

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

July 21, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Council Chamber
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Nieuwenhuis

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Malakoutian presiding.

→ Councilmember Robinson moved to excuse Councilmember Nieuwenhuis from tonight's meeting. Deputy Mayor Hamilton seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

Deputy City Clerk Karin Roberts called the roll and all Councilmembers except Councilmember Nieuwenhuis were present. Deputy Mayor Hamilton led the flag salute.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

4. Oral Communications

Deputy City Clerk Roberts said the Council appreciates public comments and supports everyone's right to express themselves. Comments shared by the speakers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views or values of the Council or the City. Ms. Roberts said the total time allowed 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) Erik Brand, a Board member of the Woodridge Community Association, expressed concern about middle housing laws that allow up to six units per single-family lot. He said City regulations conflict with recorded private neighborhood covenants. He said redevelopment should address infrastructure needs, parking, sewer capacity, sidewalks and aging in place housing.
- (b) Marcelle Van Houten, Treasurer of the Woodridge Community Association, said she served eight years on the Bellevue Planning Commission, including two terms as chair, and has served on several citizen advisory committees. She worked as a consultant for Puget Sound Energy, City of Edmonds, Pierce County and others prior to her retirement. She expressed concern regarding the impacts of middle housing in her neighborhood and encouraged the City to inform permit applicants about private covenants.
- (c) Diana Leo, Vice President of Government Affairs, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, spoke on behalf of the Eastside Housing Roundtable and expressed support for the City's multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) catalyst program for housing in mixed-use areas. She said the Eastside Housing Roundtable supports the proposed changes to fee-in-lieu eligibility and application timing.
- (d) Brady Nordstrom, Associate Director of Government Relations and Policy, Housing Development Consortium, expressed support for the Eastside Housing Roundtable's agreement related to the MFTE catalyst program. He thanked the Council for working with the community to find the right balance of regulations.
- (e) Nava Carlyle, Government and Policy Affairs Intern, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, spoke on behalf of the Bellevue Mobility Coalition. She encouraged additional transportation funding to adequately address growth and traffic congestion. She encouraged the City to focus on intersection capacity, priority bike and pedestrian connections, and vehicular throughput.
- (f) Carol Schiller, a Woodridge resident, expressed concern regarding middle housing regulations and neighborhood covenants. She said the City recently processed permit applications for a multifamily project on a single-family lot governed by covenants restricting the lot to one house. She said this forces residents to take legal action to protect their property rights.
- (g) Christopher Randels, Complete Streets Bellevue, thanked the City for its hard work on the transportation benefit district (TBD) discussions. He encouraged projects and programs to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on local streets. He asked the Council to

continue to underscore the need for the prioritization of safety and multimodal infrastructure.

- (h) Mariya Frost, Vice President of Government Affairs, Kemper Development Company, encouraged the Council to keep the City's budget and Capital Investment Program (CIP) fiscally disciplined. She expressed concern regarding the proposed TBD and noted there have recently been two county sales tax increases. She said if a TBD is moved forward, it should be placed before the voters. She encouraged the completion of Spring Boulevard, intersection improvements and data-driven safety projects.
- (i) Victor Bishop urged the City to support growth-related transportation needs. He encouraged the City to move forward with asking the voters to approve a TBD to address traffic congestion.
- (j) Cameron Kast expressed concern regarding street safety for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. He said the City should invest in transportation infrastructure that directly benefits current Bellevue residents.
- (k) Joe Kunzler apologized for his inappropriate comments the previous week. He expressed his ongoing concern regarding disparaging comments to the Council on a regular basis from a member of the public. He thanked Councilmembers for their public service.

5. Reports of Boards and Commissions

- (a) 2027 Recommended Budget and Strategic Plan for Bellevue-Redmond Tourism Promotion Area (TPA)

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced discussion regarding the recommended budget and strategic plan for the Bellevue-Redmond Tourism Promotion Area (TPA).

Lori Hoffman, Arts and Creative Economy Manager, Community Development Department, said staff requests that the Council consider directing staff to return with legislation as part of the 2027-2028 budget process to support expenditures consistent with the budget and strategic plan recommended by the Bellevue-Redmond TPA Advisory Board.

