



# MEMORANDUM

Date: May 8, 2018

To: Mayor Chelminiak and City Councilmembers

From: Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board

Subject: Proposed 2019-2025 Parks Capital Investment Program

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Parks 2019-2025 Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan. We hope that these comments will be helpful to you as Council prioritizes the City's capital investment needs for the next seven years.

The Board reviewed the new Bellevue City Council 3-Year Priorities (2018-2020) in May, and noted the many priorities that related to parks and community services, several of which are referenced in our recommendations below. Of particular note, we strongly support the effort to update the *Parks and Open Space System Plan*, including an analysis of the level of service for a growing population and creation of a financial strategy for these services (**Council Priority #12**). We encourage Council to develop a balanced and sustainable approach for advancing the City's long-term goals and maintaining the vision of a "City in a Park." The Parks & Community Services Board looks forward to working with and directly supporting City Council on this important issue over the next several years.

The Parks & Community Services Board reviewed the budget process and provided direction on Parks CIP proposals at our meetings in March and April. Overall, the Board considered a variety of factors in developing this recommendation, including balance, geographic distribution, economic development, multiple benefits, innovative funding, levy commitments, and the need to maintain existing infrastructure. Board priorities included:

- Continue the commitment to the voters from the 2008 levy, utilizing additional levy funds to develop Airfield Park as the next major Parks levy project;
- Completing construction of Phase I Meydenbauer Bay Park by 2018 and the Downtown Park Gateway by the end of 2019 (**Council Priority #8**);
- Maintain existing capital infrastructure, including both the Parks Renovation and Enterprise Facility improvement programs;
- Continue to invest in ongoing Property Acquisition;
- Continue to invest in the ongoing planning of Bellevue's park and open space system, including updating the 2009 Aquatics Center Feasibility Study (**Council Priority #13**); and
- Create a new Bel-Red Parks & Streams project using revenues collected from the amenity incentive system in the Bel-Red subarea (**Council Priority #5**).

While the above list can be accomplished with the additional Parks Levy and Real Estate Excise Tax revenue forecasted to be available in the updated plan, we do not believe that current Parks CIP funding sources are adequate to meet the needs of a growing and changing community. The

Parks Levy program was not intended to represent all the capital needs of the community for a 20-year period (through 2028), and the Board supports three additional budget proposals as described below:

- Meydenbauer Phase II Design and Development (\$18.5M). Following completion of Meydenbauer Phase I in 2018, this project would fund design and permitting (\$3.5M) of Phase II by creatively dedicating Marina and property rental user fees to this effort. Development of Meydenbauer Phase II (\$15M) builds upon the momentum and has multiple City benefits including a signature piece of Grand Connection vision (**Council Priority #15**)
- Tyler Park Development (\$3.0M). Design and construct a neighborhood park in Newport Hills on the Tyler/Patterson properties first acquired by the City in 2010.
- Bridle Trails/140<sup>th</sup> Street Park Development (\$2.6M). Design and construct a neighborhood park on the Ginzburg property acquired by the City in 2014.

Like the previous budget cycle, the Park Board continues to support funding for proposed neighborhood parks in Newport Hills and Bridle Trails. We believe that additional neighborhood investment is an ongoing need, and is aligned with the budget outcome of Quality Neighborhoods and Council's priority for a high-quality built and natural environment. Both of these areas were specifically identified for additional neighborhood park development in the adopted 2010 and 2016 *Bellevue Parks & Open Space System Plans*, and both neighborhoods have existing undeveloped park property suitable for development. In the community survey that accompanied the plan, Bellevue residents included neighborhood parks in the top tier of park facilities that should be prioritized for additional development, and this statistical data has been corroborated by supportive citizen comments from both neighborhoods.

In addition to completing the levy commitments and funding the larger Meydenbauer Bay Master Plan, additional funds will be needed to create parks in the Bel-Red area, provide additional green space in downtown Bellevue, the Grand Connection, and to create additional opportunities for the aquatics community. While updating the aquatics feasibility study is an important next step, the scale and scope of this facility will likely need creative funding solutions, including public-private partnerships, alternative funding sources, and operating subsidies to ensure public access.

As a City that takes great pride in its parks and natural areas, we acknowledge that these investments contribute to the quality of life in Bellevue, creating a special place that families and business seek to locate and flourish. Research consistently shows that urban parks and recreation systems have positive economic impacts beyond a place to recreate and socialize with friends and family. Research shows that high quality, well-maintained parks contribute positively to the overall economic development of the City, including raising property tax values, attracting tourists, and protecting water and air quality.

Once again, we appreciate the ability to provide early comments on the 2019-2025 Parks CIP Plan, and look forward to continued discussions as the budget process moves forward. Feel free to contact any of the Parks & Community Services Board members if you have questions or comments about the content of this message.