



DATE: March 22, 2021

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mac Cummins AICP, Director, 452-6191
Emil King AICP, Assistant Director, 452-7223
Elizabeth de Regt AICP, Senior Planner, 452-2890
Gwen Rousseau AICP, Senior Planner, 452-2743
Brooke Brod, Community Engagement Lead, 452-6930
Community Development

SUBJECT: Status Report on the Neighborhood Area Planning program: Great Neighborhoods in Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue

Neighborhood plans bring the City's broader vision to life in a local way. They provide guidance to City staff and consultants, those working on projects in the community, and others helping to shape our Neighborhoods' futures. By highlighting what is unique about each Neighborhood and the residents' aspirations for their community, Neighborhood Area Plans allow us to define a vision and a pathway toward that future. These plans are an essential part of implementing the Comprehensive Plan's Neighborhoods Element. The Great Neighborhoods program is developing these plans. Staff, residents, and stakeholders, using creative and inclusive outreach and engagement adapting to COVID-19 realities, are developing plans that secure our neighborhoods' future as livable, inspiring, vibrant, and equitable communities.

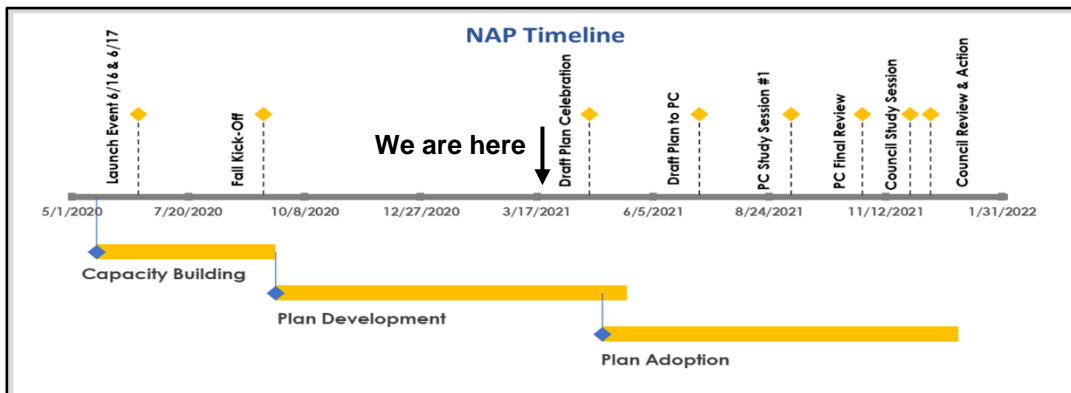
The Community Development Department is leading an effort in the community to develop new plans for Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue. This is part of a larger goal of updating all Neighborhood Area Plans over the coming years, focusing on two at a time in order to provide focused outreach and community engagement opportunities. The plans will include the following sections, with engagement opportunities around each of them that allow residents to help craft the plans alongside City staff.

1. A *Vision Statement* to act as a beacon for crafting the rest of the plan.
2. The *Neighborhood Profile* that lays out data showing what is unique about the neighborhood.
3. *Challenges and Opportunities* facing the community and identified by residents themselves.
4. A *Guided Conversation* that acts as a link between the previous section and the policies that follow, defining the "why" behind the policies themselves and highlighting the main themes found within the neighborhood discussions.
5. *Policies* to realize the Vision, including future Plan directions.
6. A map and complete list of specific recommended *Actions* developed and prioritized by the community and assessed by City staff for feasibility.

Progress to Date

This management brief reports on Great Neighborhoods engagement progress and plan development since the most recent City Council management brief on October 12, 2020. The three-phase process (Capacity Building, Plan Development, and Plan Adoption) will deliver the Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue plans for adoption action by City Council in December 2021.

Neighborhood Area Planning Timeline



During the Capacity Building phase, City staff used several methods to engage residents, businesses, schools, and other stakeholders. These took the form of one-on-one Zoom “coffee chats”, online engagement through surveys and educational materials, outreach to individual groups such as HOAs and neighborhood associations, meetings with school representatives, and online outreach events. Cultural Outreach Assistants (COAs) were also brought on by the Community Development Department to assist in building relationships with communities that traditionally have struggled to take part in City planning efforts. Four COAs have been hired part-time to cover the Chinese, Spanish-speaking, Korean, and South-Asian communities. Presentations have been planned for each of these communities as highlighted in the chart below. Over 35 one-on-one conversations have also taken place with community members and leaders from various cultural communities.

Community	Most Common Language for Translation	# of Planned Presentations	# of Attendees
Chinese	Simplified Chinese	2	59
Spanish-speaking	Spanish	1	11
Korean	Korean	1	11
South-Asian	Hindi	2	(upcoming)

The latter part of Capacity Building acted as a lead-in to Plan Development. This portion focused on familiarizing participants with the process and end goal, while simultaneously shaping a vision for the future. A survey focusing on stakeholders’ values, with opportunities for elaborating as desired, was open from June 10, 2020 through the end of the year. Early events focusing on these broad values occurred in July and September, grounding the conversation in a positive vision for the neighborhoods’ futures.

The Plan Development phase began with Visioning Workshops channeling the early values work into an updated vision for each neighborhood. These workshops enabled residents’ active

engagement in prioritizing values and crafting draft vision statements. One example of a value with its associated discussion points that was common to both neighborhoods was the importance of giving residents the opportunity to *age in place*. While the nuances of this value varied between neighborhoods, residents of both Northeast and Northwest Bellevue felt that a variety of actions could help support elderly residents wanting to remain a part of their neighborhood. Input like this, combined with input from the values survey and other community conversations, was used by staff to create draft Vision Statements, which were posted on Engaging Bellevue in the first week of 2021 for stakeholder feedback.

