

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

October 22, 2024  
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. She asked everyone to refrain from speaking out of turn, interrupting others or making sounds while someone else is talking to ensure a productive and respectful meeting. She said members of the public should not approach Councilmembers or City staff during the meeting. If a person disrupts the meeting, Mayor Robinson will give a warning, end the person's remaining comment time or ask the person to leave the room for the rest of the meeting. She encouraged everyone to express themselves without name-calling, disparaging remarks or taunting.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Lee led the flag salute.

(a) Disability Employment Awareness Month Proclamation

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation declaring October 2024 as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Bellevue. He urged all residents to support disability equity by recognizing the value and contributions of people with disabilities in our workplaces and to take steps to recruit, hire, retain, develop and advance individuals with disabilities to foster self-sufficiency.

Debbie Meyers, Executive Director, SKCAC Industries and Employment Services, thanked the Council for the proclamation and commended the City's commitment to disability employment and inclusive hiring practices for people with disabilities. She said this year's theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month is Access to Good Jobs for All. She said the City of Bellevue's commitment to supportive employment sets an example for all businesses to provide access and to see the value of including people with disabilities in their hiring. Ms. Meyers said

the unemployment rate for people with disabilities continues to be high, even in times of low unemployment for the general population.

Ms. Meyers said Ben and Jeff work in the Parks and Community Services Department at the Highland Center. Joseph works in the Transportation Department on special projects and maintains the cleanliness of the kitchens and conference rooms. Jessie works in the Human Resources Department providing filing and scanning assistance, and Joe works in both the Information Technology Department and the Finance and Asset Management Department. Joe is also a member of the City's Disability Advocacy Resource Team (DART) that meets monthly to discuss ways to create a more inclusive work environment. Ms. Meyers said they look forward to continuing to partner with the City.

(b) Filipino American History Month Proclamation

Councilmember Stokes read the proclamation recognizing October 2024 as Filipino American History Month in Bellevue and urged all community members to celebrate the history and contributions of Filipino Americans in the Bellevue community. The first known Filipino in the Seattle area worked at the Port Blakely Lumber Mill on Bainbridge Island around 1883 and Washington state is home to the third largest Filipino population in the United States. Filipino Americans have lived and worked in Bellevue for decades, contributing to the City's growth, vibrancy and economy.

Sharon Gonzalez thanked the Council for the proclamation, noting that it reflects the growing presence of Filipinos in Bellevue and the rich history and significant contributions to American society for more than four centuries. Ms. Gonzalez acknowledged that there is much work to be done to fully embrace the narratives of all people of color. She said the Filipino community in Bellevue looks forward to continuing to work with the City to build a more inclusive and equitable future.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons 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.

- (a) Brady Nordstrom, Housing Development Consortium, and Saghar Amini, Advocacy and Policy Manager at Habitat for Humanity, spoke as representatives of the Eastside Affordable Housing Coalition. Ms. Amini expressed support for the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update [Agenda Item 10(b)], which outlines an ambitious vision for affordable housing in Bellevue. Mr. Nordstrom commended the robust residential capacity reflected in the future land use map and the policy emphasis on mixed use transit-oriented development, revenue tools for affordable housing, support for home ownership and addressing past inequities related to housing. He encouraged the Council to approve the plan update and to continue to collaborate with the Eastside Affordable Housing Coalition.
- (b) Barbara Braun, speaking on behalf of People for Climate Action, commented on the City's goal to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030 and by 80 percent by 2050. She noted the need to reduce emissions related to buildings and transportation. She encouraged the City to allocate sufficient funding to reduce emissions in existing single-family and multifamily homes and small commercial buildings. She suggested that the City needs to spend an additional \$10 million per year to meet emission reduction goals. She said the funding could be used to expand the Energy Smart Eastside program and to develop similar programs for multifamily and small commercial buildings. She suggested expanded zero emissions transit service for people who cannot afford electric vehicles. She urged the Council to prioritize and continue to take bold action on climate funding.
- (c) Layla Dow, a freshman at Interlake High School, said she has been attending the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue since she was in third grade. During the pandemic, the club remained a constant in her life and allowed her to build a strong sense of belonging and to socialize with friends. Ms. Dow said she traveled to Washington, D.C., twice to meet with senators and representatives and through those experiences, she became interested in leadership, community service and advocacy. She asked Councilmembers to keep the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue in mind as they review the budget. She said many youth would have nowhere else to go outside of school.
- (d) April Stevens, a volunteer with People for Climate Action, thanked the Council for their service to the community and for their efforts to implement actions through the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She said it is encouraging to see that the budget continues robust efforts to reduce the City government's greenhouse gas emissions. She commended the City's focus on making Bellevue more affordable and in creating enhanced equity. She expressed concern regarding the existing building stock including small businesses, single family residences and smaller multifamily units. She encouraged the City to provide grants and loans to assist property owners in transitioning to energy that lowers greenhouse gas emissions. She encouraged the expansion of the Energy Smart Eastside program.
- (e) Patrick Bannon, President/CEO of the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) and Co-Chair of the Friends of the Grand Connection, expressed strong support for the Grand Connection I-405 crossing. He commented on the recent trip to New York City to tour

the High Line and to learn how it is maintained and activated as public space. Mr. Bannon said the Grand Connection crossing will encourage development in the Wilburton area and connect to the downtown. He said they are enthusiastic about the potential integration of the project with private development on both sides of the crossing. He said the crossing will be transformative for Bellevue and the Friends of the Grand Connection look forward to continuing to serve as advocates and partners with the City.

