

# Information and Discussion

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Bellevue Arts Commission

1E-113 or Zoom Meeting, 4:30 pm

City of Bellevue, WA

## Great Neighborhood Program: Draft Policies for Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans

At this meeting, staff is seeking **feedback** on draft policies within the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans (Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan), specifically as they relate to arts and culture opportunities in the two neighborhood areas.

Staff request that the Arts Commission discuss and provide guidance to affirm or consider additional updates to draft policies. Staff will consider and incorporate input from the Arts Commission as part of staff's recommendation on final draft policies that will be reviewed with the Planning Commission over the summer. A formal recommendation is not necessary.

**Code and bylaw support:** This item is presented to the Commission as it is supported by City Code 3.56.070 item I: "...participation with the planning commission in preparing, reviewing and recommending comprehensive plan updates and subarea plans; provided, that the planning commission shall review and make final recommendations to the city council on all matters which will be adopted by the city council as part of the comprehensive plan."

### Background

The neighborhood area plans are in Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. A neighborhood area plan articulates a vision consistent with the citywide vision detailed in Volume 1, sets priorities, and identifies future actions to realize the community's vision at the neighborhood level. The scope centers around strengthening a neighborhood area's unique identity and community gathering places as Bellevue prepares and plans for its well-managed future growth.

In 2018, Council launched the Great Neighborhoods program that provides a strategic, community-driven process for developing neighborhood area plans. The Great Neighborhoods program provides a structure for developing plans for the sixteen neighborhood areas that cover the full extent of the city. See Attachment A for a map depicting the neighborhood area boundaries.

As part of the City's Great Neighborhoods program, Council initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs) to update the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans in 2024-2025 on September 17, 2024. The objective of the Great Neighborhood program is to adopt plans for each neighborhood area that are relevant to their community's distinctive identity, adaptability, social connectivity, and core needs with a high level of community ownership of the plan.

This study session is part of several Board and Commission meetings intended to inform the Planning Commission recommendation to Council for the CPAs for both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans during the summer of 2025. The review and adoption of a neighborhood area plan follows the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process as set forth in the Land Use Code.

## Planning Process

Neighborhood area planning is consistent with Neighborhoods policies in Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan (NH-17 and NH-19), which direct the city to equitably engage local communities to define neighborhood area specific values and policies when implementing adopted citywide policies. As such, the neighborhood area planning process is organized to allow participants to participate in equitable, informed community dialogue about what is unique and distinctive in their neighborhood area, identify priorities, and consider strategic options in a logical and transparent manner. Particular attention is given to historically underserved communities and identifying any missing voices and perspectives to have representative engagement.

Neighborhood area plan policies must be consistent with citywide policies in the Comprehensive Plan (Volume 1). While Volume 1 policies provide citywide direction, neighborhood area plan policies are localized to reflect neighborhood priorities, issues, and opportunities. The Arts Commission reviewed the Urban Design & The Arts element of Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan and made a recommendation to Planning Commission on the updates on March 6, 2024. Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan on October 22, 2024. Relevant citywide policies from that element include:

- **UD-48.** Cultivate public art that enhances neighborhood identity, builds community and engages the community in the artistic process.
- **UD-49.** Encourage private and public developers to integrate art into the design of the public areas of their projects.
- **UD-50.** Cultivate art and arts programs that facilitate involvement, engagement, communication, understanding and respect among the city's diverse population.
- **UD-51.** Support and encourage development, display and performance opportunities for a wide range of artistic expression throughout the city.
- **UD-55.** Support artists and arts groups working in the community through city programs.
- **UD-57.** Encourage and enhance arts and cultural opportunities within Neighborhood Centers.
- **UD-60.** Support partnerships and spaces for cross-cultural programming that contribute to intercultural engagement, learning and exchange.
- **UD-61.** Recognize and affirm diverse heritages within the community through interpretative materials, artistic expression and placemaking.

## Neighborhood Area Plan Policies: Current Progress

The city published draft policies for the Crossroads (Attachment B) and Newport (Attachment C) neighborhood area plans on May 1 for public review. These draft policies build from engagement around identifying key values, priorities, and qualities that community members enjoy about their neighborhood today and want to see in the future. This study session highlights a subset of policies from the two drafts that specifically relate to arts and culture opportunities.

### Draft Policies - Crossroads

The draft vision for Crossroads is “a complete, urban neighborhood with convenient access to a variety of destinations that fosters diversity and embrace its natural qualities.” This vision sets a foundation for neighborhood art and identity opportunities that strives to highlight Crossroads’ diverse and culturally rich neighborhoods and multicultural population.

During community engagement, community noted a desire for play and creativity in public spaces, activities for seniors, and culturally specific art that is significant for residents of the Crossroads neighborhood. This includes multilingual elements that reflect the cultural diversity of the neighborhood to make people feel at home.

Updated policies that relate to arts and culture opportunities support:

### 1. Culturally Responsive Built Environment

Crossroads is one of Bellevue's most diverse neighborhoods. Policies reinforce the role of culturally relevant features within the neighborhood in making community feel like they belong and can comfortably navigate their environment.

### 2. Business District Development

Business districts, such as the area around Crossroads Shopping Center and Neighborhood Centers, provide opportunities for arts and culture, including design elements that establish neighborhood identity and uses that support the local creative economy.

