



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2018

TO: Mayor Chelminiak and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mike McCormick Huentelman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, 452-4089
Department of Planning and Community Development

SUBJECT: **Bellevue Neighborhoods Conference Update**
This is for information only, no action is required

Background: The Bellevue Neighborhoods Conference was introduced in 2016 and scheduled as a bi-annual event in the Spring. The 2016 conference was neighborhood focused, with themes of building community, diversity, neighborhood safety and navigating City programs (such as the City website, Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP), Neighbor Link, Public Process 101, and Emergency Preparedness).

The 2018 Conference strived to attract a younger, more diverse audience, and did extensive outreach outside our usual outlets. The overarching theme of the conference was Innovation – Inspiration – Connection with 16 workshops offered in four focus areas:

- Our Stories Our Community
- On the Move – Innovations in Transportation
- Looking Forward – Urban Growth
- Rooted at Home – Environment & Conservation

The conference incorporated partnership opportunities with both business and non-profit communities, including Bellevue College, Microsoft, Global Innovation Exchange (GIX), REI, Inc., Plug in America, NW Solar, Bellevue Urban Gardens and Imagine Housing. These partnerships enhanced what we offered to residents.

Highlighting the partnership with REI, Inc. was keynote speaker, Marc Berejka, Director of Government Affairs who spoke about the relocation of REI headquarters to Bellevue, and REI's commitment to community and the outdoor environment.

Display tables in the concourse during lunch offered additional resources and take-home information to residents.

Conference Goals:

- **Promote education, leadership development and civic engagement**
The Neighborhoods Conference provides another building block to the educational program components that Neighborhood Services offers, which now include Neighborhood Leadership Gatherings, Neighborhood Forums, Cultural Conversations,

Bellevue Essentials and Conflict Resolution Center trainings. The variety of workshops offered at the conference is a One City effort that invites multiple departments to showcase their work.

- **Help residents gain insight on key City issues**

The conference allowed time and space to dive deep into topics of interest. Residents could take home concrete ideas to personally make a difference. Residents become ambassadors in their neighborhoods and community for spreading the word about Bellevue's approach to growth and civic engagement.

- **Build and strengthen relationships with residents**

The variety of themes at the conference gives staff from multiple departments the opportunity to interact with residents in a learning environment. These interactions help build strong, ongoing staff-resident relationships as well as trust in local government.

- **Reinforce Environmental Awareness**

In support of Earth Day and environmental sustainability, this was a no waste event.

Workshop Highlights:

- **Finding the Heart and Soul of Our Community**

An exercise in learning what gives our neighborhoods their life and personality! Included an exploration of cultural resources in Bellevue.

- **Eyes on Traffic**

A tour of the traffic center gave real life experience to how engineers control 200 traffic signals and 80 cameras, using cutting edge technology.

- **Smarter Home – Smarter City**

Residents walked away knowing how to use technology to put more power at their fingertips with Smart water meters and other new technologies for the home.

- **Next Generation Visualization (Grand Connection), Eastside Rail Corridor Transformation**

Residents showed great interest in the future vision of these two exciting projects. They experienced the Grand Connection through virtual reality and learned how walking and biking access will be transformed by the Eastside Rail Corridor.

- **Exploring the Workforce of Tomorrow**

Key leaders from GIX, Bellevue College and Microsoft examined the intersection between education, technology and the workforce.

- **Test Drive and Learn**

The mystery of electric vehicles was uncovered with live test rides by local dealers and a learning session on the benefits of EV ownership.

The Neighborhoods Conference provided an opportunity to highlight many facets of the City and to move forward with cutting edge technology and a spirit of innovation. Top interest from residents was in affordable housing, how the City will manage traffic, improve connectivity and care for the environment.

Testimonials from 2018 Attendees:

“Thank you all for an amazing experience you offered to the conference attendees. We had fun, our visions were enlarged and we're now totally fired up to contribute to the future of Bellevue. Kudos, kudos, kudos to you all! You're truly setting the City on a very admirable cutting-edge approach to neighborhood vitality.”

“I enjoyed Marc Berejka's keynote speech a lot. REI seems like a very enlightened organization, and how wonderful that Bellevue will benefit from their positive energy as they move their headquarters there.”

“All the sessions that I went to were interesting, informative, and focused on very relevant important topics for neighborhoods and the bigger community too. Kudos to you all!”

“I’m glad the City does this. It’s good to know how thoughtfully our City is considering its future.”

“I was very impressed by the professionalism, friendliness, and intelligence of the City staff. I’m really proud of my City.”