

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: February 13, 2024

TO: Parks & Community Services Board

FROM: Kate Nesse, PhD, Senior Planner
Community Development
Ryan Walker, Senior Planner
Parks & Community Services

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update 2024 - Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element
Board review and action requested – policy recommendation to Planning Commission

Action Requested

The Parks & Community Services Board is asked to make a recommendation forward to Planning Commission related to policies presented.

Sample Motion: Move that the Parks & Community Services Board recommend the amendments to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element policies, as presented in the attachment to the memo, to the Planning Commission as part of the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Project Executive Summary

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan provides the roadmap for growth in the City. Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) directs counties and cities to periodically update their Comprehensive Plans. Updates to the policies in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element are focused on meeting the needs of a growing, diverse population, ensuring the City has the flexibility and resources to respond to future needs, and supporting a functioning ecosystem.

Council Direction

On February 28, 2022 the City Council directed the Planning Commission to manage the Comprehensive Planning Periodic Update. They directed the other boards and commissions to contribute to the update in relation to the Elements and to provide policy recommendations within their respective areas of expertise.

Context of the Project

The state Growth Management Act (GMA) directs cities and counties to update their comprehensive plans every 10 years (RCW 36.70A). The current update must be adopted by December 2024. Within

the state of Washington, the GMA framework outlined in RCW 36.70 and 36.70a ensures consistency and coordination between jurisdictions. Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan is guided by policies in King County’s Countywide Planning Policies and Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC’s) Vision 2050 and Multicounty Planning Policies. The Parks & Community Services Board is directed by City code to participate in this process by, “preparing, reviewing and recommending comprehensive plan updates” in cooperation with the Planning Commission (Bellevue Code 3.62.070.B).

The Parks & Community Services Board was introduced to the overall scope of the update at the meeting on April 20, 2022. At the meeting on November 8, 2022, the Parks & Community Services Board reviewed and provided comments on the policy scope of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element. On January 9, 2024 the Board reviewed staff recommended updates and recommended some areas for changes. In addition, the Board asked to be updated on the community feedback regarding policies in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element at the following meeting. At this meeting, the Board will review the changes made based on their direction.

The proposed policies were released for public review in mid-January online at [EngagingBellevue.com](https://engagingbellevue.com). The public can provide feedback by responding to online questionnaires through February 16. A Policy Open House was held on January 20 giving the public an opportunity to talk with staff about policy updates, ask questions, and to provide feedback on the policy moves. The public is also invited to Board and Commission meetings to provide input through oral testimony. A list of upcoming and past meetings is published on the [project webpage](#). A summary of feedback thus far will be provided at this meeting. If staff recommend any changes due to feedback from the community, those will be identified at this meeting. Staff may make recommendations to Planning Commission once feedback is complete.

Policy Review Summary

At the January 9 meeting, the Board recommended several changes. Below is a summary of the recommendation and how staff addressed it. Renumbering of the policies will follow in the complete draft for Planning Commission.

1. Emphasize density as one driver of urban parks and open space acquisition in PA-2.
 - Staff recommend the following change.

PA-2. Obtain land throughout the community to meet present and future parks and open space needs, <u>with emphasis on providing park land concurrent with growth of urban neighborhoods, in alignment with the Parks and Open Space System Plan.</u>	PA-2. Obtain land throughout the community to meet present and future parks and open space needs, with emphasis on providing park land concurrent with growth <u>and density</u> of urban neighborhoods, in alignment with the Parks and Open Space System Plan.
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2. Include the development of existing waterfront property, not just newly acquired property in PA-8.
- Staff do not recommend changing this policy. The policy supports development of both newly acquired property and existing City-owned property, as written. For instance, this policy has supported the development of Meydenbauer Bay Park partially through developing property owned by the City as well as through the acquisition of neighboring property. It also continues to support the future development of public access to Lake Sammamish.

PA-8. Acquire and develop waterfront property to increase public access to Bellevue’s lakes.	No change recommended.
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3. Combine PA-16 & PA-13, but don't lose the concept of linking public and private recreation & facilities more generally.
- Staff recommend combining the policies in the following way:

PA-13. Encourage privately funded recreational and managed facilities that serve or <u>supplement recreation</u> and cultural facilities <u>needs</u> throughout the city, especially in major employment centers.	PA-X. Encourage a network throughout the city of privately funded and managed facilities that serve recreation and cultural needs and may supplement or link with facilities and programs in the public system.
PA-16. Encourage the linkage and access of private facilities with those in the public system.	