### 3. Welcoming Gathering Places

Crossroads has many different types of gathering spaces primarily concentrated around Crossroads Shopping Center and Crossroads Community Park. Policies support working with community partners to provide gathering opportunities throughout the neighborhood.

Proposed Number	Proposed Crossroads Policy
S-CX-1	Recognize and affirm diverse heritages, histories and cultures within the Crossroads community through public art, activation and placemaking, especially efforts around play and storytelling.
S-CX-2	Explore the identification of locations and thresholds that are significant to the community and contribute to the neighborhood's visual identity.
S-CX-3	Integrate accessible signage and wayfinding into streetscapes and public spaces that use multiple languages and are culturally relevant to enhance neighborhood identity.
S-CX-4	Provide aesthetic and landscaping enhancements on key corridors, including NE 8th Street, 140th Avenue NE, 148th Avenue NE, 156th Avenue NE and NE Bel-Red Road, so they become visually attractive, safe, and comfortable corridors to and through the area.
S-CX-7	Support the creation of a unique and well-defined identity of Crossroads' business districts through placemaking and activation.
S-CX-8	Explore the creation of a district-based organization for businesses in Crossroads to reinforce the economic vitality of the area
S-CX-9	Accommodate the retention of small businesses in Crossroads, including through increased access to affordable commercial space.
S-CX-10	Support the creation of both permanent and temporary spaces where small or emerging food businesses and vendors can develop and flourish.
S-CX-14	Enhance existing Neighborhood Centers (see Map LU-2 of the Land Use Element) designed to serve neighborhoods, recognizing their multiple roles: serving

	residents' needs, acting as community gathering places and helping to establish neighborhood identity.
S-CX-16	Encourage and enhance arts and cultural opportunities within Neighborhood Centers.
S-CX-18	Partner with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and private partners to create accessible, affordable and welcoming community gathering places, especially indoors.
S-CX-19	Continue to work with private partners to foster Crossroads Shopping Center's role as a community gathering place reflective of neighborhood identity and the community's cultural diversity.

### Draft Policies - Newport

The draft vision for Newport is "a connected neighborhood with strong social bonds and a deep relationship with the natural environment." This vision sets a foundation for neighborhood art and identity opportunities that strive to highlight Newport's natural areas, and the community's pride in its diversity, history, and natural beauty.

During community engagement, community focused on recognizing the history and culture of the neighborhood. They appreciated the many trails and natural areas that give a sense of beauty and quiet. They noted a desire for indoor spaces for community gathering and cultural events, as well as murals and artwork that reflect the history and diversity of Newport.

Updated policies that relate to arts and culture opportunities support:

#### **1. Natural History and Identity**

Newport is known for its forested natural areas, streams, and proximity to Lake Washington. Policies recognize how these qualities can be imbued in current and future public spaces.

#### **2. Business District Development**

Business districts, such as the Neighborhood Center, provide opportunities for arts and culture, including design elements that establish neighborhood identity and uses that support the local creative economy.

#### **3. Intergenerational Gathering Places**

The Newport community notes a lack of easily accessible public gathering spaces and activities for all ages. Future public and private development, as well as partnerships with active groups and organizations, can help to provide gathering spaces throughout the area.

Proposed Number	Proposed Newport Policy
S-NP-1	Support Newport's identity as a diverse and connected community, anchored by forested natural areas and connections to streams and Lake Washington.
S-NP-2	Explore the identification of locations and thresholds that are significant to community and contribute to the neighborhood's visual identity.
S-NP-3	Reflect the continuing contributions of many different cultures to Newport in the design of its built environment.

S-NP-9	Encourage the inclusion of small commercial spaces to accommodate new and displaced businesses in new commercial development.
S-NP-10	Support the unique identity of the Neighborhood Center as it evolves through signage, public art and activities.
S-NP-12	Support and partner with organizations like schools, faith communities and social clubs to create accessible, affordable and welcoming indoor gathering places that support community needs and encourage intergenerational connections.
S-NP-13	Encourage the Bellevue School District to include community-serving uses in the redevelopment of its property and support the use of surplus Bellevue School District property as third places.
S-NP-14	Collaborate with Bellevue School District on the joint use of public property to address common community needs.
S-NP-15	Support multi-functional, programmable parks and other outdoor spaces for sports, cultural activities and recreation opportunities that meet the needs of the community.

## Discussion

Staff request guidance from the Arts Commission on the following:

- *Do draft Crossroads and Newport policies provide adequate direction to inform arts and culture investments to support the neighborhood area's vision statement?*

A formal recommendation is not needed from this discussion. Input from the Arts Commission will be considered and incorporated into final draft policies.

## Next Steps

Staff will consider and incorporate input from the Arts Commission as part of staff's recommendation on final draft policies that will be reviewed with the Planning Commission over the summer. The Planning Commission is anticipated to transmit a recommendation to Council on final draft policies later in the summer. Council is anticipated to review and take action on both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans in the fall.

## Attachments

- Attachment A: Neighborhood Areas Map (Map N-1 in the Comprehensive Plan)
- Attachment B: Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan: Proposed Policies
- Attachment C: Newport Neighborhood Area Plan: Proposed Policies

## Staff Contact

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