

*The below includes the “Goals and Policies” section of the Recommended Northwest Bellevue Neighborhood Area Plan. It includes a strikedraft with the proposed amendments from the November 22 City Council Study Session on the topic.*

Northwest Bellevue’s vision is built out by themes, each with opportunities and challenges around them. These inform both aspirational goals and associated policies and those focused on preserving the area’s strengths.

## SENSE OF PLACE

One of Northwest Bellevue’s strengths is the great variety of experiences already found within its boundaries. Each smaller portion of the neighborhood has its own unique characteristics to offer. These areas range in age, size, use, and style from small and residential in nature to larger multifamily or commercial areas. This variety creates opportunities for unique approaches to any challenges facing the area. Northwest Bellevue also borders Downtown Bellevue, providing residents of the area with easy access to employment, services, and experiences found Downtown.

These same strengths also present a challenge of maintaining this variety of experiences and separation from Downtown’s scale and growth. Residents appreciate the broad range of places to live, visit, and access services within and near Northwest Bellevue. There is a clear desire to maintain the neighborhood feel and diverse characters of each unique sub-neighborhood while also maintaining a clear separation from Downtown.

In particular, they are concerned about both the smaller spaces left between new homes and the loss of trees on these lots, losing the shade, privacy, and access to nature that they provide the neighbors and street.

### ***Sense of Place Goals and Policies***

#### **To maintain the existing variety of sub-neighborhoods within Northwest Bellevue.**

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|---------------|---|
| POLICY S-NW-1 | Protect and enhance the existing distinctions between land uses throughout the Neighborhood Area through the use of transition areas between higher-intensity use districts and lower-intensity use districts as well as encouraging design features such as landscape buffers. |
| POLICY S-NW-2 | Promote transition areas when areas adjacent to a lower-intensity land use district are rezoned, and encourage the integration of pedestrian traffic into the neighborhood structure.   |
| POLICY S-NW-3 | Preserve the existing sub-neighborhood characters by supporting efforts to renovate and maintain the existing housing stock.  |
| POLICY S-NW-4 | Integrate new development into its surrounding sub-neighborhood by orienting it in a similar fashion to existing development and transitioning in scale to adjacent land uses.  |

#### **To maintain and improve upon the experiential qualities found throughout the sub-neighborhoods of Northwest Bellevue.**

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|---------------|--|
| POLICY S-NW-5 | Encourage the undergrounding of utility distribution lines where feasible, particularly when new development occurs. |
| POLICY S-NW-6 | Encourage new development to maintain and enhance the neighborhood character of the individual sub-neighborhoods.    |

- POLICY S-NW-7 Explore opportunities for small-scale commercial uses at key locations to improve access to goods and services throughout Northwest Bellevue.

**To maintain a clear separation between Downtown Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue.**

- POLICY S-NW-8 Maintain a clear distinction between the scale of Downtown Bellevue and that of Northwest Bellevue.
- POLICY S-NW-9 Create a separation between the low-intensity uses within Northwest Bellevue and Downtown Bellevue, utilizing buffers such as McCormick Park and/or gradients of building scale within Northwest Bellevue to ease that transition where appropriate.
- POLICY S-NW-10 Direct vehicles moving between Downtown Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue to the minor and major arterial network rather than residential streets.

**To encourage a seamless transition between Northwest Bellevue and its neighboring jurisdictions.**

- POLICY S-NW-11 Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to promote a consistent experience when crossing jurisdictional boundaries.

## SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Northwest Bellevue’s variety of housing types and styles allows for a mix of unit sizes and designs, which can be welcoming to those of many different ages and cultures. Residents hope to enhance this with additional ways to welcome diversity into the neighborhood. The neighborhood provides a good set of opportunities to meet and gather within scattered parks and commercial uses in the Neighborhood Area. They want to maintain these and create others to help improve the sense of community within Northwest Bellevue.

Residents often feel that they do not know one another. They desire ways to learn about their neighbors, particularly those with different backgrounds from their own. While the current variety of options appeals to a diversity of residents, not everyone currently feels welcomed to the area, particularly if they come from a background or culture uncommon in the area. Finding ways to bring people together and make everyone feel welcome are important challenges to address in the area.

Northwest Bellevue also has a large percentage of seniors living in the area, many of whom worry about their ability to stay as they age. They find that both physical and economic challenges make it difficult for them to find a place to live and safely get around as they get older. Addressing these needs is a key challenge for the neighborhood.

Northwest Bellevue residents value living in a safe and inclusive community. They value having safety in their homes, on their streets, and in places where people shop, work, and gather. Northwest Bellevue residents value having a clean and healthy environment.

### ***Sense of Community Goals and Policies***

**To provide opportunities for residents to gather both formally and informally with both old and new friends and neighbors.**

- POLICY S-NW-12 Support efforts to create gathering opportunities, bringing together residents from different sub-neighborhoods, cultures, ages, or backgrounds.
- POLICY S-NW-13 Encourage efforts to bring neighbors together to help one another, either with ongoing or time-specific challenges, to enhance community resilience and cohesion.