- (f) Vita Grace Cabanilla, an intern at the Filipino American National Historical Society and a Bellevue resident, said her family came here in the 1920s and is one of the oldest Filipino families in Washington. She thanked the Council for recognizing Filipino American History Month. She said her family is one of the 61 percent of American-born Filipinos in Washington state, with the overall population of Filipinos being nearly 76,000 in King County, 184,000 in Washington state and 9,000 residents in Bellevue. Ms. Cabanilla said the month was celebrated the previous day at the White House and it commemorates the arrival of Filipino Americans in Morro Bay, California on October 18, 1587. She said her aunt and late uncle, Dorothy and Fred Cordoba, worked with the Filipino American National Historical Society and helped establish the observance of this month in 1991. She said her great grand uncle, Pio Decano, made history as the first person of color to own land in Washington state. She thanked the Bellevue community for their support.
- (g) Devin Cabanilla said he is a member of the Filipino American National Historical Society and serves on the Make Us Visible Washington committee based in Bellevue. He said the latter is advocating for state legislation to make Asian American history a requirement in education systems. His grand uncle, Pio Decano, was the first Asian American to own land in Washington state. He initially bought a house in the Leschi area of Seattle after declining to purchase land on Mercer Island because he did not have a boat. His family later settled in Bellevue and lives in the Eastgate neighborhood. He said the Council's proclamation is important in demonstrating that Filipino American history is American history. He commended Bellevue's commitment to celebrating diversity. He presented coloring books to the Council and said they are available to the public at no cost at [MakeUsVisible.org](http://MakeUsVisible.org).
- (h) Tim Motts, President/CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue, recognized all of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue families in the audience. He thanked the Council for providing additional human services funding in the preliminary budget. He said, however, that as the largest provider of afterschool services in Bellevue, he knows that challenges facing thousands of families continue to escalate. He commented that the critical need for affordable child care has increased significantly and their scholarship program has increased from \$900,000 in 2019 to \$2.5 million by this year's end. He said they have families on their wait list who are struggling to find care for their children while they work or pursue education. He encouraged the Council to increase its investment in the Boys and Girls Clubs, where 75 percent of the youth are people of color and/or members of historically marginalized communities. He would like to be able to provide scholarships to every family on their wait list. He said a statewide study

demonstrated that for every \$1 invested in the clubs, the community receives \$7.20 in direct benefit because it allows parents to work. Mr. Motts said the clubs provide meals and contribute to less juvenile crime and incarceration. He noted the importance of funding prevention programs such as the Boys and Girls Clubs.

- (i) Melanie Faure, Community Impact Manager at Upwards, thanked the City for its ongoing support and requested continued support of Bellevue's in-home daycares and working families. She said the program is supporting 23 home daycares in Bellevue and has helped more than 250 families. She said 30 percent of the participating daycares have reported increased revenue well ahead of schedule and seven new teaching assistant positions have been created. She said the City's support will enable them to provide dozens more home daycare businesses. She thanked the Council for addressing the need for child care services in Bellevue.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager: None.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Council Minutes  
*Minutes of October 8, 2024 Regular Meeting*
- (b) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period September 1, 2024 - September 30, 2024.
- (c) Ordinance No. 6809 relating to speed limits; amending Chapter 11.32 of the Bellevue City Code (BCC) to reduce the default speed limit on most local streets from 25 miles per hour (mph) to 20 mph; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.
- (d) Resolution No. 10425: 1) authorizing execution of a grant agreement (and supplements if necessary) with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to accept up to \$2,787,894 in federal Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) funding to support implementation of the Bellevue Safe Access For Everyone (B-SAFE) Project; and 2) authorizing the execution of the Professional Services Agreement with Fehr & Peers (PO # 2450272) in the amount of \$1,600,000, including all applicable taxes, to assist the City in completion of five activities within the

Bellevue Safe Access For Everyone (B-SAFE) Project as part of Vision Zero Rapid Build Data Driven Safety Program (CIP Plan No. PW-R-205).

- (e) Resolution No. 10426 authorizing execution of an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for Inmate Housing with South Correctional Entity (SCORE) to increase the number of guaranteed beds to 35 and increase the service fees and charges.

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions

- (a) Ordinance No. 6810 adopting the 2024 BelRed Look Forward (24-101918-AC) amendment to the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Bellevue pursuant to the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW, and Chapter 35A.63 RCW; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson said the development of the BelRed Look Forward Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) involved extensive community engagement, hours of work by the Planning Commission, and Council review and direction. She commended Emil King, Director of Community Development; Thara Johnson, Planning Director; and their team for their work. She said staff is requesting Council action to adopt the proposed CPA.

