throughout the neighborhood, including Eastrail that connects Bellevue to the region. However, tThe trails are managed by a variety of public entities, including schools, the City of Bellevue, utilities, and other jurisdictions. Eastrail runs parallel to I-405 but connections to it are limited from the more populous, eEast side of I-405. In addition, the trail network connects to trails in other jurisdictions such as King County and Newcastle. The road network remains a challenge both for active transportation modes as well as for and cars. I-405 limits access to neighborhoods to the wWest and to Lake Washington. There are only two arterials that provide access to the neighborhood to the eEast of I-405. Improving connections from the neighborhood to other places is a primary priority for the neighborhood.

Environment and Natural Areas

One of the prized characteristics of the neighborhood is the many trails and forested parks that snake their way through the neighborhood and forested parks. This is in part due to the topography. The steep ravines that are difficult for residential construction to develop, create excellent habitat for wildlife and trails through natural areas. They also contribute to the goal of expanding the tree canopy citywide. Newport has a higher tree canopy than some other neighborhoods and it is important to maintain those forested areas. Connection to nature is one of the defining features of the neighborhood and a key part of

meeting the citywide goal of 80 percent of households having access to a park, open space or trail within a third of a mile of their homes. Maintaining and enhancing that connection to nature through trails, tree canopy, and neighborhood and regional parks is a priority for the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Center in Newport

A Neighborhood Center is a small commercial or mixed-use area in a location that is otherwise primarily residential. Neighborhood Centers are often anchored by grocery stores and often meet the daily needs of local residents. Policy support for Neighborhood Centers is in the Land Use Element (LU-16, LU-17, and LU-18) of Volume 1. Newport contains one Neighborhood Center, ~~which~~ named for the largest retail development~~space~~ but includes the commercial and mixed use area around it as well.

- Newport Hills Shopping Center
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An Urban Design Framework for Newport

An urban design framework visualizes design strategies and provides policy guidance on how to improve public spaces within Newport to achieve the vision. The framework builds from what the community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using public spaces within the neighborhood today. A robust set of activities and workshops were used throughout the planning process for community members to evaluate public spaces within their neighborhood and identify new opportunities.

Urban Design and Public Spaces

Urban design is the practice of planning and designing the physical environment of a community. Within a neighborhood area plan, urban design can improve the design and function of public spaces, including community gathering spaces, parks, plazas, streets, trails, natural areas and public art. Rather than focusing on the design of a specific place, urban design considers how experiencing different public spaces throughout a neighborhood provides for enhanced gathering and social interactions, a more attractive public realm, improved neighborhood connectivity, and a clear neighborhood identity.

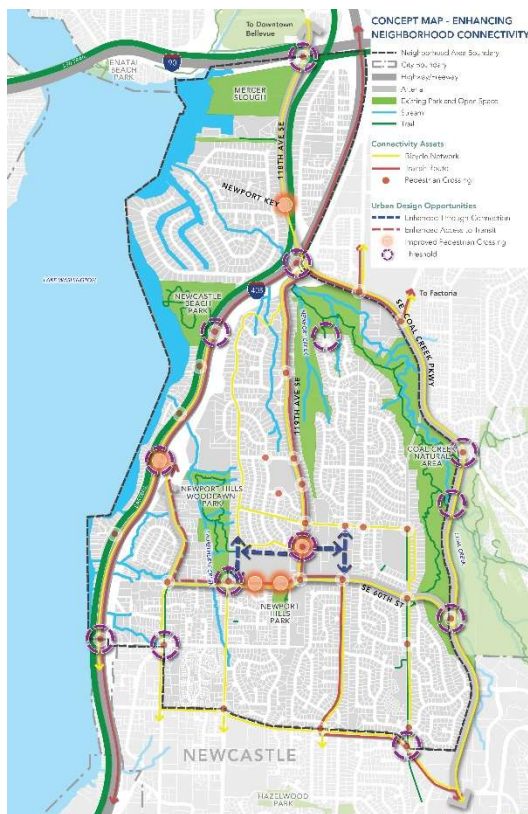
Enhancing Neighborhood Connectivity

Arterials such as 118th Avenue SE/Lake Washington Boulevard SE, 119th Avenue SE, Coal Creek Parkway, SE 60th Street are primarily how people move in and out of Newport's

neighborhoods. Community members have noted few access points in and out of neighborhoods, lack of connectivity between local and regional trails, and incomplete pedestrian infrastructure along arterials such as SE 60th Street.

