

NORTHWEST BELLEVUE

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS PLAN

- NW Bellevue Vision
- NW Bellevue Profile
- A discussion of challenges and opportunities facing NW Bellevue
- A guided conversation through the four lenses of place, environment, mobility, and community
- Policies to realize the Vision, including future Plan directions
- A map and complete list of actions

THE VISION

“NORTHWEST BELLEVUE IS A COMMUNITY WITH DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE.”

This is what Northwest Bellevue community members envision for their neighborhood area as they move into the future. They see it as a welcoming one, with a diverse range of residents living and working within. It is both active and quiet, a destination and a home, connected to yet set apart from Downtown. Throughout both its denser multi-family or commercial areas and the calmer single-family streets, Northwest Bellevue will have maintained a neighborhood feel and embraced the natural beauty and green character of the Pacific Northwest. This balance defines the unique variety that is found in the area, a variety that is preserved in order to allow for diversity – of residents, of experience, and of opportunities.

COMMUNITY VISIONS

Residents made their own vision statements as an exercise during a community meeting. Here are a few:

- ▶ In the future, *a sense of community* will play a vital role in Northwest Bellevue. By focusing on *knowing our neighbors*, we can help people *connect and commune*, and bring a sense of *wellbeing* to NW Bellevue.
- ▶ In the future, *diversity* will play a vital role in Northwest Bellevue. By focusing on a *empathy* we can help people *interact*, and bring a sense of *community* to NW Bellevue.
- ▶ In the future, *multi-generational family values* will play a vital role in Northwest Bellevue. By focusing on *supporting economic and interpersonal connections for growing families* we can help people *thrive socially*, and bring a new sense of *inclusion and preservation of cultural values* in Northwest Bellevue.

Members of the Northeast Bellevue community have come together to shape their future through a shared vision of their community. The following describes that vision as if the reader were transported there into the future.

NORTHWEST BELLEVUE'S VISION

Northwest Bellevue is made up of many unique neighborhoods that provide options for residents, each offering its own element to the larger community. Maintaining this variety and distinction has allowed each area to provide a different *sense of place* and experience walking or driving down the street. Residents are proud of their ability to choose the neighborhood that best suits their needs, helping maintain its unique sense of place for generations to come.

While Downtown Bellevue's proximity allows for easy access to many amenities, there is a clear difference between Downtown's urban character and Northwest Bellevue's neighborhood characters.

A diversity of residents is attracted to Northwest Bellevue's variety. They feel a *sense of community*, part of a larger community that they enhance with their own experience and contribution. Everything from large annual events to small gestures between neighbors helps build connection, with residents supporting and learning from one another. They have developed community gathering places that help bring both newcomers and longtime residents together. Neighbors know one another, providing a sense of safety and a natural resiliency that keeps Northwest Bellevue strong.

These community benefits are felt by the long-time residents, who have a variety of options to age in place, remaining in their community as they get older. Whether they choose to stay in the same home or adjust their lifestyle, these residents are able to remain within the area despite potential physical or economic constraints.

In order to remain welcoming to all, the neighborhood has prioritized **affordability of housing** options. While not all housing will be affordable to everyone, they have enhanced the spectrum of choices available to would-be residents. From small and large single-family houses to townhomes, dense apartments and more in between these options, residents have choices that can fit their needs. Long-time residents are able to stay in the area while new residents can find something of their own.

Community members have found ways to connect to one another throughout the year. **Access** between individual neighborhoods has been improved so that each feels connected to the area as a whole. Residents feel a sense of safety throughout Northwest Bellevue, particularly as they connect to people and destinations inside and outside the community. Bellevue Way and NE 8th St act as spines, providing a safe and enjoyable connection to destinations by foot, car, or other methods of transportation. Families feel safe traveling with their kids both on these major streets and within smaller pockets, whether on their way somewhere or to simply enjoy the great outdoors.

