

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 Center on 119th Ave SE between SE 56th St 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, trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and paths. 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 primarily a residential area in the southwest corner of Bellevue. It straddles I-405 south of I-90 to the southern boundary of the City. It is bounded to the west by Lake Washington and to the east by Factoria and Somerset neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Area Planning

Planning for the 16 neighborhood areas in Bellevue is directed by 3 policies in the Neighborhoods Element (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.

History and Continued Evolution

Prior to farming by Europeans, there is evidence that the area now known as Newport Shores was a settlement and port used by native people. 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.

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 feet through the completion of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, the Montlake Cut, and the Chittenden Locks. This transformative infrastructure project 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 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 Newport Hills Woodlawn Park provide current residents 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 settlement of native people 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 those routes were carried forward. The old interurban rail line is now Eastrail and I-405 developed from a road that connects to a highway that can be a barrier. The neighborhood is made up of many sub-neighborhoods that developed in the middle-20th century to follow the topography of the hilly area. I-405 bifurcates the neighborhood and limits connections between the sub-neighborhoods to the West and those to the 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 of I-405 revolve around the Neighborhood Center at the top of Newport Hills and the sub-neighborhoods west of I-405 maintain a strong connection to Lake Washington.

Because of the geographic challenges of 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 four street access points on and off the hills east of I-405 and 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 topology and natural areas.

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, the retail area -- now designated a neighborhood center -- and the schools. Today, with the more diverse neighborhood, social connections are made in more contexts. However, the social life of the neighborhood remains a priority for many people, both new and old residents.

Connectivity Challenges and Transit Access

Historically, connection to other places was 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 connection needs. Walking paths wind throughout the neighborhood, including Eastrail that connects Bellevue to the region. However, the trails are managed by a variety of public entities, including schools, the city, utilities, and other jurisdictions. Eastrail runs parallel to I-405 but connections to it are limited from the more

populous, east 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 cars. I-405 limits access to neighborhoods to the west and to Lake Washington. There are only two arterials that provide access to the neighborhood to the east 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. This is in part due to the topography. The steep ravines that are difficult for residential construction create excellent habitat for wildlife and trails through natural areas. Connection to nature is one of the defining features of the neighborhood. Maintaining and enhancing that connection 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 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 community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using public spaces within the neighborhood today.

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.

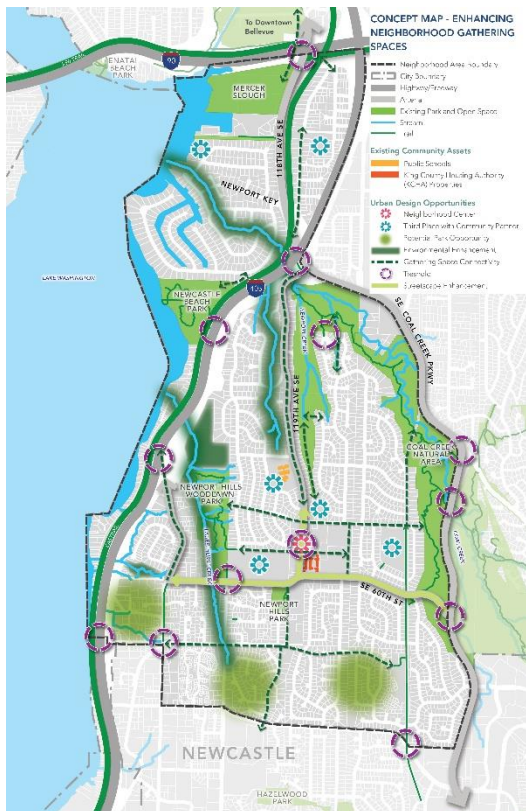
Enhancing Neighborhood Connectivity

Arterials such as 118th Avenue SE, 119th Avenue SE, Coal Creek Pkwy, SE 60th Street are primarily how people move in and out of Newport's neighborhoods. The community 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 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.

- *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 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 on 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 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 and with better connections to areas to the west of I-405, could be a primary connector. In addition, there is an opportunity to better connect to the light rail 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.

- S-NP-1.** Support Newport's identity as a diverse and connected community, anchored by forested natural areas and connections to streams and Lake Washington.
- S-NP-2.** Identify locations and thresholds that are significant to community and contribute to the neighborhood's identity.
- S-NP-3.** Reflect the continuing contributions of many different cultures to Newport in the design of public spaces and through public art.
- S-NP-4.** Connect the Neighborhood Center with residential areas through a network of safe, pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- S-NP-5.** Preserve existing visual features such as trees and hilltops, public views of water, and open space in new development when feasible.
- S-NP-6.** Strive to minimize loss of trees, especially on slopes and hilltops, mitigate unavoidable tree removal, and maintain and expand the tree canopy and forested environment in natural areas.