Mr. King said the CPA amends the BelRed Subarea Plan and future land use map contained in the Comprehensive Plan. He said the current BelRed Plan was adopted in 2009 and guided significant development in the urban neighborhoods of the subarea. The area is served by four light rail stations and has significant potential for additional growth. Mr. King said the CPA refines the policies in the plan and helps advance future work on code amendments, park improvements, BelRed Arts District, multimodal access and walkability, and stream enhancements. He thanked the community for their engagement throughout the planning process. He thanked the Planning Commission and other boards and commissions that reviewed the proposed CPA.

Mayor Robinson noted that staff is requesting formal Council action.

Councilmember Stokes noted that some Councilmembers have been working on the BelRed Plan since approximately 2012. He noted the Council's longtime interest in updating the plan and evaluating the outcomes of the policies. He commended staff for their work that will produce a significant and exciting change for Bellevue. He thanked everyone in the community who participated and provided feedback.

→ Councilmember Stokes moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6810, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

- (b) Ordinance No. 6811 adopting the citywide 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update for the City of Bellevue pursuant to the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW (GMA), and Chapter 35A.63 RCW; amending Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan consistent with the GMA, Chapter 35A.63 RCW, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies; adopting amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.

Mr. King said staff is requesting action to adopt the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. He said updating the plan has involved a significant effort by City staff over the past year.

Thara Johnson, Planning Director, said the City is required to update its Comprehensive Plan every 10 years. She said Bellevue and the region have experienced significant growth since 2015 and this plan update reflects important changes for the City and the community. It also reflects changes under Vision 2050 and regional and state requirements, as well as countywide planning policies. Ms. Johnson said the planning team worked closely with the community to identify development priorities, address key challenges and enhance housing equity.

Ms. Johnson recalled that the update was launched in 2022 with Council direction to plan for additional housing capacity, primarily in the Wilburton area, as well as in the BelRed transit-oriented developments. She commented on the focus on equity in the Community Engagement Element and the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. She said climate change and sustainability are also integral components of the plan.

Mr. King thanked staff for their significant engagement in the planning process, which he said was essential for a successful planning effort. The boards and commissions did a lot of work to study the public comments and proposed amendments. Mr. King asked for Council action on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update ordinance.

Mayor Robinson commended staff, the community, Council, and the boards and commissions for their work on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian noted the extensive work over the past 13 months, including 78 community events, to update the plan. He said the Planning Commission held 26 meetings to discuss the plan update.

- Councilmember Zahn moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6811, and Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

#### 11. Study Session Items

(a) Update on Grand Connection Crossing over I-405 and Related Projects

Acting City Manager Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the Grand Connection I-405 crossing.

Jesse Canedo, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, said the update would include information regarding the completion of the 30 percent design phase.

Anthony Gill, Grand Connection Manager, highlighted the agenda for the presentation.

Maher Welaye, Assistant Director, Transportation Department, said the project will reach 30 percent design by the end of this year. He noted that Amazon funded half of the design costs. He highlighted the project schedule since the design charette last December. He said an online open house is currently running October 16-30.

Mr. Canedo recalled discussion in June regarding the design tradeoffs to consider for the Grand Connection crossing including future park lid-compatible, budget-friendly, memorable landmark, fully integrated redevelopments on both sides of the crossing, right-of-way required and ability to complete by target date of 2028. He said the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) led a tour to study the High Line in New York City. He said that elevated path has been open since 2009 and there have been a series of continuous improvements to enhance the public spaces and plantings. He said the High Line is a relaxing, special place in the city. However, it also feels separated from the rest of the city. Mr. Canedo said there are a number of partners and funding streams to maintain the public spaces and landscaping.

Mr. Gill presented illustrations of how the crossing might look, noting the pedestrian amenities, gathering spaces and space for vendors. He said the design will continue to evolve. He said the design team considered a number of factors, with the first being to prioritize the user experience for people on the crossing. He presented an illustration of the proposed design from Wilburton to the City Hall Plaza. Evaluation criteria include the structural analysis, aesthetics, maintainability, compatibility with future freeway lid and construction costs. A second key factor is the integration with redevelopment on both sides of the crossing. Mr. Gill said this could be a signature feature of the crossing.

The third consideration was related to the project timeline and phasing. Mr. Gill said the City plans to prioritize a complete link on the first day of operations from City Hall Plaza to the Eastrail. However, staff will consider phasing for amenity spaces and integrated structures. Mr. Gill said cost estimates will help inform the timeline.

Mr. Welaye said an analysis determined that an alternative delivery method could be appropriate for this project. He said there are three important considerations: 1) funding availability, 2) level of control desired by the City, and 3) timeline to completion. He said two possible methods are the general contractor/construction manager (GC/CM) method and progressive design build.

Mr. Gill said the funding the Grand Connection crossing has been a focus since the inception of the project. He said cost estimates are anticipated in December. He said the City has received



positive feedback so far from congressional and state legislative delegations. The 2025-2026 budget includes \$15 million to fund continued design and engineering work. Mr. Gill said they continue to identify funding sources.