- POLICY S-NW-14 Support the continued use of existing facilities and the introduction of new businesses and facilities that provide gathering opportunities for community-oriented programs and services.
- POLICY S-NW-15 Improve public access to outdoor covered areas for residents to gather informally throughout the year.
- POLICY S-NW-16 Introduce and retain existing recreational opportunities in public spaces, such as pickle-ball courts or outdoor games.

**To foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging for a diversity of residents.**

- POLICY S-NW-17 Support efforts to welcome new residents to the neighborhood.
- POLICY S-NW-18 Include features and activities for children of all ages within Northwest Bellevue’s events and spaces when possible.
- POLICY S-NW-19 Seek opportunities to enhance the usability and accessibility of new development, parks and public spaces throughout the neighborhood for users with disabilities.
- POLICY S-NW-20 Provide seating opportunities where possible at scattered locations throughout Northwest Bellevue to allow residents opportunities to rest.

NEW POLICY: Create a safe community, including safe places to gather, walk, and play.

**To support seniors staying in the neighborhood as they age.**

- POLICY S-NW-21 Support the creation of a physical, economic, and social variety of living space types for seniors to remain in the neighborhood.
- POLICY S-NW-22 Encourage co-habitation and multi-generational living opportunities for seniors.
- POLICY S-NW-23 Encourage housing for the elderly in areas designated for multifamily development.

NEW POLICY: Build awareness of programs that support and enable older adults to stay in their home as they age.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Many neighborhoods within Bellevue are facing difficulties associated with rising housing prices. Northwest Bellevue has a clear strength for combatting these issues in its existing variety of land uses. This allows for a varied approach to housing options, harnessing the many types that already exist to provide a variety of housing choices. There are opportunities to build upon this diversity to address the continued affordability challenges brought up by residents. In particular, there are a variety of lower density neighborhoods within walking distance of Downtown that are seeing increased land value and costs due to that proximity. There is a tension between residents wanting to maintain the existing neighborhood scale, those building larger homes in these areas, and residents wanting to provide greater density of housing in these areas to help address rising housing costs.

While there are a variety of options throughout the neighborhood, most of them are high in cost and therefore can be exclusive in nature. Residents have expressed a desire to be welcoming to those of different cultural and economic backgrounds, but the existing housing stock often does not support this desire. Similarly, these options frequently do not address the unique requirements for seniors with both mobility and economic constraints, many of whom have lived in the area most of their lives. Addressing the needs of this desired diversity of residents is a major challenge facing Northwest Bellevue.

### ***Housing Affordability Goals and Policies***

**To create a diverse supply of housing typologies through the use of existing single- and multi-family densities and the encouragement of housing between these two scales.**

- POLICY S-NW-24 Encourage a mix of housing typologies, within both lower and higher intensity districts, to allow for a range of affordability options with a variety of sizes of housing units, ease of movement for the physically disabled, and visual styles.
- POLICY S-NW-25 ~~Explore introducing detached accessory dwelling units as a permitted use within single-family areas.~~
- POLICY S-NW-26 Explore regulations to minimize the impact from any new accessory dwelling units to the existing residential character of the street.

### **MOBILITY AND ACCESS**

With its proximity to both Downtown Bellevue and highway access to both I-405 and SR 520, Northwest Bellevue has a multitude of jobs, activities, services, and more within easy access. There is a network of arterials connecting the residential streets to this larger system. Transportation improvements are focused on these important arterial corridors.

This great vehicular access can also create a challenge to Northwest Bellevue. Nearby highways and major arterials like Bellevue Way can create barriers to local mobility across multiple modes of transportation. In addition, the residential streets tend not to be interconnected in the area, enhancing reliance on Bellevue Way NE, 100th Ave NE, NE 24th Street, and NE 8th Street to get through the neighborhood. Residential streets that do connect through longer portions of the neighborhood can attract cut-through traffic. Drivers who exceed posted speed limits on residential streets and along the arterials dissuade many residents from walking, biking, and taking transit, particularly with many gaps in the sidewalks and bikeways.

Residents have prioritized these alternate modes of transportation, seeking improvements particularly for pedestrian safety and opportunity. Whether they want to get out for some exercise, enjoy the greenery and fresh air, or get to a destination with Downtown or another commercial use that is walkable for many, Northwest Bellevue residents want to invest in improving the experience for those walking in the neighborhood.

~~With many arterials that break up the neighborhoods and many neighborhoods that lack sidewalks, residents worry about pedestrian safety. They tend to desire prioritization of pedestrian improvements over vehicular, transit, or bicycle improvements as a way to enhance neighborhood safety and experience.~~

### ***Mobility and Access Goals and Policies***

**To improve pedestrian safety and encourage walking in the area, particularly to or from residential areas.**

POLICY S-NW-32 moved to this location: Address vehicle speeds and safety concerns along arterials, particularly along both Bellevue Way NE and NE 24th St near the intersection of the two.