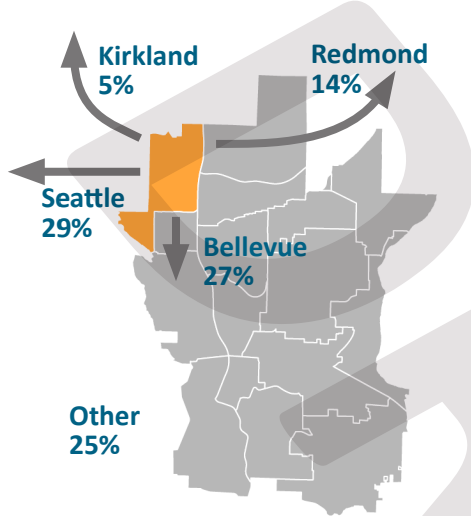
The community's natural **environment** is important, helping residents gather in groups or enjoy greenery in solitude. The beautiful trees and parks encourage outdoor activity, providing physical and mental exercise. Residents have focused on preserving and adding to these trees over the years through their shared commitment to the environment. They have integrated sustainability into their daily activities and planned for a sustainable future through their neighborhood's built environment.



The natural beauty of the area blends together with and supports varied neighborhood experiences, businesses, and gathering places to create and maintain the unique identity of Northwest Bellevue.

A PROFILE

COMMUTE PATTERNS*



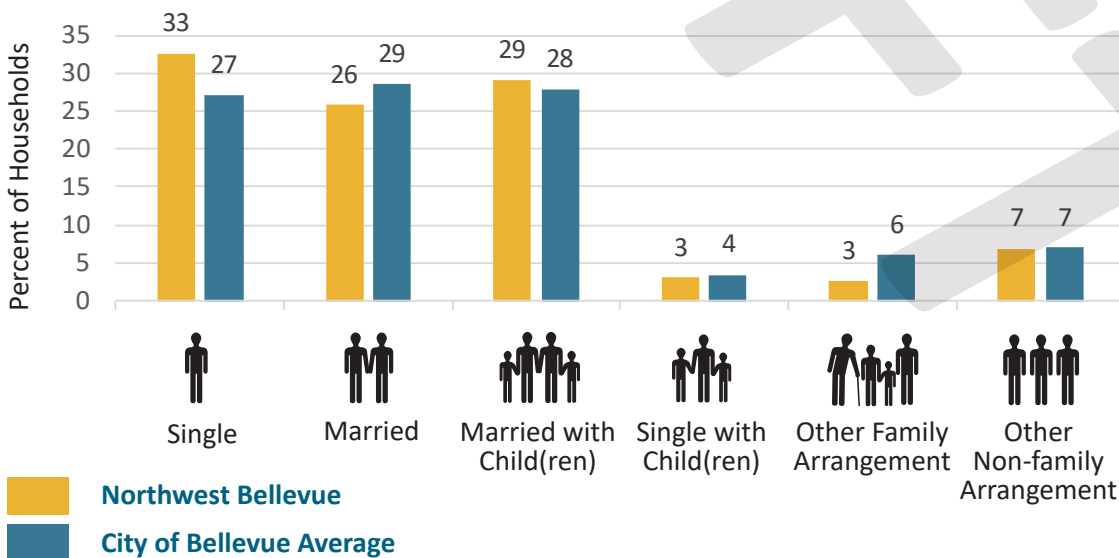
Residents of Northwest Bellevue commute to other areas for work on a daily basis. While about a quarter stay within the City of Bellevue, the rest commute to other cities in the area.

Northwest Bellevue includes some of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and was incorporated into Bellevue in 1953. While much of the area developed in the 1950s, it has had consistent housing growth or renovation in each decade since then. This has led to a diversity of housing types across Northwest Bellevue, with about half the housing units set within multifamily buildings. The area’s proximity to Downtown Bellevue leads to lower average commute times than the rest of the City.

The area is popular for both retirees and families with children, with a slightly higher percentage of children under 18 and a significantly higher percentage over age 45 living in Northwest Bellevue than in the City as a whole. The area has a higher average income than the City does but has a range of income levels.