Lizzette Flores, Cultural Tourism Specialist, said staff would provide an overview of the TPA, its impact to date, and the 2027 budgets and strategic plans for the two zones.

Wade Hashimoto, Chair, Bellevue-Redmond TPA Advisory Board, commented on the importance of tourism to the local and regional economy. The TPA directly supports tourism promotion and the lodging fees collected through the TPA are spent within their respective cities.

Ms. Flores said the TPA helped bring 2.2 million overnight visitors to Bellevue in 2025 and areas of emphasis for 2026 include culinary tourism. Overnight visitors to Redmond grew to more than 400,000 in 2025. Ms. Flores highlighted the recommended 2027 budgets for the Bellevue and Redmond zones.

Mr. Hashimoto said both zones have similar strategic plans and TPA funds may be used for tourism promotion as allowed by the interlocal agreement (ILA). Bellevue's TPA strategic plan includes a focus on airport and cruise connections, destination stewardship and signature events. The 2027 goals for the Bellevue zone are to attract 2.5 million visitors, increase citywide hotel occupancy to 73 percent, increase weekend hotel occupancy to 69 percent and help support approximately 14,000 local jobs. The Redmond zone's strategic plan focuses on enhanced marketing and communications, destination sales and expanding transportation options. Redmond's 2027 goals are to increase overnight occupancy to 420,000, improve marketing benchmarks and focus on niche tourism programming.

Responding to Councilmember Sumadiwirya, Mr. Hashimoto confirmed that the TPA collaborates with the Bellevue Arts Commission for art and cultural programming.

Councilmember Robinson expressed an interest in supporting large events, such as the Rock 'n' Roll marathon. She said Bellevue has the annual Wintergrass festival, one of the largest bluegrass, Americana, world, and acoustic music festivals in the country. While participation is strong, many people do not know about it. Ms. Hoffman said Visit Bellevue has an arts festival incubator that could potentially provide more marketing funds for the festival and for new festivals and events.

Councilmember Briar expressed support for the work of the TPA. She said Timbaland, the producer for Justin Timberlake, has expressed an interest in producing a talent show.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Ms. Hoffman said the cruise connections initiative was launched around the same time as the recent FIFA World Cup event. Mr. Hashimoto said the airport connection funded in part by the TPA offers discounts to customers. Mr. Bhargava encouraged pursuing events that could have a national draw.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton expressed support for the efforts and accomplishments of the TPA to date.

Responding to Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Hashimoto commented on ensuring that the TPA is properly funded to continue to invest in unique, Bellevue-centric activities including culinary tourism and wellness events.

- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to accept the Bellevue-Redmond TPA Advisory Board's recommendation for the TPA's 2027 budget and strategic plan, and to direct staff to return with legislation as part of the City's 2027-2028 budget process to support expenditures. Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.
- 6. Report of City Manager: None.
- 7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 6-0, and the following items were approved:
 - (a) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period June 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026.
 - (b) Resolution No. 10656 authorizing execution of an agreement between the City of Bellevue and American Traffic Solutions, Inc., doing business as Verra Mobility, for the use of automated cameras to issue notices of speeding infractions within city limits. The initial term of the agreement is through January 31, 2030, with an option to extend for two additional two-year terms.

9. Public Hearings: None.

10. Study Session

- (a) Name Recommendation for the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the naming of the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE.

Camron Parker, Assistant Director, Parks and Community Services Department, said staff is seeking Council direction regarding its preferred name for the park at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE.

Betsy Anderson, Senior Planner, described and presented photos of the park, which was acquired and constructed by Sound Transit as part of the light rail project and transferred to the City in 2024. The site is also the location of a commemorative project to honor Japanese American history in Bellevue. Ms. Anderson said Isan Bellevue has committed to fundraising to complete the project, which is a plaza with a map depicting former Japanese American farms.

Ms. Anderson said Resolution No. 10151 adopted in October 2022 established policy for naming public parks and recreation facilities. To initiate this park naming process, staff conducted a community survey beginning in the spring of 2025. Staff screened 258 suggested park names based on the policy criteria and name options were considered by the Parks and Community Services Board. A list of nine names was reviewed by the Board in May.