POLICY S-NW-31 moved to this location: Utilize traffic calming measures to discourage people from driving faster than the speed limit within residential neighborhoods.

NEW POLICY: Increase designated pedestrian areas and sidewalks within Northwest Bellevue, prioritizing the safety of pedestrians in determining locations of new walking paths.

- POLICY S-NW-27 Encourage pedestrians to cross arterial streets within designated crosswalks or intersections.
- POLICY S-NW-28 Explore opportunities to install new safe crossing locations where gaps are present, particularly along Bellevue Way NE near Northtowne Shopping Center.
- POLICY S-NW-29 Improve visibility of pedestrian areas when sidewalks are not present.
- POLICY S-NW-30 Maintain a pedestrian path clear of obstacles where feasible when sidewalks are present.
- POLICY S-NW-31 [\(Policy moved to start of section\)](#)
- POLICY S-NW-32 [\(Policy moved to start of section\)](#)

**To encourage multiple methods of access through and within Northwest Bellevue.**

- POLICY S-NW-33 Prioritize completing gaps ~~between existing sidewalks or bikeways in pedestrian and bicycle networks~~ to provide continuity within the pedestrian and bicycle networks.
- POLICY S-NW-34 Explore ways to support increased public transportation and ride-sharing use in Northwest Bellevue.
- POLICY S-NW-35 Explore ways to improve and maintain bicycle access to Eastrail at 108th Ave NE.

**To maintain efficient and safe vehicular movement within Northwest Bellevue.**

- POLICY S-NW-36 Maintain a clear distinction between arterials and neighborhood streets, discouraging commuter through-traffic from using residential streets to get to their destination.
- POLICY S-NW-37 Minimize new vehicular access points to major arterials to facilitate efficient traffic movement.
- POLICY S-NW-38 Explore transportation improvements on streets that lead to/ from and intersect with SR-520 that reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety.

**To protect and enhance easy access to goods, services, and gathering places within Northwest Bellevue.**

- POLICY S-NW-39 Prioritize transportation enhancements that improve safety and access between residential areas and popular destinations, particularly schools, parks and transit stops.
- POLICY S-NW-40 Create direct pedestrian connections between parks and nearby residential areas.

## ENVIRONMENT

Northwest Bellevue has a variety of parks scattered throughout the neighborhood, providing a variety of recreational options with relatively good access from its residential areas. Many of these parks are large and centrally located, but some areas, particularly at the north and west edges of the neighborhood, do not have a park within easy walking distance. Providing park access for these households provides a challenge that should be addressed over time.

In addition to formal parks and open spaces, Northwest Bellevue residents desire access to greenery. The neighborhood has seen an exceedingly large proportion of recent redevelopment. This activity has removed large swaths of trees in many cases and, when considered over time, has caused tree canopy protection to be the issue that invokes the most passion in Northwest Bellevue residents. They want

immediate and continued action to protect and rebuild their tree canopy over time. In particular, they hope that the impact on Northwest Bellevue's tree canopy will be a consideration for any future development regulations that might affect the neighborhood.

Northwest Bellevue also borders Meydenbauer Bay, providing the public with access to the water along Meydenbauer Bay Park. This also enhances the importance of controlling runoff and reducing water pollution throughout the area.

### ***Environment Goals and Policies***

#### **To provide continued access to trees and green spaces throughout Northwest Bellevue.**

- POLICY S-NW-41 Pursue opportunities for increasing tree canopy through planting of new trees on public and private property throughout Northwest Bellevue.
- POLICY S-NW-42 Encourage Northwest Bellevue engagement and support in Citywide efforts to introduce or amend requirements for the preservation and enhancement of the City's tree canopy.
- POLICY S-NW-43 Support efforts to protect Northwest Bellevue's tree canopy, preserve its trees, and enhance the health of trees on both public and private property.
- POLICY S-NW-44 Explore the potential for small, scattered parks throughout the neighborhood, monitoring opportunities for small public purchases for this purpose.
- POLICY S-NW-45 Pursue opportunities for the public's active use of green spaces, such as through pea patches, organized self-guided activities or interactive educational opportunities.
- POLICY S-NW-46 Provide multiple points for pedestrian access to public trails and parks like Eastrail and Meydenbauer Bay Park where appropriate.

#### **To provide education around natural resources within the community.**

- POLICY S-NW-47 Encourage education opportunities for residents to learn about native plants, tree care, and other relevant environmental topics.
- POLICY S-NW-48 Support community and/or school district partnerships to create environmental and sustainability education opportunities in Northwest Bellevue.

#### **To protect the health of Bellevue's streams, lakes, and other water bodies, such as Lake Washington.**

- POLICY S-NW-49 Encourage natural stormwater best management practices and the reduction of water pollution.
- POLICY S-NW-50 Encourage low-impact development and the use of pervious surfaces in new public and private developments.