50 percent of those Northwest Bellevue residents that took the 2020 Annual performance Survey rated the neighborhood as having “Neutral,” “Little Sense,” or “No Sense” of community.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE*



*Data calculated by City of Bellevue staff based on King County Assessor records (2020) and US Census Bureau American Community Survey (2018) tables.

NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICS*

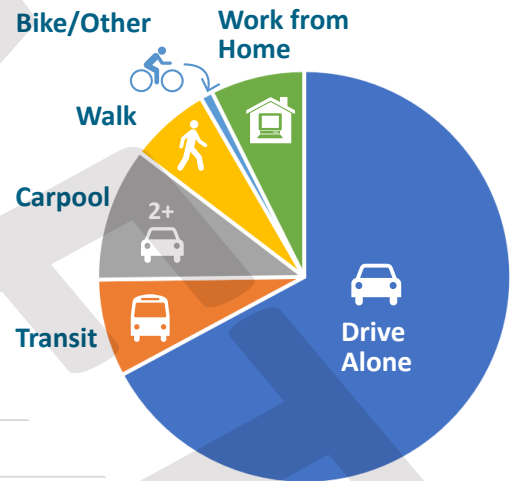
Population	9,514
Number of Households	4,001
Average Household Size	2.38
Number of Multifamily Units	2,230
Number of Single Family Units	2,176
Vacancy Rate	9.2%
Units Occupied by Owner	58%
Residents Born Outside the US	33%
Residents Speaking a Non-English Language at Home	39%
Population with any Disability	5%
Average Commute Time	22.4 min
Average Household Income	\$204,218
Households making under \$50,000	18%
Households making over \$200,000	31%
Households Cost-burdened by Housing	31%
Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	74%

DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

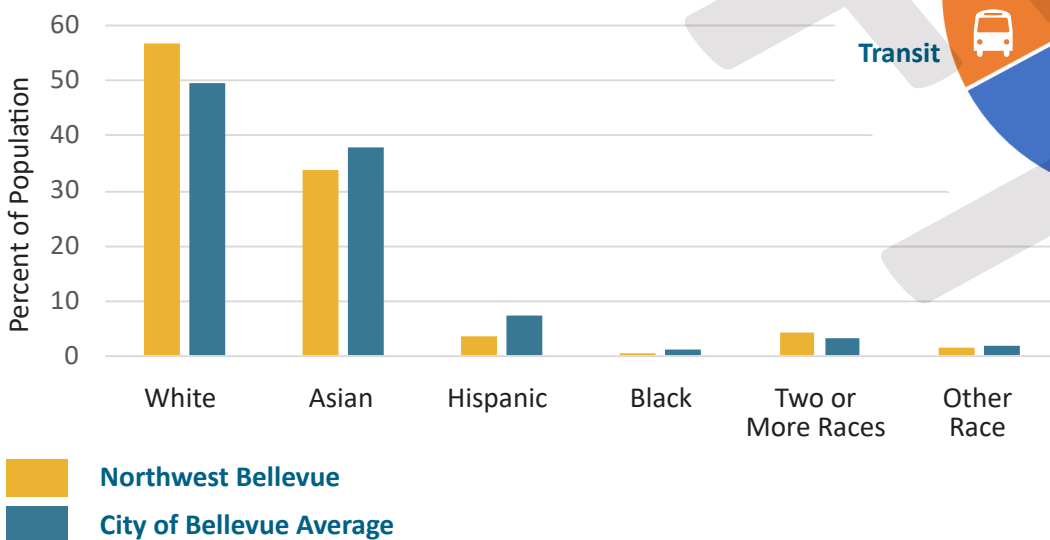
39% of residents speak a non-English language at home. These are the most common of those languages.