Mr. Canedo presented a map of the Grand Connection crossing and surrounding area. The City owns the Metro site next to City Hall and the Lincoln Center site on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. He said a consultant will conduct a constructability analysis over the next few months to determine the development capacity and required specifications. He said the City-owned sites hold the potential for an 18-hour neighborhood around the crossing that draws residents and visitors to the area.

Mr. Canedo said staff will come back early next year with proposed guiding principles for the future uses of City-owned parcels. He noted plans for a City Facilities Needs Assessment and highlighted the goal of planning for integrating redevelopment with the crossing.

Mr. Gill said the 30 percent design work is nearly completed, and costs estimates and environmental documentation should be ready relatively soon. He said staff is working closely with Friends of the Grand Connection on funding development. He said staff expects to return to the Council in early 2025 to talk about next steps and guiding principles for the redevelopment of City-owned properties.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff for their work and said she had the opportunity to participate in the BDA tour of the High Line in New York City. She said she has also visited the Beltline in Atlanta. Ms. Zahn said the crossing will transform the downtown and connect it to the Wilburton area. She encouraged private-public partnerships to support elements of the crossing.

Ms. Zahn asked whether staff is designing the project to budget or to scope. She said she appreciated staff's exploration of alternative project delivery methods. She expressed support for the progressive design build approach.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their work and thanked Amazon for their funding assistance. He thanked the Friends of the Grand Connection for their work and dedication to the project. He thanked the BDA for sponsoring the High Line study tour.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Welaye said the bike lanes are separated and protected. Mr. Welaye said the crossing is one-half mile from Eastrail to City Hall Plaza and the structure walkway ranges from 40 feet to 70 feet wide. In further response, Mr. Welaye said there will be spaces for vendors, gathering and public activities.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested repeating the Piloti art motif to tie into the art installation at the Downtown Park. He asked about impacts to the safe parking lot program currently at the Lincoln Center building.

Councilmember Stokes thanked the BDA for their collaboration and support. He encouraged continuing to move forward. He thanked Amazon for their support.

Councilmember Hamilton said he appreciated the comprehensive public engagement process. He said the trip to New York City was helpful in determining the appropriate design for Bellevue. He commented on the High Line and the use of its public spaces. He said the Grand Connection will benefit Bellevue overall and activation will be critical. He said it is important to keep the project moving forward.

Councilmember Lee said the Grand Connection will provide a vibrant area for residents, workers and visitors. He said the project will be good for economic development. He thanked Amazon for their support of the project. Mr. Lee said he would like to learn more about the project delivery method options.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked everyone for their work on and support of the Grand Connection. He thanked Friends of the Grand Connection for their partnership and said he appreciated the input by his colleagues. Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. Canedo said the consultants are coordinating their efforts. Mr. Malakoutian asked about the types of public activation that are anticipated.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. Gill said staff has been thinking about how to activate the public spaces. He said staff tested a number of things this summer. He said the goal is to create a welcoming space.

Mr. Malakoutian said he would like to learn more about the project delivery methods. He said he has heard that progressive design-build involves relatively excessive meetings. He said it is important that the City have control over the design.

Mayor Robinson thanked the Friends of the Grand Connection for making this project a reality. She said it is a real gift to residents and workers in the Wilburton and Downtown areas, as well as the entire community. She concurred with Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's suggestion about repeating the design of the Piloti art installation at Downtown Park. She suggested having a separate entity to coordinate partnerships.

At 7:51 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:00 p.m.

(b) 2025 State Legislative Agenda

Acting City Manager Carlson said the Council adopts a legislative agenda every year to allow staff and city officials to advocate for the City's legislative priorities.

Genesee Adkins, Deputy City Manager, introduced staff's presentation of the 2025 State Legislative Agenda.

Katie Halse, Assistant Director, Intergovernmental Relations, said the state legislative session begins on January 13, 2025 and will be a long, 105-day session. Budget adoption will include the operation, capital and transportation budgets. Ms. Halse said there are significant challenges including reduced revenue projections for both the operating and transportation budgets. She said a large K-12 education funding request is anticipated.

Ms. Halse said staff will start monitoring pre-filed legislation in early December. She noted a revenue review meeting scheduled for November 20 to learn more about budget projections.

Ms. Halse described the development of the state legislative agenda involving discussions with department representatives and staff legislative liaisons to learn about their legislative priorities. In September, the intergovernmental relations team assessed the draft priorities and positions and compared them to the Council's priorities and strategic target areas to ensure alignment. Ms. Halse said staff also compared the agenda with external agencies, committees and boards, and external partners.

Ms. Halse said staff met with Councilmembers individually to discuss the legislative priorities. She thanked them for their input. The legislative agenda includes key legislative priorities and policy statements. She said the agenda helps to communicate the City's positions to the public and state lawmakers and helps to inform the City's lobbying efforts. She said the agenda allows for flexibility and nimbleness.

