

## **CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

### **SUBJECT**

2016 Parks & Open Space System Plan Draft

### **STAFF CONTACTS**

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*Parks & Community Services*

### **POLICY ISSUES**

Comprehensive Plan:

The Parks & Open Space System Plan is a functional plan of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan. The projects recommended within the plan support goals and policies found within multiple Comprehensive Plan Elements including Parks, Open Space and Recreation, Environment, Utilities, Human Services, Economic Development, other General Elements, as well as the Subarea Plans, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan.

A regularly updated Plan is a required standard for the Department's accreditation, and is necessary to obtain grant support for park acquisition and development projects. The Plan was last updated in 2010.

On November 10, 2015, the Parks & Community Services Board voted unanimously to recommend to the City Council approval of the 2016 update of the Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan.

### **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

☐ Action  
☒ Discussion  
☐ Information

Following a presentation of the public participation process and the content of the draft plan, staff requests Council feedback. Staff will incorporate any modifications and return with a resolution adopting the 2016 Parks & Open Space System Plan for your consideration at a future meeting.

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

The Parks & Open Space System Plan is the primary tool used to guide the long-term growth and development of Bellevue's parks and open space system. The heart of the plan is a set of 20-year capital project objectives (Attachments A and B). These long-term objectives are reviewed and updated approximately every six years. A summary of the additions and modifications to the project objectives is provided in Attachment C. Funding to implement the long-term recommendations within the plan is determined through the Capital Investment Program budgeting process.

The Parks & Open Space Plan identifies seven major focus areas where Parks & Community Services proposes to focus attention in order to meet the park, open space and recreation needs of

the community. These Focus Areas have generally remained consistent since the 1987 edition of the Plan, although over time they have been re-structured and modified to meet contemporary needs.

- **Open Space, Greenways, Wildlife Corridors & Trails:** Acquiring and protecting open space to establish a network of greenways throughout the community. These greenways function to meet passive and active recreation needs of the community, protect wildlife and critical habitat areas, and provide linkages between parks and commercial or residential neighborhoods.
- **Park Facilities:** Providing walkable access to neighborhood and community parks through acquisition, development, or redevelopment.
- **Active Recreation Facilities:** Siting geographically distributed community centers and active recreation facilities to provide needed indoor and outdoor recreation spaces and activities of interest to a wide spectrum of diverse users.
- **Urban Park Systems:** Addressing the unique challenges of designing and providing parks, open space, trails and active recreation facilities serving the urban densities of Downtown Bellevue, BelRed and the Eastgate I-90 Corridor.
- **Waterfront Access:** Acquiring and developing additional publicly-owned waterfront property to meet community demand.
- **Partnership Opportunities:** Working with community partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors to provide recreation and community service needs for Bellevue residents. Additionally, connecting Bellevue residents to the abundant regional park and recreation facilities surrounding the city.
- **Historic, Cultural, and Art Resources:** Protecting and interpreting Bellevue's cultural history as well as providing space and an outlet for artistic expression.

Updating the Plan's capital project recommendations involves analysis of five key elements. Each of these elements are described in more detail in the draft plan and will be highlighted during the presentation. They include:

- Public input and feedback on current use of the park system and future priorities;
- A review of the current community profile and future demographic trends;
- The level of service provided by the current network of neighborhood parks and trails;
- Progress made completing capital projects since the last update; and
- A review of recent adopted citywide long-range plans and policy documents that impact park and open space priorities.

From June to November 2015, many avenues were used to collect feedback and opinions from Bellevue residents and park users on how the park and trail systems are currently used and what priorities should be given in the future for development. These outreach methods included:

- A statistically valid representative sample survey of Bellevue residents with responses received from almost 575 households;
- An open web-survey completed by just over 575 park users;
- Twelve presentations to City boards and commissions, parks user groups and interested organizations;
- A public hearing hosted by the Parks & Community Services Board in September 2015 attended by 24 individuals and resulting in 8 in-person comments and 10 additional written comments;
- A posting to NextDoor, a neighborhood-oriented email discussion forum with 13,000 registered users across the city, resulting in 11 comments from residents;

- The City's Neighborhood Leadership Gathering, held in September 2015 and attended by 84 neighborhood leaders; and
- Project updates and comment opportunities provided by the Parks & Community Services events and the monthly e-newsletter (36,000 subscribers), the Neighborhood Outreach Office's Neighborhood News (1,650 subscribers), the City's presence on social media web sites and the Bellevue Reporter newspaper.

In very general terms, park users report a high level of satisfaction with the park and trail systems as a whole. There is an even balance between people's preferences for continuing to acquire park and open space land and developing existing park properties. Trails, parks or plazas with open areas for unstructured recreation and beach parks are the most frequently used types of facilities and these same categories were in the top tier of project types given a high priority for future development.

The Parks & Community Services Board focused attention on the update process during four meetings between June and November 2015. At their meeting on November 10, 2015 the Board voted unanimously to recommend to Council approval of the 2016 update of the Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plan.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Capital Project Objectives Map
- B. Capital Project Objectives List
- C. Summary of Substantive Additions and Edits to Capital Project Objectives

#### **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

Draft 2016 Parks & Open Space System Plan

Online: [www.bellevuewa.gov/park\\_plan\\_update.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/park_plan_update.htm)