

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

March 17, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Malakoutian, Deputy Mayor Hamilton and Councilmembers Bhargava, Briar¹, Nieuwenhuis², Robinson and Sumadiwirya

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

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

(a) Women's History Month Proclamation

Councilmember Robinson read the proclamation recognizing March 2026 as Women's History Month in Bellevue. She encouraged everyone to honor the month through programs, ceremonies and activities that recognize and celebrate the contributions and achievements of women past, present and future.

City Manager Diane Carlson commented on the contributions by women in our civic history, business environment and neighborhoods and their efforts in the areas of equity and opportunity. She said women and girls still face challenges and barriers ranging from wage gaps to caregiving burdens. She noted Bellevue's commitment to being a community where all women and girls can thrive.

(b) American Red Cross Month Proclamation

Deputy Mayor Hamilton read the proclamation declaring March 2026 as American Red Cross Month in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to support the mission of the American Red Cross and to recognize the volunteers and donors who provide hope and assistance to those in need.

¹ Councilmember Briar participated remotely.

² Councilmember Nieuwenhuis participated remotely and left the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Monica Wellner, Board Member and volunteer, American Red Cross King County, thanked all of the volunteers in Bellevue for their support. Noting she is the laboratory director at Seattle Children's Hospital, she said she regularly sees the lifesaving impact of American Red Cross blood services.

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 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. 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) Khaiersta English said Bellevue's tree canopy is currently 39.3 percent compared to a goal of 40 percent. She said approximately 150 acres or 15,000 mature trees are needed to reach that goal. She encouraged the City to protect trees from removal during development and redevelopment and to add street trees.
- (b) Court Olson, representing People for Climate Action (PCA) Bellevue, thanked Councilmembers for meeting with them individually over the past few months. He encouraged additional funding to help reach the 2050 emissions target.
- (c) Deborah Duitch, a Newport Hills resident for 45 years, spoke on behalf of the Newport Community Coalition in support of redeveloping the Newport Hills Shopping Center. She said they look forward to the potential for different types of housing and community gathering spaces under the proposed HOMA (Housing Opportunities in Mixed Use Areas) Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).
- (d) Michelle Hilhorst commented regarding Ordinance No. 6907 and expressed concern regarding the use of a legislative rezoning to adopt HOMA regulations. She expressed concern regarding the planning process, development intensity and the need for more public engagement.

- (e) Don Marsh, Vice President of 300 Trees, said they are encouraged by the City's tree codes and efforts to distribute free trees to residents. He referenced written materials he submitted to the Council and expressed concern regarding the loss of tree canopy in different areas of Bellevue.
 - (f) Diana Leo, Vice President of Government Affairs, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, spoke on behalf of the Chamber's PLUSH (Permitting, Land Use, Sustainability and Housing) committee regarding the Council's work on HOMA regulations and the multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program. She encouraged flexibility and MFTE enhancements to support the feasibility of housing development.
 - (g) Martin Seelig expressed support for Ordinance No. 6907 adopting the HOMA regulations.
 - (h) Daniel Nygaard, representing the Newport Hills Coalition, thanked the Council and staff for their extensive efforts and public outreach related to HOMA regulations.
 - (i) John Tiscornia expressed concern regarding the low frequency sound emitting from the Sound Transit light rail operation on the East Channel Bridge, which he compared to the sound of a jet taking off. He suggested methods to mitigate the sound and encouraged the City to enforce the noise code's quiet hours.
 - (j) Heidi Dean expressed concern regarding the influence of developers and commercial property owners in Bellevue. She said the HOMA regulations are not fully consistent with past statements and decisions by Councilmembers.
 - (k) Steve Kasner, President of the Lake Hills Neighborhood Association, thanked Mindy Garner, former East Bellevue Community Councilmember Gerry Hughes, Julie Ellenhorn and former City Councilmember Conrad Lee for their longtime efforts in support of the Lake Hills neighborhood. He noted the availability of \$622,000 for the neighborhood through the City's Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) and highlighted community activities including upcoming Earth Day events and the annual Lake Hills picnic.
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 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 7-0, and the following item was approved:
- (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of February 24, 2026 Regular Meeting
 - (b) Motion to award Bid No. 26004, for the Bellevue City Hall 1W Suite - Tenant Improvement project, to Balfour Beatty Construction, LLC, DBA Howard S. Wright as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, in an amount not to exceed \$2,707,907, plus all applicable taxes (CIP Plan No. G-124).
 - (c) Resolution No. 10592 authorizing execution of a five-year General Services Contract with Northwest Cascade Inc. dba Honey Buckets in an amount not to exceed \$525,000, plus all applicable taxes, to supply, service, and maintain portable toilets and hand-washing stations at park sites throughout the City.
 - (d) Resolution No. 10593 determining that portions of two easements, a Sidewalk and Utility easement and a Sidewalk, Utility and Wall easement located at 1425 120th Ave NE are surplus to the City's needs; and setting a time and place for a public hearing to consider the release of these easements.
 - (e) Ordinance No. 6905 amending Ordinance No. 6877 to replace the classification listing with pay grades previously adopted as part of the 2026 City of Bellevue Pay Plans with an updated listing that includes additional classifications.