Ms. Halse highlighted the key priorities involving Bellevue Grand Connection downtown integration project (City Hall Plaza) and transportation, permitting and housing issues. She said the Downtown Integration Project improves sightlines and adjusts utilities to integrate with the Grand Connection crossing. It will prepare the City Hall block for future development and enhance public spaces and accessibility. Ms. Halse said staff recommends that the City submit the project request through the capital budget.

Transportation priorities include: 1) Bellevue Grand Connection I-405 crossing, Downtown to Eastrail, request for partnership if a transportation package is developed in 2025, 2) SR 520/124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Interchange (Washington State Department of Transportation), support funding for construction of interchange, fish passage and multimodal realignment, and 3) I-405/SR 167 Corridor (WSDOT), support improvements that maximize the effectiveness of the 50-mile express toll lane system, including the Renton to Bellevue Contract 3 project. Ms. Halse said the transportation budget is facing significant challenges due to declining gas tax revenues and increasing project costs. She said it is important for Bellevue to keep advocating for key transportation projects while also navigating the financial pressures on budget writers. Ms. Halse said that if a transportation package develops in 2025, staff recommends submitting a budget request for the Grand Connection I-405 crossing.

Ms. Halse said additional key priorities are: 1) digital permitting project to modernize MyBuildingPermit.com, as requested by the eCityGov Alliance, 2) flexible funding options for local jurisdictions that address affordable housing, and 3) adequate funding, resources and time necessary to successfully implement recent state land use and housing legislation.

Ms. Halse said the 2025 State Policy Statement is organized around the strategic target areas of high-performance government, vibrant economy, safe and efficient transportation, high quality built and natural environment, community safety and health, and thriving people and communities. She said the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) 2025 legislative agenda was approved in late September. She thanked Councilmember Nieuwenhuis for serving on the AWC

legislative priorities committee. Ms. Halse said the City was able to influence the AWC legislative agenda priorities as a result of Mr. Nieuwenhuis's work on the committee. She said he was able to elevate the need for funding to maintain and improve aging wastewater and storm water treatment systems, which was not previously on the AWC legislative agenda.

Ms. Halse said staff will work in November and December to advance key legislative priorities, including partner discussions and the development of budget requests. She said staff will identify dates during the 2025 legislative session for Bellevue representatives to testify in Olympia. On December 2, the legislative briefing will be held for the 41<sup>st</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> districts. The legislative session begins on January 13 and the AWC's City Action Days are February 19-20.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for the presentation. He suggested that Bellevue should position itself to be a model city for tech-enabled government. Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Ms. Halse said the vibrant economy strategic target area captures the workforce development item. She said the State Policy Statement is often used to highlight ongoing efforts with other organizations or entities.

Ms. Adkins commented on the nexus between Bellevue's role in workforce development and the State's role in workforce development and noted future projects. She said the legislative statement advocates for additional investments in the arts/creative economy and technology. Mr. Malakoutian said he wanted to be sure the City is focusing on workforce development.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and for meeting individually with Councilmembers. He referred to the transportation section on page 5 of the legislative agenda and suggested a revision to the last bullet point regarding smart mobility. The amendment would read: "Bellevue supports innovation and connectivity through the expansion of next-generation smart mobility and autonomous vehicle technologies that integrate connected vehicle systems with sensors at signalized intersections and enable the statewide framework for the operation of fully autonomous vehicles."

Ms. Halse said that supporting autonomous vehicles is very much in line and supportive of Bellevue's Smart Mobility plan. She said Bellevue representatives have shared the City's position in previous sessions that address autonomous vehicles.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Adkins said staff is comfortable with Mr. Nieuwenhuis's proposed amendment and feels it is consistent with other adopted policies.

Mayor Robinson noted Council support for the suggested revision.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested emphasizing I-405 in the multimodal vision in a bullet point that reads: "Bellevue supports infrastructure improvements to maximize investments in our state's highways and to relieve significant congestion in our region. Funding is needed to advance and implement the I-405 Master Plan and key segments like the South Downtown/I-405 Access Improvement project and I-405 interchange improvements at I-90 and SR 520."

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Halse said the language is consistent with previous legislative agenda items that were more specific about certain projects.

Mayor Robinson noted Council support of the suggested revision.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed support for the legislative agenda. He said it is important for everyone to play their roles in achieving the legislative goals. He suggested deploying Councilmembers and staff strategically and consistently for communications and advocacy.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their responsiveness to the Council's priorities and their strategic planning. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Halse confirmed language in the federal legislative agenda regarding transportation innovation and technology. Ms. Adkins said the state legislative agenda refers to smart mobility as an umbrella category for autonomous vehicles and other items.

Councilmember Zahn expressed support for the legislative agenda and format. She said she appreciates the emphasis on partnerships for a number of priorities. She wondered if there is a broader category called smart cities that would accommodate digital permitting, artificial intelligence (AI) and other items.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Halse noted language in the State Policy Statement regarding how Bellevue works internally and how it represents itself externally. She suggested revising the language to accommodate the smart cities concept. Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Adkins suggested that staff include the language in the high-performance government area.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Halse said the economic development language is broad enough to encompass small business loans. Ms. Halse said, however, that does not mean the City would automatically support it.