An urban design framework for enhancing neighborhood connectivity in Newport entails potential design strategies as illustrated conceptually by the following concept map and supported by neighborhood area plan policies:

- More pedestrian and cycling *through-connections* within Newport's Neighborhood Center to provide safe and convenient access to schools, parks, and housing, especially when these areas redevelop in the future.
- Enhanced *access to transit* options such as the Newport Hills Park & Ride, allowing community members to access opportunities and services across the city and region.
- Improved *pedestrian crossings* on arterials, such as SE 60th Street, 119th Avenue SE, and 118th Avenue NE, that provide frequent and high-visibility opportunities for pedestrians to cross the street.
- Enhanced *thresholds* into Newport, especially from the trail system, using wayfinding and other safety improvements to help community members navigate between the trailhead and their intended destination. Thresholds represent the starting point of an experience or place.



Enhancing Neighborhood Gathering Spaces

The Newport community has expressed a desire for more public places to gather and to make intergenerational connections, as many of these opportunities are located outside the neighborhood area. Several privately-owned properties throughout the neighborhood serve as community spaces by hosting local activities and events, while others have expressed a desire to become that type of accessible, community-oriented space in the future.

Third Places

Third places are places that people go to when they are neither home nor at work that are seen as spaces to provide connection and build community. They can occur informally in any public or privately-owned place as long as it is known to the community as a safe and welcoming space with low barriers to entry.

An urban design framework for enhancing neighborhood gathering spaces in Newport entails potential design strategies as illustrated conceptually by the following concept map and supported by neighborhood area plan policies:

- Strengthened role of Newport's *Neighborhood Center* as a place for community to gather and access goods and services.
- *Community partnerships* with organizations, business owners, property owners, and faith-based communities to develop their existing spaces as third places
- *Potential new neighborhood-scale parks* to increase the community's access to open space and recreation, especially in areas of Newport not well-served today
- *Environmental enhancements* that improve the aesthetic and functional qualities of natural features, such as Coal Creek and Lake Washington
- New and enhanced pedestrian corridors that provide *better connectivity between and into neighborhood gathering spaces*
- Enhanced *thresholds* into Newport's numerous nature parks and trails, using art and other creative elements to reflect the neighborhood's natural beauty and history
- *Arterial streetscape enhancements* to make streets, such as SE 60th Street and 119th Avenue NE, attractive, safe, and comfortable corridors for people to walk and bike to gathering spaces throughout Newport



Neighborhood Policy Summary

Neighborhood Identity

A neighborhood identity evolves over time as residents and businesses change, reflecting the varied history of the area and incorporating the cultures and needs of new residents and businesses. Newport has a very close tie to nature, through the multiple parks and its connection to Lake Washington. The trails and pedestrian paths link sub-neighborhoods together and to parks and points outside the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood Centers are nodes of commercial activity in otherwise residential areas. The primary purpose is to serve the daily needs of the local residents and be a focus of moderately more dense housing development. The Neighborhood Center, on and around the Newport Hills Shopping Center, serves as a hub of activity and identity point for the community. The future of this area will be a mixed use area focused around a pedestrian-oriented commercial district.

Community Gathering Spaces

People in Newport value good relationships with the people that live around them and strive for an interconnected neighborhood. There are key places of connection such as the Newport Shores Yacht Club, the Newport Swim and Tennis Club and Newport Heights Elementary but there are opportunities to develop other indoor and outdoor points of connection on vacant Bellevue School District property and in other community-focused spaces.

Mobility and Access

Connecting to places outside of the neighborhood is a challenge. The topography and regional transportation system restricts access to the neighborhood by car or bus to a limited number of points. There is one transit route through the neighborhood. However, ~~there~~ the regional transportation system does offer the potential for better connections. Eastrail runs through the neighborhood west of I-405 and, with better connections to areas to the ~~eastwest~~ of I-405, could be a primary connector. In addition, there is an opportunity to better connect to the Lightrail and regional transit at the South Bellevue and Downtown stations and at a future station near Factoria.

Environment

Bellevue prides itself as being a “City in a Park” and that is very clear in Newport. The neighborhood is stitched between forested parks and Lake Washington. Bellevue seeks to ensure that the parks, trails, and other natural areas provide a safe and connected habitat for fish and wildlife.

Goals & policies

Newport strives to build connections within the neighborhood through the growth of community gathering spaces and linking trails together into a cohesive system.

Neighborhood Identity

Goal. Support a walkable community with strong connection with natural areas and convenient local shopping and service opportunities.

[See policy change document]

Neighborhood Center

Goal. Support the continued evolution of the commercial heart of the neighborhood and encourage small and unique businesses to locate and grow to support the daily needs of the neighborhood.

[See policy change document]

Community Gathering Places

Goal. Provide for the evolving social needs of residents through the formation of new indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces in partnership with Bellevue School District and other organizations.

[See policy change document]

Mobility and Access

Goal. Meet the needs of people using all forms of transportation to circulate within the neighborhood and connect to places outside the neighborhood.

[See policy change document]

Environment

Goal. Care for -the many parks, trails and green areas in the neighborhood, promoting safe water and fish and animal habitats and contributing to the health of -the larger ecosystem.

[See policy change document]