9. Public Hearing

- (a) Public Hearing and Action on Resolution No. 10594 authorizing the execution of documents necessary to release a portion of a sidewalk, utilities, lighting and landscaping easement located at 633 110th Ave NE and 640 108th Ave which has been declared surplus to the City's needs and is no longer required for providing continued public service.

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced the public hearing on Resolution No. 10594 authorizing the release of a portion of a sidewalk, utilities, lighting and landscaping easement.

Loren Matlick, Real Property Division Manager, said the easement is located at 633 110th Avenue NE and 640 108th Avenue NE related to a development along NE 6th Street. The Council previously declared the property surplus to the City's needs and scheduled the public hearing. In place of the easement being released will be a public access easement for the Grand Connection.

- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to open the public hearing, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

No one came forward to comment.

- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to close the public hearing, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.
- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to approve Resolution No. 10594, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

Councilmember Robinson said the segment connects light rail, the transit center and the Grand Connection. She said this seems like a lost opportunity to provide dedicated bike infrastructure. Mr. Matlick said the replacement easement to the Grand Connection is consistent with the Land Use Code requirements in place when the development was permitted.

City Manager Carlson said City staff is working closely with the property owners to encourage the best connectivity for bikes and pedestrians.

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

10. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions

- (a) Ordinance No. 6906 relating to development in commercial and mixed-use areas within the City of Bellevue; Amending Chapters 20.10, 20.20, and 20.50 of the Land Use Code; Recodifying LUC 20.20.128 into a new Chapter 20.15 of the Land Use Code; Amending and consolidating nonconforming use, structure, and site requirements into LUC 20.20.561; Amending Parts 20.25A, 20.25B, 20.25D, 20.25E, 20.25F1, 20.25H, 20.25I, 20.25J, 20.25P, 20.25N, 20.25Q, 20.25R, 20.30B of the Land Use Code; Repealing Parts 20.25F, 20.25G, and 20.25K of the Land Use Code; Amending BCC 14.60.110; Establishing vested rights for pipeline projects located in Downtown Land Use Districts; Allowing correction of previously adopted Director's Rule to update cross-references and to correct scrivener's errors; providing for severability; and setting an effective date.

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion and action on two ordinances amending the Land Use Code to expand Housing Opportunities in Mixed Use Areas (HOMA) and to rezone mixed use areas currently inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

Nick Whipple, Code and Policy Director, Development Services Department, said staff is seeking Council action tonight on the HOMA LUCA [Ordinance No. 6906] and the HOMA rezone [Ordinance No. 6907]. He clarified that Ordinance No. 6907 does not include a legislative rezone of the Newport Hills area.

Mathieu Menard, Senior Planner, recalled that the project was initiated in 2022 and the scope was updated in December 2024. The purpose of the LUCA is to encourage the development of

housing, require affordable housing in targeted mixed-use areas and to create vibrant communities where people can live closer to their jobs and services.

Mr. Menard said the Planning Commission's recommendation was presented to the Council on February 24, 2026. In response to that discussion, the LUCA was revised to add the FAR (floor-area ratio) exemption for a three-percent floor plate increase, retain upper-level setbacks along Main Street between 100th Avenue and Bellevue Way and to provide the option for developers to use HOMA regulations. Mr. Menard highlighted the LUCA process, noting that the first draft was released more than one year ago for public input and involvement.

Responding to Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Menard commented regarding input from members of the Newport Hills community. Mr. Menard noted concerns regarding building heights, traffic, parking and the need for the revitalization of the shopping center.