Mayor Robinson commented on the challenge of replacing infrastructure, which is a nationwide problem. She encouraged requesting funding for infrastructure needs. Ms. Adkins concurred that this is a shared problem across the country. She said staff went to the National League of Cities (NLC) and suggested creating a grant program and/or low-interest loan program for revitalizing and replacing infrastructure.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt the 2025 State Legislative Agenda, as amended during the meeting regarding autonomous vehicles, the I-405 Master Plan and smart cities. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At approximately 8:45 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:57 p.m.

- (c) Budget Deliberations: Discussion of the 2025-2026 Operating Budget and the 2025-2030 Capital Investment Program (CIP) – High-Performance Government

Strategic Target Area and Thriving People and Communities Strategic Target Area.

Acting City Manager Carlson noted that the presentation would cover the High Performance Government strategic target area and the Thriving People and Communities strategic target area.

John Resha, Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Asset Management Department, recalled that the budget workshop and public hearing were held on July 9. The preliminary budget was transmitted to the Council on September 17 and the second public hearing was held on September 24. The final public hearing is scheduled for November 12 and budget adoption is tentatively set for November 19.

Mr. Resha said the High Performance Government strategic target area totals approximately \$317.6 million.

Joy St. Germain, Director, Human Resources Department, said a well-managed government is essential to achieving the Council's vision for Bellevue and delivering exceptional City services. She said valuing employees and their contributions and treating each other with caring and respect is at the heart of being a high performance government, as it fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation.

Mr. Resha said the budget focuses on maintaining current assets, major maintenance of municipal buildings (fire alarms, generators and repaving at Bellevue Service Center), fuel tank replacement at BSC and electric vehicle charging infrastructure at City Hall. He said City Hall is a 75-year building and we are approximately 40 years into the building's life. The budget includes funding for the planning and design of remodeling in City Hall and other facilities, including interim space solutions. Mr. Resha said staff will conduct a long-range facilities planning needs assessment to include population and service growth assumptions, facilities conditions and investments.

In the area of municipal sustainability, the City is investing in LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and Clean Fuels incentive programs, compliance with the Clean Buildings Act, and updating the greenhouse gas emissions wedge analysis. Mr. Resha highlighted investments in performance and business intelligence including structured data reviews with leadership, the use of data visualization tools to increase the speed from collecting data to taking action, and guiding work groups in identifying key performance indicators (KPIs) to best reflect their daily work.

Sabra Schneider, Director, Information Technology Department, said the budget proposes new investments in innovation with the goal of working alongside technology companies and partners in the community to explore how to drive more inclusive innovation. She noted the goal of increasing the City's capacity to support digital equity, advise staff on innovation priorities and policies, and to augment partnerships.

Councilmember Hamilton said he was glad to see the continued emphasis on maintaining the City's facilities and infrastructure and the support for the business intelligence team in the budget. He expressed support for funding for the new innovation forum.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked about planning for long-term needs. Mr. Resha said the long-range planning budget item for \$250,000 sets up the prioritization to develop funding schemes over the next few budgets.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Resha said City Hall has systems that need upgrading and funding is provided in the budget to address those and other needs.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for the proposed budget and said Bellevue welcomes growth and innovation.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and noted his enthusiasm regarding the innovation forum.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that staff reimagine how City Hall space could be remodeled to be more accessible and available to the community, including for certain programming. She asked whether the City is on track to meet its municipal greenhouse gas emissions goals by 2030. If not, she wondered what funding investment would be needed to do so. Regarding EV charging, Ms. Zahn asked whether the City anticipates receiving tax credits for that effort. She commended Ms. Schneider for her focus on innovation. Ms. Zahn said she wanted to ensure that the City has adequate funding to provide strong cybersecurity support. Mr. Resha said he would add the questions to the memory bank list for staff to follow up with more detailed information.

Moving to the Thriving People and Communities strategic target area, Mr. Resha said its budget totals approximately \$98.4 million.

Bianca Siegl, Assistant Director, Citywide Priorities and Policy Development, said the budget includes resources to advance the Council's priorities around community engagement. The budget funds a one city effort to be led by the Community Development Department and would focus on supporting citywide outreach and community engagement for major initiatives.

Dr. Linda Whitehead, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, City Manager's Office, said that cultural events in Bellevue in 2025-2026 will reflect a community led, City supported approach to the celebration of cultural and heritage events. She said Bellevue's first International Festival was held in August with 13 partners, including Amazon, and 21 countries were represented by the attendees. More than 500 people attended the event. In September, the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN) held its resource fair with 30 partners.

Dr. Whitehead said the Cross-Cultural Center Without Walls grant program has been very successful and eight events have been held this year. The current grant-funded projects will extend through May 2025. Dr. Whitehead said that the 2024 programming demonstrated the continued demand for cross-cultural engagement and growing network of cross-cultural partners. She said organizations are consistently challenged in finding venues for programming.