Rowena Clima, Chair, Parks and Community Services Board, said the Board unanimously selected Isan Park as the recommended name due to its unique character and cultural significance. Isan means legacy or heritage in Japanese.

Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff and Chair Clima for the presentation and recommendation.

Councilmember Briar expressed support for the recommended name and thanked the Board for their thoughtful deliberation. She thanked community members who submitted suggested names.

Councilmember Bhargava expressed support for the recommended name.

Councilmember Robinson expressed support for the name and noted that it celebrates the heritage of Japanese Americans in Bellevue while acknowledging the generational impact of internment during World War II.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya thanked staff and the Board for their work and expressed support for the name. She noted the importance of honoring Japanese American culture and the residents who have been in Bellevue for so long.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton thanked the Board for their review and recommendation. He expressed support for the name and the commemorative plaza project.

- Councilmember Briar moved to direct staff to prepare a resolution for Council action to formalize the name Isan Park for the park located at Main Street and 112th Avenue SE. Councilmember Sumadiwirya seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

At 7:18 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared a break. The meeting resumed at 7:30 p.m.

(b) Transportation Needs and Funding Strategy

City Manager Carlson introduced staff's presentation regarding the City's transportation needs and funding strategy.

Andrew Singelakis, Director, Transportation Department, said staff would present information regarding transportation infrastructure needs and revenues.

Mark Poch, Deputy Director, spoke regarding the impact of regional growth on the City's transportation network, noting that 35,000 new housing units and 70,000 new jobs are anticipated by 2044. The City's role is to build and maintain connections, including sidewalks, crossings, bike lanes and intersections, and to set performance targets for all travel modes. Regional transit and transportation include light rail, regional trails, bus rapid transit and freeways.

Mr. Poch described the use of the Bellevue-Kirkland-Redmond traffic model to forecast daily round trips by mode in 2044. He said the Mobility Implementation Plan tracks the arterial network for completeness. By 2044, 17 intersections will not meet the capacity targets for vehicles.

Mr. Poch said the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an important planning tool under the state Growth Management Act, and projects must be included in the program to be eligible for grants. The 2027-2032 TIP was adopted by the Council in June and represents the overall transportation infrastructure needs in Bellevue.

Mr. Poch described the new approach to the delivery of capital projects. Instead of the previous 17 individual programs and project list, the new Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Plan will have a single portfolio, Transportation Mobility and Safety, with projects categorized into five areas: 1) pedestrian and bike mobility, 2) major projects, 3) vehicle mobility, 4) neighborhood mobility, and 5) preservation and reconstruction. Projects reflected in the TIP total \$1.5 billion. Mr. Poch presented examples of the types of projects in the five program areas.

Mr. Poch recalled that the Council established a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) in 2023 to potentially generate funding for transportation improvements. He noted that TBDs are used by many surrounding jurisdictions. Bellevue's TBD has not been funded but available revenue sources include a 0.1 percent sales tax and a vehicle registration fee of \$20 per vehicle. The sales tax would generate approximately \$11 million annually and the vehicle fee would raise approximately \$2 million annually. The establishment of a TBD requires annual performance and financial reporting. The estimated annual cost per household in Bellevue is \$57 per year for non-vehicle households and \$77 per year for households with one vehicle.

Laura Milstead, Public Information Officer, City Manager's Office, described the public engagement effort to collect input on the community's transportation priorities and to build awareness about the infrastructure needed for growth. The preliminary results of community feedback highlight the following priorities: 1) maintain and repair aging streets, sidewalks and bridges, 2) add protected bike lanes and multi-use paths, and 3) increase access to transit.

Ms. Milstead encouraged the public to complete the online transportation priorities survey by August 20. She said neighborhood and community groups may request a briefing from staff, and she noted the Council public hearing on the budget and CIP Plan scheduled for September 15.

Mr. Poch said the transportation budget presentation to the Council is scheduled for October 6. Staff will present the base transportation CIP Plan and an optional plan incorporating the TBD and additional revenue.

Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for the presentation.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Hamilton, Mr. Singelakis said staff and the Transportation Commission are monitoring the impact of recently lowered speeds limits on certain streets. Mr. Hamilton encouraged improvements to and the addition of new pedestrian and bike facilities in neighborhoods. He expressed support for projects to enhance access to transit. He acknowledged the benefits of a TBD.