Responding to Councilmember Sumadiwirya, Mr. Whipple said the traffic impacts of any development will be addressed during the permitting process.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked staff for their work and public engagement efforts. Responding to Mr. Bhargava, Mr. Menard said the only departure from the Planning Commission recommendation is the direction provided by the Council on February 24. In further response, Mr. Menard commented on the FAR provisions.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked the public for their involvement and input. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Menard said the ordinances are consistent with other City documents and regulations. Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed concern regarding transportation and traffic impacts related to HOMA regulations. Mr. Whipple noted that the HOMA work relied on a previous citywide analysis of traffic impacts. However, project-specific impacts will be addressed through the permitting process.

Councilmember Briar thanked residents for their civic engagement and concurred with Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's concerns regarding traffic impacts in neighborhoods. Responding to Ms. Briar, Mr. Menard said the limited number of rezones are consistent with the Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Briar said she has heard concerns from the community about the potential displacement of small businesses.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton thanked everyone for their work and expressed support for the ordinances.

→ Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6906, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

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

- (b) Ordinance No. 6907 relating to zoning within mixed-use areas within the City; Amending the land use designations for mixed-use areas throughout the City for consistency with revisions to the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Housing

Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas (HOMA) Land Use Code Amendments; Confirming the legal description of the F1 land use district; Confirming the legal description of the F3 land use district; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.

- Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6907, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 7:23 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:35 p.m.

11. Study Session Items

(a) Sound Transit Update

City Manager Carlson introduced Sound Transit's update regarding light rail and bus rapid transit planning.

Andrew Singelakis, Director, Transportation Department, said the presentation would include information regarding Sound Transit's Enterprise Initiative to update the ST3 plan and the agency's long-range financial plan.

Ariel Taylor, Government and Community Relations East King County Corridor Director, Sound Transit, addressed the comment during earlier oral communications regarding light rail-related noise complaints in the Enatai neighborhood. She said Sound Transit staff is currently working with the community to address the issues.

Ms. Taylor provided an overview of the voter-approved Sound Transit system including Link light rail, Sounder trains, Sound Transit express bus service and Stride bus rapid transit. She said the light rail 2 Line will begin operating across Lake Washington on March 28 and activities are scheduled at multiple stations for opening day.

Alex Krieg, Executive Director of Enterprise Planning, Sound Transit, said the Enterprise Initiative is a comprehensive effort involving planning, capital, operations, maintenance and finance policies to continue the ST3 program. He commented regarding increased project costs, lower revenue projections, economic uncertainty and regional transportation usage. Mr. Krieg said Sound Transit must identify \$34.5 billion in cost savings and new funding to deliver the full ST3 program. He said Sound Transit plans to issue debt, backed by local revenue streams, to finance the program. However, capital project cost increases and the timing of anticipated expenditures limit the agency's ability to issue debt for the full funding needed.

Mr. Krieg said the Sound Transit Board held a retreat in November 2025 to review the Enterprise Initiative work plan and directed staff to develop plausible, affordable scenarios for an updated ST3 system plan. He highlighted staff's process to develop scenarios for the Board's review on March 18. The Enterprise Initiative addresses policy and planning, transit operations, capital

project delivery and financial planning. Ms. Taylor noted that the Stride bus rapid transit program is not affected by the Enterprise Initiative.

Lacey Jane Wolfe, Intergovernmental Policy Advisor, City Manager's Office, said staff is seeking Council direction to prepare a letter to the Sound Transit Board based on Attachment A in the meeting packet, Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative. The Board will determine by June which projects will be delayed or reduced in scope. For Bellevue, the only affected capital project is the South Kirkland to Issaquah Link segment. That project includes two new stations in Bellevue (Eastgate and Factoria), a potential (unfunded) Lakemont station and parking at the Kirkland and Issaquah stations.

Ms. Wolfe presented the draft guiding principles for Bellevue with the top priority of subarea equity. She said staff recommends that the Council remain open at this time regarding whether the Kirkland-to-Issaquah project is built as light rail or bus rapid transit. She said staff recommends that Sound Transit minimize project delays and that they implement both the Eastgate and Factoria stations at the same time. Ms. Wolfe said staff recommends continued support of Sound Transit's regional express bus service.