Dr. Whitehead said the City will be conducting a siting analysis and options for a cross-cultural center. At the same time, the City will continue with cross-cultural programming in other venues. The preliminary site analysis was completed in 2019-2020, and updated information is available in the final Cross-Cultural Feasibility Study (2022) and the Cross-Cultural Center Without Walls pilot program. The goal of the analysis will be to advise City leadership with current information regarding the costs and siting opportunities.

Michael Shiosaki, Director, Parks and Community Services Department, said that recreation programs help to build a caring community. He highlighted the 2023-2024 accomplishments including the increase in the number of youth with disabilities in day camps and an increase in the number of large-scale special events from 23 events in 2023 to 41 in 2024.

Mr. Shiosaki said a shared use pilot program for pickleball and tennis was launched this summer and involved courts in both Eastgate and Lakemont Parks. He said the two activities alternate days and the program is considered a success.

Mr. Shiosaki said the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy awarded a grant to the North Bellevue Community Center/Senior Center to support a services hub for older adults. He said overall recreation registrations and event participation have exceeded pre-pandemic levels. He said there were waitlists up to 3,100 people for day camps.

The proposed budget includes funding to add recreation staff to support community recreation programs and to expand community center operating hours. Mr. Shiosaki said the demand for recreation programs is increasing significantly.

The next topic area was human services. Mr. Shiosaki said the Council previously recognized the one-time receipt of federal aid a couple of years ago and the difficulty it would bring in the 2024-2025 funding cycle. He said the Council adopted strategic guidance to inform the Human Services Commission's recommendations.

Toni Esparza, Assistant Director, Parks and Community Services Department, concurred that the Council was able to make historic investments in human services throughout the pandemic with one-time federal funding. She said that since that time, the Council directed the establishment of the City's first strategic plan for human services to provide policy guidance on how to strategically invest the City's dollars in the face of rising community needs.

Ms. Esparza said that data from the Human Services Needs Update informed the commission's funding recommendations as well. She said the strategic plan called for the development of a human services dashboard to provide increased understanding among the public of the outputs and outcomes from the City's investments into the human services infrastructure. She said the 2023 dashboard has been published and the data was shared with the Human Services Commission as they deliberated over their funding recommendations.

Ms. Esparza recalled that in past conversations about human services funding, the Council has emphasized the importance of building relationships with new human services agencies,



including the City's trusted messengers. She said staff increased its outreach, published the grant program requests for proposals (RFP) in eight languages and provided technical assistance. The City received 154 applications requesting human services funding.

Ms. Esparza said the commission learned more about human services needs through panel presentations from providers, presentations on data from the needs update and a review of the new dashboard that details investments in human services. She said everyone who reviewed the proposals participated in equity training to integrate it into their decisions. She said more community members were involved in the proposal review process this year, as directed in the human services strategic plan.

Ms. Esparza said the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), Communities of Color Coordinating (CCC) Team, and Bellevue Youth Link were invited to participate in a one-day retreat with the commission to review applications. The commission will continue its review during subsequent meetings and form the final funding recommendations. Ms. Esparza said the commission developed recommendations for any potential added funding as well, as they have done in the past.

The preliminary budget invests \$16.8 million into human services infrastructure from several sources: Human Services Fund, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and behavioral health and housing services revenues. Ms. Esparza provided additional brief details regarding those resources.

Ms. Esparza said the commission's process is outlined in the transmittal letter to the Council [Attachment B in meeting packet]. Their recommendations are informed by policies and data and support the Council priority to meet community needs and increase equitable access and outcomes. Ms. Esparza highlighted policy guidance from the human services strategic plan. The service areas with the highest need are housing stability, food and basic daily needs, child care and behavioral health services. Service gaps are noticeable for youth services and for certain cultural and/or linguistic populations.

Ms. Esparza highlighted the Human Services Commission's recommended investments by need: \$5.7 million in housing stability, \$1.1 million for food and basic needs, \$964,387 for child care \$3.06 million for behavioral health services, \$3.57 million for culturally and linguistically specific services and \$2.3 million for youth services. She said each commissioner reviewed all 154 applications and considered the policy and data reviewed throughout their process. She said the commission also incorporated input from the community and service providers. She said the requests far exceeded available funding. She said more information is provided in Attachments C and D in the meeting packet. Attachment E details supplemental recommendations should more CDBG funds become available.

Ms. Esparza said that although the 2024-2030 human services strategic plan is only a few months old, staff is beginning to analyze how the Council's guidance has made an impact on the commission's funding recommendations. She commented regarding the commission's recommendations for culturally and linguistically specific support. She said all contracted

partners are required to offer services to all income-qualifying Bellevue residents and are monitored to ensure compliance with contract requirements.

Ms. Esparza said the preliminary budget includes a recommendation to use any potential future funding for a one-time \$2.5 million investment in the Human Services Fund to help address the most critical needs, with two-thirds targeted for youth services and one-third targeted for needs after pandemic-related federal funding has been expended.

Ms. Esparza thanked the Council for providing policy guidance and for considering an additional investment in response to the growing needs of residences.