- ▶ Chinese Languages: 15%
- ▶ South Asian Languages: 6%
- ▶ Korean: 4%
- ▶ Russian: 3%
- ▶ Spanish: 3%

COMMUTE METHODS*



POPULATION RACIAL DIVERSITY*



*Data calculated by City of Bellevue staff based on King County Assessor records (2020) and US Census Bureau American Community Survey (2018) tables.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUB-NEIGHBORHOODS

► Each Neighborhood Area, such as Northwest Bellevue, has a number of unique ‘sub-neighborhoods’ within it. Some of Northwest Bellevue’s are Meydenbauer Bay, Vuecrest, Bovee Park, and Northtowne. Such areas often have their own rich histories and character but together create the distinct experience of Northeast Bellevue.

Northwest Bellevue is a diverse community made up of many smaller *sub-neighborhoods*. It skirts around Downtown Bellevue, which nearly splits the area in two. The neighborhood of Vuecrest provides a narrow connection between the portions of Northwest Bellevue that sit north and west of Downtown. The neighborhood’s unusual shape borders Medina, Clyde Hill, and Kirkland to the west and north, making collaboration with these jurisdictions essential to successful planning efforts. I-405’s presence acts as a barrier to the east, with SR-520 cutting across the northern portion, splitting Yarrowood from the rest of the Northwest Bellevue. These boundaries segregate it from the rest of Bellevue and split it into its smaller sub-neighborhoods. This split and the large variety of experiences found within the area lead to most residents identifying most closely with their immediate neighborhood (Downtown, Meydenbauer, Northtowne, Yarrowood, etc) rather than with Northwest Bellevue as a whole. This can make it a challenge to identify community ties that define Northwest Bellevue’s identity.

The many sub-neighborhoods within Northwest Bellevue provide contrasts to one another and to Downtown. Many small-scale areas border larger-scale areas, with single-family near multi-family, multi-family near Downtown, and office uses near residential uses in many areas. These contrasts produce varying priorities amongst community members. As the City grows and Downtown changes over time, Northwest Bellevue residents struggle with the impact on their neighborhood’s experience, affordability, and livability.

COMMUNITY THEMES AND INTERSECTIONS

Northwest Bellevue’s *proximity to Downtown* provides its residents with a lot of benefits, but it also presents challenges of affordability and preservation. The community is passionate about preserving the natural, wooded feeling in their neighborhood. Even those located at the northern edge, in Northtowne or Yarrowood, feel the pressure of a changing Downtown and want to preserve the neighborhood feel of their sub-neighborhoods.

The *diversity of sub-neighborhoods* and scales attracts a variety of household types, incomes, and backgrounds to Northwest Bellevue, yet residents across the area have expressed a concern about the lack of integration and mingling with their neighbors. They desire *closer connections* with their neighbors, particularly those from other backgrounds. This desire to preserve and enhance diversity while building community intersects with many other challenges and desires expressed by residents.

The pressures of growth and proximity to Downtown have increased the area’s living costs, impacting the ability to invite and welcome a diversity of household types. Increased property values have shifted the types of development that are feasible, leading many to express an interest in *broadening housing choices* to help balance this shift. The desire to allow residents to gather together also corresponds to other community elements, such as public parks, social events and opportunities, and physical gathering places, both public and private. All of these elements of community planning intersect with one another when considering how to enhance Northwest Bellevue’s livability.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

- ▶ Residents are safe and comfortable in their neighborhoods
- ▶ Neighbors feel a sense of belonging through participation in their community associations, centers, and schools
- ▶ People sense a responsiveness to emerging and changing conditions
- ▶ Neighborhood plans reflect local values, identity, and character

GOALS AND POLICIES

Northwest Bellevue’s vision is built out by themes, each with opportunities and challenges around them. These inform both aspirational goals and associated policies and those focused on preserving the area’s strengths.

IMAGES TO BE ADDED

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SENSE OF PLACE

One of Northwest Bellevue’s strengths is the great variety of experiences already found within its boundaries. Each smaller portion of the neighborhood has its own unique characteristics to offer. These areas range in age, size, use, and style from small and residential in nature to larger multifamily or commercial areas. This variety creates opportunities for unique approaches to any challenges facing the area. Northwest Bellevue also borders Downtown Bellevue, providing residents of the area with easy access to employment, services, and experiences found Downtown.