Next, to ground participants in each neighborhood's unique characteristics, Data Walk events were held. At these events, data provided by the City Demographer, other City departments such as Parks and Police, and residents themselves through the annual Performance Measures Survey, were presented in numbers, charts, and verbal descriptions to describe what makes Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue unique. Providing these data to residents through online events and passive viewing opportunities allowed them to arrive at their own conclusions regarding key take-aways from the data. Staff used this data and feedback from residents to begin drafting the Neighborhood Profile section of the Plan. This helped set the stage for identifying the challenges and opportunities that are facing each neighborhood.

The visioning and neighborhood data/profile work revealed some clear trends and important challenges facing each neighborhood. While nuances varied between Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue, challenges identified fell within four key topic areas. These topics were used to develop a series of Community Brainstorming events scheduled throughout February and March, generating ideas for potential solutions and policies that would address the following:

1. **Affordability** – Residents want to make sure their neighborhood is affordable to people from diverse backgrounds and make it possible to age-in-place. Residents participated in solutions-oriented brainstorming, identifying options ranging from the introduction of detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs) to the creation of a program pairing elderly community members together to lessen housing costs.
2. **Mobility and Access** – Stakeholders are interested in both making it easier for people to walk and bike and creating convenient access to stores, cafes, parks, and other services close to home. Residents identified key access ways within their neighborhoods and generated ideas about how to improve safety while moving through them.
3. **Trees, Open Space, and Sustainability** – These neighborhoods are particularly interested in helping residents preserve and care for trees, ensuring that people have access to parks, trails, and green space, and promoting sustainable neighborhoods. Residents brainstormed ideas about tree preservation methods, education opportunities for new residents, and ways of making our existing parks and open spaces more welcoming and accessible.
4. **Community Connections** – Residents want to help create neighborhoods where people know one another, where people from diverse backgrounds can come together, and where they can create resilient communities. These sessions are scheduled for mid to late March.

Input collected during these conversations will be used to develop the Guiding the Conversation and Policies sections of the neighborhood plan. These draft policies will then be reviewed and amended through community involvement throughout the month of April, prior to Planning Commission engagement.

Community Engagement Highlights

The following are community engagement events/tools implemented to date. Staff will review details as part of the Management Brief presentation to Council, highlighting successes of our expanding outreach to diverse communities as well as challenges and limitations of remote engagement.

Event/Tool Platform Used	Purpose	Participants/users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging Bellevue • Web 	<p>www.EngagingBellevue.com is the centralized information hub for all things Great Neighborhoods, both for education and interaction.</p>	<p>Participant totals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 832 aware • 1792 aware and informed • 376 aware, informed and engaged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 16/17 online Soft Launch • Zoom 	<p>Introduce the Great Neighborhoods program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96 registrations • 64 participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Values Survey • Web + Paper 	<p>Respondents update and prioritize the values list from previous Great Neighborhoods (2018) work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 351 surveys returned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 22/23, Sep. 3 Values Conversations • Zoom 	<p>The Values workshops started conversations around the Vision Statement as a foundation for the rest of the plan policies and actions.</p> <p>Online exercises and group and breakout room discussions and Mad Libs exercise!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79 registrations • 52 participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sep. 30/Oct. 1 Vision Workshops • Zoom 	<p>Staff facilitated resident exploration of their hopes for the future of their neighborhood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 registrations • 25 participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 17/19 Data Walks • Zoom + Engaging Bellevue 	<p>Data was gathered and presented to residents both in a Zoom meeting and through videos posted on Engaging Bellevue. Data was grouped into overview, Access + Safety, Community Connections, Diversity, and Environment + Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73 registrations • 31 participants • 194 online views/comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 3/4 Community Brainstorming: Affordability • Zoom + Engaging Bellevue 	<p>Community members brainstormed potential solutions to address the challenge of affordability, including a strong interest in allowing residents to stay in their neighborhood and homes as they age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 registrations • 46 participants <p>Ongoing online participation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 17/18 Community Brainstorming: Mobility and Access • Zoom + Engaging Bellevue 	<p>Residents brainstormed potential solutions to address the challenges around mobility and access, with a focus on safe travel and accessing goods and services close to home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58 registrations • 38 participants <p>Ongoing online participation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming Community Brainstorming: Trees, Open Space, and Sustainability; Community Connections • Zoom + Engaging Bellevue 	<p>Stakeholders will brainstorm potential solutions to address challenges around trees, open space, sustainability, and community connections.</p>	<p>In progress</p>

What's Next

Following the Community Brainstorming sessions occurring in February and March, initial draft policies will be written up with certain topics requiring more in-depth conversations. In mid-April, staff will facilitate deeper conversations with the community as policy development and refinement occurs. Following these conversations, staff will prepare draft plans for Planning Commission review.

The final phase, Plan Adoption, will begin with Planning Commission engagement in late April. Because the Neighborhood Area Plans are part of the Comprehensive Plan, their amendment goes through the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) process. City Council will be presented with the Planning Commission's recommendations for the Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue neighborhood plans during the review of annual CPAs in the Fall.

Great Neighborhoods – Many Voices. One Vision. Our Future.