Ms. Wolfe requested Council feedback regarding the guiding principles and proposed letter to the Sound Transit Board.

Mayor Malakoutian thanked everyone for their work and expressed enthusiasm for the opening of the 2 Line on March 28.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Mr. Krieg commented regarding increasing capital project costs.

Responding to Councilmember Robinson, Mr. Krieg said there will be continued discussions involving Sound Transit and cities regarding light rail versus bus rapid transit from South Kirkland to Issaquah.

Responding to Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Krieg highlighted the key principles of the ST3 voter-approved plan. Mr. Krieg said the Sound Transit Board is focused on funding the ST3 plan without delaying projects. Mr. Malakoutian acknowledged that a number of tradeoffs, including subarea equity, will need to be considered.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton thanked everyone for their work and commented on the benefits of the 2 Line cross-lake connection. He noted the importance of ensuring subarea equity with ST3 implementation.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya thanked staff for the thorough presentation and commented on the value of transit services to stimulate transit-oriented development (TOD) including housing and services.

Councilmember Robinson commented on the positive impact of the light rail system on the development of Bellevue. She encouraged the consideration of bus rapid transit through Bellevue.

Councilmember Briar concurred with the importance of subarea equity in implementing the ST3 plan. While she prefers trains, she is open to bus rapid transit. She thanked everyone for their work.

Councilmember Bhargava commented on the importance of subarea equity and the benefits of TOD.

→ Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to direct staff to prepare a letter to the Sound Transit Board based on Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative. Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

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

At 8:40 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared a break. The meeting resumed at 8:50 p.m.

- (b) Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) to establish a Development Agreement pathway specifically for Projects involving Public-private Partnerships

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding a development agreement pathway for public-private partnerships.

Code and Policy Director Whipple said staff requests that the Council enter a finding of necessity to process the LUCA and direct staff to schedule the public hearing. A development agreement is a voluntary, legally binding contract between the city and a property owner or developer as authorized under state law [RCW 36.70B]. It establishes the development regulations, standards and conditions for a specific project and must be approved by the City Council. A development agreement provides regulatory certainty for developers and allows the City to secure public benefits including infrastructure, impact mitigation, phasing commitments and public amenities.

Charlie Engel, Senior Planner, Development Services Department, said the Land Use Code allows development agreements in specific contexts: 1) BelRed, used to catalyze redevelopment of the Spring District, 2) Downtown pedestrian bridges and Flexible Amenity proposals that improve downtown livability, 3) East Main TOD projects with additional affordable housing or Flexible Amenity, 4) Wilburton sites near Grand Connection, and 5) homeless services uses citywide.

Ms. Engel said the proposed LUCA establishes a new development agreement pathway for public-private partnership projects to allow for greater zoning and development flexibility when the City has property ownership, control or provides significant project funding. The proposal supports the delivery of key policy priorities such as affordable housing, sustainability and economic development.

Edward Butterfield, Public-Private Partnerships Manager, Community Development Department, said the LUCA would apply when the City owns or controls real property or when it serves as a major project funder (i.e., more than 10 percent of total project cost or more than \$5 million). The LUCA is focused on the redevelopment of City-owned sites in the BelRed and Wilburton areas.

Ms. Engel said the proposed LUCA consolidates existing development agreement provisions from different sections of the Land Use Code into one chapter and defines eligibility, application and submittal requirements, review and approval process, and the procedures for modifying approved agreements. If initiated by the Council, the next step is a public hearing and Council action on April 14. Ms. Engel said a project web page has been established. An internal work group with staff from economic development, the Office of Housing and the City Attorney's Office is involved in the process.

Responding to Councilmember Bhargava, Mr. Whipple commented regarding potential public benefits.

Responding to Councilmember Sumadiwirya, Mr. Butterfield said the LUCA would help advance development and provide public benefit.

Councilmember Robinson said development agreements tend to produce thoughtful development and can respond to emerging needs within a community.

Mayor Malakoutian commented on the importance of transparency for the public and of evaluating the public benefit against the flexibility granted to the developer.

→ Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to enter a finding of necessity for the Council to process the LUCA and to direct staff to schedule the public hearing. Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

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

12. Land Use Reports: None.

13. Written Reports

(a) Update on Great Neighborhoods Program: Eastgate and Factoria

(b) 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan Implementation Update

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 9:10 p.m., Mayor Malakoutian declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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