These same strengths also present a challenge of maintaining this variety of experiences and separation from Downtown’s scale and growth. Residents appreciate the broad range of places to live, visit, and access services within and near Northwest Bellevue. There is a clear desire to maintain the neighborhood feel and diverse characters of each unique sub-neighborhood while also maintaining a clear separation from Downtown.

In particular, they are concerned about both the smaller spaces left between new homes and the loss of trees on these lots, losing the shade, privacy, and access to nature that they provide the neighbors and street.

Sense of Place Goals and Policies

To maintain the existing variety of sub-neighborhoods within Northwest Bellevue.

- S-NW-1.** S-NW-1. Protect and enhance the existing distinctions between land uses throughout the Neighborhood Area through the use of transition areas between higher-intensity use districts and lower-intensity use districts as well as encouraging design features such as landscape buffers.
- S-NW-2.** S-NW-2. Promote transition areas when areas adjacent to a lower-intensity land use district are rezoned, and encourage the integration of pedestrian traffic into the neighborhood structure.
- S-NW-3.** S-NW-3. Preserve the existing sub-neighborhood characters by encouraging rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing housing stock.
- S-NW-4.** S-NW-4. Integrate new development into its surrounding sub-neighborhood by orienting it in a similar fashion to existing development and transitioning in scale to adjacent land uses.

To maintain and improve upon the experiential qualities found throughout the sub-neighborhoods of Northwest Bellevue.

- S-NW-5.** Encourage the undergrounding of utility distribution lines where feasible, particularly when new development occurs.
- S-NW-6.** Encourage new development to maintain and enhance the neighborhood character of the individual sub-neighborhoods.
- S-NW-7.** Explore opportunities for small-scale commercial uses at key locations to improve access to goods and services throughout Northwest Bellevue.

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To maintain a clear separation between Downtown Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue.

- S-NW-8.** Maintain a clear distinction between the scale of Downtown Bellevue and that of Northwest Bellevue.
- S-NW-9.** Create a separation between the low-intensity uses within Northwest Bellevue and Downtown Bellevue, utilizing buffers such as McCormick Park and/or gradients of building scale within Northwest Bellevue to ease that transition where appropriate.
- S-NW-10.** Direct vehicles moving between Downtown Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue to the minor and major arterial network rather than residential streets.

To encourage a seamless transition between Northwest Bellevue and its neighboring jurisdictions.

- S-NW-11.** Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to promote a consistent experience when crossing jurisdictional boundaries.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Northwest Bellevue's variety of housing types and styles allows for a mix of unit sizes and designs, which can be welcoming to those of many different ages and cultures. Residents hope to enhance this with additional ways to welcome diversity into the neighborhood. The neighborhood provides a good set of opportunities to meet and gather within scattered parks and commercial uses in the Neighborhood Area. They want to maintain these and create others to help improve the sense of community within Northwest Bellevue.

Residents often feel that they do not know one another. They desire ways to learn about their neighbors, particularly those with different backgrounds from their own. While the current variety of options appeals to a diversity of residents, not everyone currently feels welcomed to the area, particularly if they come from a background or culture uncommon in the

area. Finding ways to bring people together and make everyone feel welcome are important challenges to address in the area.

Northwest Bellevue also has a large percentage of seniors living in the area, many of whom worry about their ability to stay as they age. They find that both physical and economic challenges make it difficult for them to find a place to live and safely get around as they get older. Addressing these needs is a key challenge for the neighborhood.

Sense of Community Goals and Policies

To provide opportunities for residents to gather both formally and informally with both old and new friends and neighbors.

S-NW-12. Support efforts to create gathering opportunities, bringing together residents from different sub-neighborhoods, cultures, ages, or backgrounds.

S-NW-13. Encourage efforts to bring neighbors together to help one another, either with ongoing or time-specific challenges, to enhance community resilience and cohesion.

S-NW-14. Support the continued use of existing facilities and the introduction of new businesses and facilities that provide gathering opportunities for community-oriented programs and services.

S-NW-15. Improve public access to outdoor covered areas for residents to gather informally throughout the year.