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.

- S-NP-7.** Support a neighborhood-serving commercial district as shown on Map LU-2 (Volume 1) Neighborhood Centers as a walkable mixed use area with multiple transportation options.
- S-NP-8.** Encourage new buildings to be located adjacent to the sidewalk to create an engaging street life for pedestrians in the Neighborhood Center.
- S-NP-9.** Encourage the inclusion of small commercial spaces to accommodate new and displaced businesses in new commercial development.

- S-NP-10.** Encourage the retention of businesses impacted by redevelopment in the new development.
- S-NP-11.** Support the unique identity of the Neighborhood Center as a center of community life and commercial activity through signage, public art and activities.
- S-NP-12.** Encourage the construction of multifamily housing within the Neighborhood Center.

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.

- S-NP-13.** Create accessible, affordable and welcoming indoor gathering places that support community needs and encourage intergenerational connections on City property or in partnership with organizations like schools, faith communities and social clubs.
- S-NP-14.** Identify locations and partners to support a community-serving facility augmented to support residents and coordinate resource distribution and services before, during and after a hazard event.
- S-NP-15.** Encourage the Bellevue School District to include community-serving uses, such as a community center, daycare or senior center in the redevelopment of its property and support the use of surplus Bellevue School District property as third places.
- S-NP-16.** Collaborate with Bellevue School District on the joint use of public property to benefit operational needs of both organizations.
- S-NP-17.** Support multi-functional, programmable parks and other outdoor spaces for sports, cultural activities, community gatherings, events and recreation opportunities that meet the needs of the community.
- S-NP-18.** Acquire parcels suitable for neighborhood parks, especially where such parcels can be connected to the trail system.

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.

- S-NP-19.** Develop the transportation network to address the mobility needs of a growing and evolving community.
- S-NP-20.** Improve the experience of people walking, biking, rolling and taking transit through the use of greenery, trees and landscaping.
- S-NP-21.** Address cut-through traffic, speeding and other traffic safety concerns through traffic calming measures that adhere to Vision Zero and Complete Streets principles.
- S-NP-22.** Support the expansion of transit service in the neighborhood, connecting with Downtown Bellevue, light rail service and the region.
- S-NP-23.** Expand and connect the public trail network as land and funding become available in collaboration with other public landowners
- S-NP-24.** Collaborate with King County and other managers of local trails to implement signage to help people identify entrances to and connect between trail systems.
- S-NP-25.** Support the continued use of easements, such as the Pipeline Trail, for active transportation such as walking and biking.
- S-NP-26.** Work with Newcastle and King County to connect to trail systems across jurisdictions.
- S-NP-27.** Work with school districts to enhance trails that pass through or are adjacent to school district property and connect them to the rest of the trail system.
- S-NP-28.** Support the expansion and enhancement of the pedestrian network with an emphasis on safety and connectivity.
- S-NP-29.** Expand and connect bicycle network facilities consistent with the Mobility Implementation Plan.
- S-NP-30.** Expand on- and off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect people to Eastrail safely from nearby destinations.
- S-NP-31.** Coordinate with WSDOT to improve the I-405 crossing at the Lake Washington Boulevard interchange to provide safer and more comfortable active transportation connections to Eastrail and Newcastle Beach Park.

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.

- S-NP-32.** Work with partners to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat in Coal Creek Park, Newport Hills Woodlawn Park, Newcastle Beach Park, Mercer Slough Nature Park and the creeks and green corridors between and adjacent to them.
- S-NP-33.** Expand access to Lake Washington and its tributary creeks and streams to support their ecological functions, and contribute to educational or recreational opportunities for the community.
- S-NP-34.** Support efforts to enhance the water quality in streams and creeks to support fish and animal life.
- S-NP-35.** Encourage the use of low impact development techniques in new developments and public spaces, especially in areas with significant impervious surface coverage, to minimize flooding and contamination of Coal Creek and other neighborhood streams to support human, fish and wildlife health.
- S-NP-36.** Add information signage throughout the neighborhood about the history of the region, the natural areas, the animal habitat, and how people can contribute to the health of the environment.
- S-NP-37.** Collaborate with King County and King County Conservation District to prepare the neighborhood and its natural areas in the wildland-urban interface to be resilient against brush fires and wildfires.