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TO: Chair Trescases and Members of the Parks and Community Services Board

FROM: Elizabeth de Regt AICP, Senior Planner, 452-2890
Gwen Rousseau AICP, Senior Planner, 452-2743
Brooke Brod, Community Engagement Lead, 452-6930
Community Development

SUBJECT: Information-only Status Report on the Neighborhood Area Planning Program: Great Neighborhoods in Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue

Parks staff have requested the Great Neighborhoods team to provide an update for the Board on ongoing Neighborhood Area Planning efforts. The following is an information-only briefing on the topic intended to provide an overview of the process and desired outcomes.

Neighborhood Area Plans bring the City's broader vision to life in a local way. They provide guidance to City staff and consultants, those working on projects in the community, and others helping to shape our Neighborhoods' futures. By highlighting what is unique about each Neighborhood Area and the residents' aspirations for their community, Neighborhood Area Plans allow us to define a vision and a pathway toward that future. These plans are an essential part of implementing the Comprehensive Plan's Neighborhoods Element and act as a guiding beacon for future projects that may impact the neighborhoods in question. Using creative and inclusive outreach and engagement adapted to COVID-19 realities, the Great Neighborhoods program provides a collaborative framework for staff, residents, and other stakeholders to develop plans that secure our neighborhoods' futures as livable, inspiring, vibrant, and equitable communities.

The Community Development Department is leading this effort, and the first two new Neighborhood Area Plans under development are for Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue. The goal is to update all Neighborhood Area Plans over the coming years, focusing on two at a time to provide focused outreach and community engagement opportunities. The plans will include the following sections, with engagement opportunities around each that allow residents to craft the plans alongside City staff.

1. A *Vision Statement* to act as a beacon for the rest of the plan
2. A *Neighborhood Area Profile* to present information about what is unique about each neighborhood
3. A *Guided Conversation* section that links the previous sections to the policies that follow by highlighting the main themes found within the neighborhood discussions and defining the "why" behind the policies themselves.
4. *Policies* to realize the Vision, including future Plan directions. These will be organized based on the *Challenges and Opportunities* facing the community that were identified by residents themselves.



An associated list of specific recommended *Actions*, developed and prioritized by the community and assessed by City staff for feasibility, will be included as an attachment to each plan developed as part of the Great Neighborhoods program.

Great Neighborhoods Approach

Neighborhood Area Plans are intended to highlight community priorities for shaping the community's future, so the process to develop these plans is driven by the community themselves. They identify the challenges and opportunities facing their community, ideas around how these can be addressed or harnessed, and help prioritize key issues. The resulting plans work hand-in-hand with other City documents, such as the Parks and Open Space Systems Plan. The Neighborhood Area Plans define broad priorities and emphasize the desires of the community through a series of narratives and associated policies, while other City documents define specific actions that support and enhance these policies. The policies often address issues that impact multiple City Departments and topics, allowing ties between departments to be made for City-wide consistency.

Great Neighborhoods focuses on neighborhood-specific issues that become neighborhood-specific policies. However, some City-wide themes have emerged that need to be addressed on a City-wide scale. These comments are being compiled and written up as a separate attachment to record and pass on to appropriate staff as input on future potential actions. These will not be incorporated into the Neighborhood Area Plans. Additionally, neighborhood-specific actions that have been suggested are being discussed as part of a review process between the Great Neighborhoods team and the relevant staff in other departments. Actions that are consistent with other City initiatives, or that may be important new comments or ideas to explore, will be collated as part of a list of Recommended Actions to be presented alongside the final Plans.

Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue Parks and Open Space Comments

Great Neighborhoods staff have held a series of community meetings since late last Summer. These sessions began by focusing on the vision – a positive, forward-thinking view of the neighborhood that can be used as a beacon for future discussions. Staff held a set of "Data Walks," events that gave the community information about their neighborhood, ranging from demographic and safety information to updates on how the neighborhood is doing on City goals, such as tree canopy and access to parks. These events spurred conversations about what challenges and opportunities are facing Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue. These challenges and opportunities were developed in a series of topic-based brainstorming sessions with members of a variety of departments, including Parks, helping facilitate community idea-generation. These ideas and comments are being crafted into policies through a collaboration between the Great Neighborhoods team and their various subject matter experts in other departments, such as Parks staff.



Throughout these sessions, a few themes have emerged for each neighborhood with regard to parks and open space issues. These are summarized as follows:

Northwest Bellevue

- Desire for pocket parks to be added over time as a way to achieve 100% household walkable access (<1/3mi) to parks or trail heads
- Interest in gathering formally and informally in parks spaces, including additional spaces and outdoor furniture to support these efforts, in order to get to know their neighbors
- Excitement around Eastrail and a desire for more connections to it

Northeast Bellevue

- Desire for enhanced park improvements that better support community interaction, such as benches, picnic tables and shelters
- Desire to explore renovating the former Ivanhoe Youth Theatre building as indoor community center/gathering space in partnership with BSD
- Desire to preserve open space and natural areas in perpetuity through acquisition and improvement of private properties, possibly in partnership with other jurisdictions (a common example given is the BTC property in partnership with the City of Redmond)

Upcoming Schedule and Adoption Process

Mid- to late-April will include a series of community events, hosted by cross-departmental subject matter experts and the Great Neighborhoods staff, to review the draft policies with the community. Following these efforts, staff will bring the draft plans before Planning Commission. Because the plans reside within the Comprehensive Plan, their amendment goes through the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) process. Two study sessions with Planning Commission will be followed by a Public Hearing. City Council will then be presented with Planning Commission's recommendations for the Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue neighborhood plans during the review of annual CPAs in the Fall.

- Mid-April – Draft policies released for community review
- Late-April – Events for further community discussion and review of policies
- May and June – Draft policies reviewed by the Planning Commission
- July – Public hearing on Neighborhood Area Plans
- Fall 2021 – Council adoption of Comprehensive Plan Amendments