Ms. Siegl provided an update on the homelessness outreach program, which provides direct services to community members experiencing homelessness. The budget supports continued direct outreach services, the safe parking program, severe weather response, and local and regional collaboration. Ms. Siegl said the City has increased the number of individuals who have been served by the program to 450 unhoused individuals so far this year.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m., and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Zahn, liaison to the Human Services Commission, thanked everyone for their hard work and the commission's recommendations. She expressed support for the proposed addition of \$2.5 million in funding.

Ms. Zahn thanked Director Shiosaki for the increase in recreation staffing and expansion of community center hours. She said she liked the community-led approach to the City-supported Cross Cultural Program Without Walls. Ms. Zahn asked about funding for keeping City Hall open longer, potentially on weekends, for community use. She expressed an interest in expanding special events and upgrading the infrastructure and equipment needed to help support the events. She asked whether money is included in the budget to address the CCC Team's recommendations to be submitted to the Council in the future. She thanked staff for their homelessness outreach program.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Esparza confirmed that the commission discussed requesting \$4.8 million instead of the \$2.5 million in funding. Ms. Zahn asked, as a follow-up item for the memory bank list, whether there are additional funding resources for human services.

Mayor Robinson thanked Councilmember Zahn for her advocacy to create the safe parking program.

Ms. Robinson recalled that the Council approved the human services strategic plan with objectives for the commission to use through their grant process. However, she said the Council

did not directly discuss the principles before approving the plan. She asked staff to bring the principles back for discussion next year.

Mayor Robinson acknowledged the request for \$2.5 million, with two-thirds to go to youth services. She concurred with the importance of youth services because they are our future. She said hardly any of the crime committed in Bellevue is committed by residents, including youths. She said that indicates to her that students are learning to make good decisions as they grow up in this community.

Mayor Robinson asked whether the Council would be interested in adding the funding and directing the remaining one-third to rental assistance programs that reduce the risk of homelessness for families with children.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation. Referring to special events, he said he wants to be sure that the events will not be cost-prohibitive for community members. He thanked staff for moving forward with discussions regarding the cross-cultural center. He expressed an interest in data regarding the operation of the safe parking program. Ms. Siegl said more information will become available at the end of the year.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis commended Ms. Esparza for her work with the commission and service providers. He expressed support for the importance of youth services and preventing negative and harmful behaviors.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for staff's proposed budget. He commended staff for their expertise and continuous improvements. For the cross-cultural center, he would like more details regarding the number of people it will serve, what the needs are, and how/whether one building can work effectively for the community. He expressed support for funding youth services.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff for their time and work over the past year. He said there is community support for a cross-cultural center for a number of activities. He said he is pleased to see funding for preliminary design in the budget, including the siting analysis. He said he looks forward to more information regarding the project timeline next year.

Mr. Lee thanked the Human Services Commission for their extensive, lengthy review of all of the applications. He said there is never enough funding for all of the human services needs. He thanked staff for the human services dashboard and concurred regarding the need for more youth services and child care.

Mayor Robinson asked Councilmember Lee to comment regarding the commission's request for an additional \$2.5 million. Ms. Esparza said preliminary estimates of available funding are provided early in the year, before the grant application and review process begins. She said the Acting City Manager provided \$2.5 million in the preliminary budget beyond the amount calculated according to the formula used by the City. Acting City Manager Carlson said staff would follow up with Councilmember Lee if he has additional questions.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked about additional funding resources and opportunities. He asked whether there has been a cost-benefit analysis that quantifies the long-term benefits and potential cost savings of fully funding human services needs. For example, if the City could prevent homelessness or prevent problems encountered by youth, is there data that reflects long-term benefits?

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m., and Councilmember Zahn seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Hamilton said he was impressed with staff's strategic approach to the budget. He said it is important to provide sufficient funding for an improved, coordinated approach to community engagement. He expressed support for the Cross-Cultural Center Without Walls grant program and for further analysis of a cross-cultural facility. He said he appreciated the additional funding for recreation programs. He thanked the Human Services Commission for all of their work and recommendations. He expressed support for expanding homelessness outreach services and for maintaining the safe parking program.

Councilmember Zahn noted that the Council could use the additional requested funding of \$2.5 million differently than proposed by the commission. She encouraged investments in maintaining housing stability, youth services, and mental health assistance for families. She asked whether even higher funding could be available for human services, perhaps through using the Council Contingency Fund.

Mayor Robinson said there is more money directed toward addressing homelessness in the budget than she has ever seen.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for the additional funding request. He said the construction of a cross-cultural center has not yet been funded in the budget. Mr. Shiosaki said staff would follow up with more information for the next Council discussion.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Dr. Whitehead said the last direction from the Council was to initiate programming and to evaluate the need for a dedicated center. She said the pilot program ends May 2025, and staff is requesting funding to extend the program for one more year to continue programming and to conduct the site analysis.

12. Land Use Reports: None.

13. Written Reports: None.

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

Mayor Robinson said a Special Meeting would be held October 29, which is a fifth Tuesday of the month and therefore does not have a regular meeting scheduled.

At 10:26 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw