

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

Date: November 19, 2025

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Betsy Anderson – Senior Planner, Parks & Community Services Department

Subject: 2022 Parks & Open Space Levy
For information and discussion - no Board action requested

Staff will present an update on projects funded by the 2022 voter-approved Parks & Open Space Levy and a proposed outreach strategy to share levy progress with the community.

Background

In November 2022, Bellevue voters approved Proposition 1: City of Bellevue Levy for Parks and Open Space. This voter initiative was proposed to enhance and maintain Bellevue's parks and open space system, including investments to:

- Preserve open space, greenways, and wildlife corridors;
- Develop trails, community parks, and neighborhood parks;
- Invest in emerging sports opportunities, off-leash areas, and recreation;
- Plan major community facilities like aquatics and cross-cultural centers;
- Restore and develop waterfront parks and protect water quality in Bellevue's lakes and streams;
- Acquire and develop parks and open space in the Bel-Red and Wilburton areas; and
- Maintain improvements consistent with Bellevue Parks' standards.

The approved Parks & Open Space levy has increased the city's regular levy for nine years by approximately 20 cents per \$1,000 of assessed home value. Of that total, 15 cents are directed to fund acquisition and development and 5 cents per \$1,000 are dedicated to maintenance.

Voter initiatives have previously funded expansions of Bellevue's parks and open space system, and several initiatives have passed since the city's incorporation in 1953. This includes bond issues approved in 1956, 1965, 1970, 1977, 1981, 1984, and 1988, as well as the 2008 Parks & Natural Areas Levy.

2022 Parks & Open Space Levy Projects

Projects identified in the 2022 levy are organized around eight focus areas. These areas align with community priorities for the park system and priority investments identified in the 2022 Parks and Open Space System Plan. The latest park system survey, conducted in

2021–22, demonstrated strong community interest in trails, open spaces, and outdoor active recreation facilities. Survey respondents also indicated that Parks & Community Services should focus equally on acquiring new parkland and developing and improving existing parks. The Parks and Open Space System Plan emphasizes providing parks in underserved areas of the city, enhancing public waterfront access, investing in emerging sports, and developing large-scale community facilities, such as an aquatic center, among other projects.

Current and recently completed levy-funded projects are listed below under the relevant focus area:

- **Open Space, Greenways, Wildlife Corridors, and Trails**
 - Property acquisitions: Coal Creek Natural Area, Newport Hills Woodlawn Park, and Vasa Open Space
 - Trail planning and development projects: trail network expansion at Coal Creek Ridgeline Trail, bridges at Lower Coal Creek, Forest Ridge neighborhood trail expansion, Forest Drive and Red Cedar Trailheads, Mercer Slough boardwalk, and trail network at 168th Ave. NE Open Space.
- **Community Parks**
 - Bellevue Airfield Park planning and design
- **Neighborhood Park Development**
 - Ashwood Park Master Plan update
 - Eastgate neighborhood park acquisition and master plan
- **Recreation and Community Facilities**
 - Aquatic Center design
- **Waterfront Restoration and Development**
 - Chism Beach Park shoreline renovation
 - Clyde Beach Park boathouse demolition
 - Lake Sammamish property stabilization
 - Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 planning and design
- **Bel-Red and Wilburton Park Acquisition and Development**
 - Bel-Red neighborhood park master plan: beginning early 2026
- **Emerging Sports and Off-Leash Areas**
 - Pop-up off-leash program
 - Pickleball improvements

- Cricket improvements at Robinswood Community Park
- **Maintenance and Operations**
 - Restoration of maintenance levels at 11 neighborhood parks
 - Seasonal restrooms now open year-round
 - Regular asphalt repair to parking lots and paved trails
 - Monthly sweeping of parking lots
 - Funding for waterfront beach geese deterrent program
 - Additional materials and supplies for parks and community centers

Levy Reporting Strategy

Staff have developed a levy reporting strategy to demonstrate to Bellevue residents how their park system investment is being applied. Elements of the strategy include:

- A logo that will be applied to signs as well as to printed materials, to highlight projects funded by the 2022 levy.
- Illustrated levy progress report, describing projects and locations—this will be developed on a biennial basis and posted on the levy webpage.
- Enhancement of the levy webpage to provide more information about levy-funded projects, including an online map of projects.
- Updated structure for the regular CIP Project Status Report to the Park Board, which more clearly highlights current levy projects.
- A short video that will be posted online to feature levy-funded projects and their benefits to the community.
- Social media opportunities to highlight levy projects, for example at the community engagement phase for planning initiatives and at openings and ribbon-cutting events for new facilities.

Next Steps

With feedback from the Board, staff will continue to develop materials about the levy and will begin to share them with the community this winter.