4. Use the word "safe" when referring to bicycle and pedestrian facilities (as in PA-5) if there are no unforeseen implications in doing so.
- PA-42 specifically addresses improving safety in City park facilities, however safety is also important in the linkages between facilities and other origins and destinations.
 - There is one reference to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Staff recommend adding the word “safe” after the word “Develop”.

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PA-14. Develop pedestrian and bicycle linkages between neighborhoods and major natural areas, recreation facilities, schools and commercial centers.

PA-14. Develop safe pedestrian and bicycle linkages between neighborhoods and major natural areas, recreation facilities, schools and commercial centers.

5. Clarify PA-22 so it is consistent with the department planning documents, including the Parks & Community Services Strategic Plan, Recreation Program Plan, and Parks and Open Space System Plan.

- Staff recommend no further changes to PA-22. The Strategic Plan highlights that Bellevue's park system must serve all sectors of the population equitably. This policy provides broad support for pursuing this and allowing for change as community recreation priorities evolve. Policies in the Recreation Program Plan provide more detail. The Strategic Plan places special emphasis on meeting the needs of youth, older adults, persons with disabilities, and those with limited opportunities for recreation. Other planning documents emphasize these groups and this Comprehensive Plan policy is consistent in highlighting the groups mentioned.

PA-22. Provide a variety of services and programs accessible to all throughout the city with special emphasis on ~~serving those with limited opportunities~~ underserved groups including low-income households, youth, individuals with disabilities and older adults.

No further changes recommended.

6. In PA-24, do not remove "resources" from the policy.

- Staff recommend the following change.

PA-24. Offer programs that ~~utilize~~ are tailored to the unique ~~resources~~ land and ~~variety of indoor and outdoor~~ facilities within the ~~park~~ city's parks and open space system.

PA-24. Offer programs that are tailored to the unique resources, land and facilities within the city's parks and open space system.

7. Ensure that PA-25 addresses local history.

- Staff recommend the following change.

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PA-25. Use parks to celebrate, ~~promote~~ and preserve ~~Bellevue's~~ the full history, cultural arts and local heritage when consistent with the park's of the region through park design ~~and~~, signage, programming, and cultural landscape conservation.

PA-25. Use parks to celebrate and preserve the full local history, ~~of the region~~ through park design, signage, programming, and cultural landscape conservation.

8. Meeting the needs of a diverse population is important. Streamline language and make sure that PA-32 retains reference to culturally-specific needs as well as intercultural needs.
- Staff recommend the following change.

PA-32. ~~Monitor~~ Based upon data trends and inclusive outreach, monitor and respond to the community's evolving recreation and community service needs to ensure a ~~diverse~~ mix of relevant and effective facilities and programs that are culturally specific and meet the needs of a diverse population.

PA-32. Based upon data trends and inclusive outreach, monitor and respond to the community's evolving recreation and community service needs to ensure a mix of relevant and effective facilities that meet the needs of a diverse population, and including programs that are culturally specific or promote intercultural exchange.

9. Clarify the reference to green certification or performance standards in PA-43.
- Staff recommend the following change. In addition, green building certification has been added to the glossary.

PA-43. When feasible, install, renovate, or replace facilities using materials, construction, and operation methods that meet or exceed green certification or performance standards and are known to be weather-resistant and longer lasting.

PA-43. When feasible, install, renovate, or replace facilities using materials, construction, and operation methods that meet or exceed green building certification or other performance standards and are known to be weather-resistant and longer lasting.

10. PA-46 Concern that "non-park" is too limiting. Consensus that it should be clarified.
- Staff recommend the following change.

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PA-46. ~~Require a public review process for the conversion to~~ Eliminate and prevent non-recreational use of park uses of lands and facilities.

PA-46. Eliminate and prevent ~~non-recreational use of park~~ uses of park lands and facilities that impact or are not in alignment with the intended use or plan for them.

Next Steps

The state requires the updated Comprehensive Plan be adopted no later than December 2024. For Bellevue, the staff-recommended timeline takes the more conservative approach of planning for Council to adopt the Plan in September 2024. This way the City will have time to address any unforeseen circumstances prior to the deadline.

The Board is asked to take action to recommend the policies in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will review the recommendation and the element in the context of the entire plan and make a recommendation to City Council regarding the adoption of the entire plan following a public hearing.

Additional information on the Comprehensive Plan and update process can be found at <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/community-development/planning-initiatives/comprehensive-plan>. If you have any questions prior to the meeting, please contact Ryan Walker at (425) 452-4280 or rwalker@bellevuewa.gov.

Attachments

- A. Recommended Policy Changes for the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element (will print copies for use during 2/13/24 review)
- B. Glossary