S-NW-16. Introduce and retain existing recreational opportunities in public spaces, such as pickle-ball courts or outdoor games.

To foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging for a diversity of residents.

S-NW-17. Support efforts to welcome new residents to the neighborhood.

S-NW-18. Include features and activities for children of all ages within Northwest Bellevue's events and spaces when possible.

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S-NW-19. Seek opportunities to enhance the usability and accessibility of new development, parks and public spaces throughout the neighborhood for users with disabilities.

S-NW-20. Provide seating opportunities where possible at scattered locations throughout Northwest Bellevue to allow residents opportunities to rest.

To support seniors staying in the neighborhood as they age.

S-NW-21. Support the creation of a physical, economic, and social variety of living space types for seniors to remain in the neighborhood.

S-NW-22. Encourage co-habitation and multi-generational living opportunities for seniors.

S-NW-23. Encourage housing for the elderly in areas designated for multifamily development.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Many neighborhoods within Bellevue are facing difficulties associated with rising housing prices. Northwest Bellevue has a clear strength for combatting these issues in its existing variety of land uses. This allows for a varied approach to housing options, harnessing the many types that already exist to provide a variety of housing choices. There are opportunities to build upon this diversity to address the continued affordability challenges brought up by residents. In particular, there are a variety of lower density neighborhoods within walking distance of Downtown that are seeing increased land value and costs due to that proximity. There is a tension between residents wanting to maintain the existing neighborhood scale, those building larger homes in these areas, and residents wanting to provide greater density of housing in these areas to help address rising housing costs.

While there are a variety of options throughout the neighborhood, most of them are high in cost and therefore can be exclusive in nature. Residents have expressed a desire to be welcoming to those of different cultural and economic backgrounds, but the existing housing stock often does not support this desire. Similarly, these options frequently do not address the unique requirements for seniors with both mobility and economic constraints, many of whom have lived in the area most of their lives. Addressing the needs of this desired diversity of residents is a major challenge facing Northwest Bellevue.

Housing Affordability Goals and Policies

To create a diverse supply of housing typologies through the use of existing single- and multi-family densities and the encouragement of housing between these two scales.

- S-NW-24.** Encourage a mix of housing typologies, within both lower and higher intensity districts, to allow for a range of affordability options, size of housing units, ease of movement for the physically disabled, and visual styles.
- S-NW-25.** Explore introducing detached accessory dwelling units as a permitted use within single-family areas.
- S-NW-26.** Explore regulations to minimize the impact from any new accessory dwelling units to the existing residential character of the street.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

With its proximity to both Downtown Bellevue and highway access to both I-405 and SR 520, Northwest Bellevue has a multitude of jobs, activities, services, and more within easy access. There is a network of arterials connecting the residential streets to this larger system. Transportation improvements are focused on these important arterial corridors.

This great access can also create a challenge to Northwest Bellevue. Nearby highways and major arterials like Bellevue Way can create barriers to local mobility across multiple modes of transportation. In

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In addition, the residential streets tend not to be interconnected in the area, enhancing reliance on Bellevue Way NE, 100th Ave NE, NE 24th Street, and NE 8th Street to get through the neighborhood. Residential streets that do connect through longer portions of the neighborhood can attract cut-through traffic. Drivers who exceed posted speed limits on residential streets and along the arterials dissuade many residents from walking, biking, and taking transit, particularly with many gaps in the sidewalks and bikeways.

With many arterials that break up the neighborhoods and many neighborhoods that lack sidewalks, residents worry about pedestrian safety. They tend to desire prioritization of pedestrian improvements over vehicular, transit, or bicycle improvements as a way to enhance neighborhood safety and experience.

Mobility and Access Goals and Policies

To improve pedestrian safety and encourage walking in the area, particularly to or from residential areas.

S-NW-27. Encourage pedestrians to cross arterial streets within designated crosswalks or intersections.

S-NW-28. Explore opportunities to install new safe crossing locations where gaps are present, particularly along Bellevue Way NE near Northtowne Shopping Center.

