

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**

Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan Update

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**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL****INFORMATION  
ONLY**

Tonight, staff will share community outreach and input, and master plan alternatives. Staff seek Council's feedback prior to the development of final preferred park master plan alternatives.

**RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

**BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS****Bellevue Airfield Park Site**

In 2002, Council authorized the purchase of the properties now known as Bellevue Airfield Park (BAP). The City of Bellevue recognized that the BAP site likely represented the last opportunity to acquire a large, undeveloped, relatively flat parcel of property in Bellevue. The acquisition of the properties indicated the intent to develop an active recreation-focused community park in the future. The BAP is currently an undeveloped site comprised of three parcels totaling 27.5 acres. The site is accessed by vehicle from the south through a business office park.

The site is located just north of I-90 in the Eastgate neighborhood and is surrounded by residential neighbors to the north and west and office park to the east, south and west. Vehicular access is from the south on 160<sup>th</sup> through the office park, while pedestrian trail access is provided from the north and west residential neighborhoods. Significant to development considerations are the historical operations of the Bellevue Airfield (until 1983) and operation of a municipal landfill from 1951 to 1964. From a development perspective, the site is constrained with utility system easements (both abandoned and operational) such as a landfill gas migration system, ground water monitoring wells, storm water systems, and a major King County Metro sewer line among others.

**2012 Master Plan**

The original Master Planning process started in May 2008. The planning effort was led by Parks & Community Services staff. There was significant participation in this planning process from nearby residents and several interest groups. A majority of participants in the planning process advocated that most of the open area of the site be devoted to one of four elements: 1) an off-leash dog facility; 2) a little league field complex; 3) a regional aquatic facility; or 4) a passive-use meadow.

The Parks & Community Services Board recommended a preferred Master Plan for the Eastgate Area properties and the name Bellevue Airfield Park. The City Council concurred and adopted the Master Plan and park name in June 2012.

The current BAP Master Plan provides the community with two lighted synthetic turf sports fields, wooded picnic areas, trail connections, playgrounds, restrooms, and parking. It would maintain woodland buffers between the park and nearby residences. The Master Plan also includes the expansion of the off-leash dog area at Robinswood Park from approximately 1.75 acres to 5.75 acres. Robinswood is located west of the site about a 1/4 mile via a pedestrian path.

### **2022 Master Plan Update**

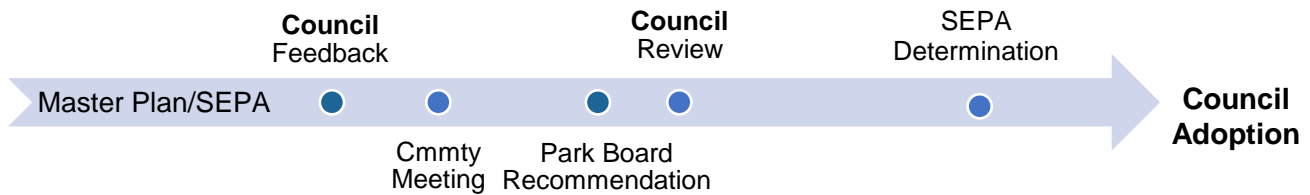
At the Council meeting on October 18, 2021, City Council directed Parks staff to prepare an update to the 2012 Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan to understand community preferences and inform impacts associated with locating a new aquatic center on-site. A master plan update for Airfield Park offers a rare opportunity to address the growing aquatic needs of Bellevue. The BAP site is the only undeveloped City-owned site large enough to accommodate the recommended aquatic facility concept (10-11 acres). The existing and only public aquatic center, the Bellevue Aquatic Center, is reaching the end of its useful life. Built in 1970, it has served Bellevue's residents over the last 50 years, from an approximate population of 61,000 to over 150,000 residents today. Bellevue Aquatic Center's age, capacity, and inability to provide a full range of aquatic programming make it inadequate to meet the current and future demand for swimming facilities in Bellevue. Additional elements favoring an aquatic facility at the BAP site are: easy access off I-90, existing shared parking agreements with owners of the surrounding office park, and the site size that could allow for park and aquatic facility complementary uses.

Community outreach began in June 2022 with a Parks & Community Services Board meeting, followed by a BAP site walk with interested neighbors. In July and September two community meetings were held, one virtual and the other in-person at South Bellevue Community Center. Using information obtained from the community meetings, correspondence, and survey responses, several Master Plan ideals have evolved. BAP should be, inclusive, safe, environmentally responsive, and active. The community has generally supported an aquatic facility on site. Most frequently cited comments have centered around the need for pickleball courts – our Bellevue picklers are organized and engaged, and we have received requests for 8 to 32 pickleball courts onsite. Not as numerous, however consistent comments cite concerns over loss of trees, habitat and open space, and potential impacts of increased traffic on nearby residents. A single preferred master plan alternative has yet to evolve with community feedback to-date being evenly split between three alternatives (attachment A).

At their meeting on October 11, 2022, the Parks & Community Services Board reviewed the Master Plan update process and community feedback to-date. The Board overwhelmingly supported an aquatic facility and the addition of pickleball ball courts.

### **Next Steps**

After receiving City Council feedback this evening and concluding public outreach, staff will return to the Parks & Community Services Board seeking a preferred master plan alternative recommendation, estimated in February 2023. Shortly after, staff will return to Council for review of the Board's recommended preferred master plan alternative. Environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) will conclude prior to any City Council action to adopt an updated Master Plan, estimated at end-of-year 2023.



## POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

### Policy Impact

#### Comprehensive Plan

- C-9 Use a range of public forums and opportunities including commissions, boards, and the community council to facilitate citizen engagement in the planning process.
- CF-2 Plan for the long-term renewal or replacement of ageing capital facilities as needed to maintain target service levels.
- PA-1 Establish a coordinated and connected system of open space and greenways throughout the City that provide multiple benefits including preserving natural systems, protecting wildlife habitat and corridors, and providing land for recreation.
- PA-16 Designate active and passive recreation uses and cultural use of parkland through the master plan approval process.

### Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with updating the Master Plan for Bellevue Airfield Park.

## OPTIONS

N/A

## ATTACHMENTS

- A. Master Plan Alternatives
- B. Vicinity Map
- C. CIP Project Description (P-AD-83)

## AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A