

DATE: June 4, 2018

TO: Mayor Chelminiak and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mac Cummins, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development
Planning and Community Development

SUBJECT: Planning and Community Development Name Changes and Creation of Divisions

Staff is excited to communicate with the City Council about its plans to change the structure and name of the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Department will be renamed the “Community Development Department”. Additionally, the Department will be restructured into three separate and equal “Divisions,” to focus on the key aspects of building excellent communities. The names of these three Divisions will be “Planning”, “Neighborhood Resources”, and “Cultural and Economic Vitality Office”. Staff is also rebranding the “mediation” program as the “Conflict Resolution Center”. Staff believes these naming conventions represent the most current trends and industry standards in municipal government.

The current name, “Planning and Community Development”, insinuates that the Department is two portions, rather than one. The name also does not represent the role that people play in the community. The City desires to create excellent physical spaces, a robust economy, and great neighborhoods with people that love and enjoy living in their community. Staff believes that the proposed name change to the “Community Development Department” will better articulate this focus, and will project that the City views the community through the lens of building a community, rather than just planning a community.

Building a community includes significant two-way communication between residents, businesses, and government. The name is a national standard for a Department that includes the services we provide, from traditional planning services to arts programs, environmental stewardship, affordable housing, economic development, cultural conversations, Bellevue Essentials, neighborhood enhancement program, etc. Using the name Community Development as the standard for the Department will help project that there are multiple facets to community building.

The creation of a Neighborhood Services Division will play an important role for the Department, specifically focusing on the people of Bellevue; their needs, and how those things interact with the physical and economic planning for the City. Though the staffing and the programs will not change, the creation of a Division within the Department to

help influence and think about building community will be impactful in the recommendations brought to the policy makers for the City.

The Economic Development Division will now include the arts program manager, and will be rebranded the Cultural and Economic Vitality Office. The terminology Economic Vitality, and the links with the City's creative economy, project the future of economic development, as a changing field from traditional job creation/growth, into a more robust interaction between economic forces and placemaking/physical spaces. The future of labor attraction and retention will be based on the amenities a community provides, rather than on the ability to deliver office space by a particular date. Economic Vitality is a naming convention that is being used nationally to replace Economic Development in municipal government service programs.

The Planning Division will remain with the same name, and will still comprise the Comprehensive Planning and Strategic Planning work groups.

Staff looks forward to discussing these name convention changes with the public, business community, Chamber of Commerce, Visit Bellevue and others. Staff will return at a future meeting to amend Chapter 3.45 of the Bellevue City Code to reflect the Department and division name changes. Also, the land use code will require amending to reflect the name change; as the land use code identifies the "Director of Planning and Community Development" or the "Department of Planning and Community Development" in multiple places. Council will be asked to make the changes to the Land Use Code as part of a routine code update process later in the year.