S-NW-29. Improve visibility of pedestrian areas when sidewalks are not present.

S-NW-30. Maintain a pedestrian path clear of obstacles where feasible when sidewalks are present.

S-NW-31. Utilize traffic calming measures to discourage people from driving faster than the speed limit within residential neighborhoods.

S-NW-32. Address vehicle speeds and safety concerns along arterials, particularly along both Bellevue Way NE and NE 24th St near the intersection of the two.

To encourage multiple methods of access through and within Northwest Bellevue.

S-NW-33. Prioritize completing gaps in pedestrian and bicycle networks to provide continuity within the network.

S-NW-34. Explore ways to support increased public transportation and ride-sharing use in Northwest Bellevue.

S-NW-35. Explore ways to improve and maintain bicycle access to Eastrail at 108th Ave NE.

To maintain efficient and safe vehicular movement within Northwest Bellevue.

S-NW-36. Maintain a clear distinction between arterials and neighborhood streets, discouraging commuter through-traffic from using residential streets to get to their destination.

S-NW-37. Minimize new vehicular access points to major arterials to facilitate efficient traffic movement.

S-NW-38. Explore transportation improvements on streets that lead to/from and intersect with SR-520 that reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety.

To protect and enhance easy access to goods, services, and gathering places within Northwest Bellevue.

S-NW-39. Prioritize transportation enhancements that improve safety and access between residential areas and popular destinations, particularly schools and parks.

S-NW-40. Create direct pedestrian connections between parks and nearby residential areas.

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ENVIRONMENT

Northwest Bellevue has a variety of parks scattered throughout the neighborhood, providing a variety of recreational options with relatively good access from its residential areas. Many of these parks are large and centrally located, but some areas, particularly at the north and west edges of the neighborhood, do not have a park within easy walking distance. Providing park access for these households provides a challenge that should be addressed over time.

In addition to formal parks and open spaces, Northwest Bellevue residents desire access to greenery. The neighborhood has seen an exceedingly large proportion of recent redevelopment. This activity has removed large swaths of trees in many cases and, when considered over time, has caused tree canopy protection to be the issue that invokes the most passion in Northwest Bellevue residents. They want immediate and continued action to protect and rebuild their tree canopy over time. In particular, they hope that the impact on Northwest Bellevue's tree canopy will be a consideration for any future development regulations that might affect the neighborhood.

Northwest Bellevue also borders Meydenbauer Bay, providing the public with access to the water along Meydenbauer Bay Park. This also enhances the importance of controlling runoff and reducing water pollution throughout the area.

Environment Goals and Policies

To provide continued access to trees and green spaces throughout Northwest Bellevue.

S-NW-41. Pursue opportunities for increasing tree canopy through planting of new trees on public and private property throughout Northwest Bellevue.

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S-NW-42. Encourage Northwest Bellevue engagement and support in Citywide efforts to introduce or amend requirements for the preservation and enhancement of the City’s tree canopy.

S-NW-43. Support efforts to protect and enhance the health of Northwest Bellevue’s trees on both public and private property.

S-NW-44. Explore the potential for small, scattered parks throughout the neighborhood, monitoring opportunities for small public purchases for this purpose.

S-NW-45. Pursue opportunities for the public’s active use of green spaces, such as through pea patches, organized self-guided activities or interactive educational opportunities.

S-NW-46. Provide multiple points for pedestrian access to public trails and parks like Eastrail and Meydenbauer Bay Park where appropriate.

To provide education around natural resources within the community.

S-NW-47. Encourage education opportunities for residents to learn about native plants, tree care, and other relevant environmental topics.

S-NW-48. Support community and/or school district partnerships to create environmental and sustainability education opportunities in Northwest Bellevue.

To protect the health of Bellevue’s streams, lakes, and other water bodies, such as Lake Washington.

S-NW-49. Encourage natural stormwater best management practices and the reduction of water pollution.

S-NW-50. Encourage low-impact development and the use of impervious surfaces in new public and private developments.

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