Councilmember Robinson expressed concern about the need for more safe bike routes and encouraged signage to direct cyclists to the safer routes. Looking at overall safety needs, she

encouraged staff to identify and prioritize high-risk intersections for project funding. Ms. Robinson noted her top priorities to add protective bike lanes and multi-use paths throughout the community, complete the Spring District gap and prioritize West Lake Sammamish Parkway.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryra asked about tracking transportation projects and needs in underserved neighborhoods. Mr. Singelakis said the Mobility Implementation Plan incorporates an equity perspective and ranking factor in the prioritization of needs and projects. Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryra, Ms. Milstead provided additional comments regarding public engagement plans.

Councilmember Briar asked about the projections regarding future increases in walk/roll and transit travel modes. Mr. Poch said the projections are based on the Bellevue-Kirkland-Redmond traffic model. Staff responded to additional brief questions of clarification. Ms. Briar expressed strong support for neighborhood safety projects.

Councilmember Bhargava said safety needs to remain the foundation for transportation investments. He expressed support for neighborhood transit connections and access, safe multimodal access and a variety of multimodal options. Responding to Mr. Bhargava, Chief Financial Officer John Resha said staff will provide more information regarding the tradeoffs associated with the TBD and other revenue sources. In further response, Mr. Poch said safety and Vision Zero principles are the top criteria in scoring and prioritizing projects. He confirmed that safety will be a top concern related to autonomous vehicles.

Mayor Malakoutian thanked his colleagues for their questions and comments. He expressed an interest in more information regarding the projects in each of the transportation budget categories. Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. Poch noted that people tend to use alternate transportation modes (e.g., bike, walk) more when safety is enhanced. Staff responded to additional brief questions of clarification. Mr. Malakoutian expressed support for the revised approach to transportation budgeting.

At 8:34 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:41 p.m.

(c) Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) Catalyst Program for Housing Opportunities in Mixed Use Areas (HOMA)

City Manager Carlson opened discussion regarding housing opportunities in mixed use areas (HOMA).

Hannah Bahnmitter, Senior Affordable Housing Planner, said staff is requesting Council direction to finalize an ordinance adopting changes to the Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) program. Ms. Bahnmitter recalled that the MFTE program provides a property tax exemption to qualified properties where a certain portion of the units are set aside as affordable for the duration of the exemption. One of the proposed changes to the program is to establish a “supercharger” catalyst tool for HOMA areas, excluding the downtown. The term refers to an exemption from a deeper affordability requirement for overlapping MFTE and land use incentives.

Ms. Bahnmitter said that on May 19, staff recommended a six-year or 1,500-unit limited supercharger catalyst for non-downtown HOMA areas. The Council provided direction to move forward with a four-year catalyst tool to include a two-year lookback at the impact of the policy. The Council also directed staff to modify code language related to the MFTE program and fee-in-lieu payments.

Ms. Bahnmitter presented the MFTE program revisions and recommendations from staff related to the four-year catalyst program, use of fee-in-lieu option and the timing of applications. The catalyst program will expire on December 31, 2031.

Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for the information and for their responsiveness to Council questions and direction.

Councilmember Robinson expressed support for the recommended revisions.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked staff for their work and expressed support for the recommendations.

Councilmember Briar thanked staff for their diligence and responsiveness on this issue.

Responding to Councilmember Sumadiwirya, Ms. Bahnmitter said all of the housing units produced under the supercharger catalyst will be at the 80-percent AMI (area median income) level.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton noted that Ms. Bahnmitter is leaving the City. He thanked her for her work and wished her well. He expressed support for staff's recommendations. He noted that the Eastside Housing Roundtable supports the policies.

Responding to Mayor Malakoutian, Councilmembers agreed to bringing the ordinance back for formal action on a future consent calendar.

→ Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to direct staff to finalize an ordinance related to the supercharger catalyst program for action on the consent calendar at a future meeting. Councilmember Bhargava seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

11. Land Use Reports: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions: None.

13. Written Reports: None.

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.
17. Adjournment

At 8:55 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared the meeting adjourned.

Karin Roberts, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

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