



Capital Project Objectives

“Trail”

– Radka Mares



Paradise Road

I see a light, a dim faint light
Through the paradise road
The trees line it with leaves,
Both dark, or light, or somewhere in between,
You hear the leaves murmur in the soft wind,
You hear all your accomplishments and all your faults,
Suddenly you are at the end of paradise road
And you have a fortune that's to be told.

– David Moran



The Parks & Open Space System Plan identifies seven major focus areas around which Parks & Community Services meets the park, open space and recreation needs of the community. In general, these focus areas have remained consistent since the 1987 edition of the plan, although they have been re-structured and modified over time to meet contemporary needs.



Open Space, Greenways, Wildlife Corridors & Trails: Acquiring and protecting open space to establish a network of greenways throughout the community. These greenways function to meet passive and active recreation needs of the community, protect wildlife and critical habitat areas, and provide linkages between parks and commercial or residential neighborhoods.



Park Facilities: Providing walkable access to neighborhood and community parks through acquisition, development, or redevelopment.



Active Recreation Facilities: Siting geographically distributed community centers and active recreation facilities to provide needed indoor and outdoor recreation spaces and activities of interest to a wide spectrum of diverse users.



Urban Park Systems: Addressing the unique challenges of designing and providing parks, open space, trails and active recreation facilities serving the urban densities of Downtown Bellevue, BelRed and the Eastgate I-90 Corridor.



Waterfront Access: Acquiring and developing additional publicly-owned waterfront property to meet community demand.



Partnership Opportunities: Working with community partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors to provide recreation and community service needs for Bellevue residents. Additionally, connecting Bellevue residents to the abundant regional park and recreation facilities surrounding the city.



Historic, Cultural, & Art Resources: Protecting and interpreting Bellevue's cultural history as well as providing space and an outlet for artistic expression. This section does not include a set of specific capital project objectives. It lays a policy foundation for how cultural history and artistic expression should be incorporated in existing and future parks and facilities.

Specific capital objectives are included under each focus area where appropriate. All objectives are grouped together and mapped for a comprehensive view at the end of this chapter.



Space, Greenways, Wildlife Corridors and Trails

“The environment” has captured the public’s attention more so now, or at least in a different way, than in the past. The word “green” has taken on new meanings that have exploded beyond a simple color description. Social acceptance is measured by how green a person can make themselves. Children in preschool are taught songs about how to properly reduce, reuse and recycle. Paradoxically, even though society has become increasingly aware of — and prioritizes — environmental protection, individuals are less likely to venture out to experience the natural environment than in any previous generation. In his book, *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv, documents how children in particular are well educated about nature but fundamentally disconnected from experiencing it. Louv argues that this disconnection is a probable cause for the decreased mental and physical health evidenced in American society.



Bellevue’s natural areas, wildlife corridors, trails and greenways are part of the solution to both environmental degradation and public health declines. Tree masses absorb carbon dioxide, emit oxygen, reduce erosion, moderate temperatures, protect wildlife, and provide aesthetic relief. Wetlands filter pollutants, absorb surface water runoff, help maintain stream base flows and groundwater replenishment, and provide a rich biological habitat. Riparian corridors, which include the stream channel and the streamside vegetation, provide flood water attenuation, groundwater replenishment, water quality filtering, and fish and wildlife habitat. The abundance of trails, which are easily accessed from residential neighborhoods and places of work, provide a low-barrier way for individuals to get outside and benefit from all that our natural environment has to offer in terms of physical activity and mental well-being.

As a growing urban center, Bellevue must find a balance between continued urban development and preserving or enhancing environmental quality. The following program areas acknowledge the importance of preserving critical open space and wildlife habitat areas, providing connections, and encouraging public education and awareness of Bellevue’s natural systems.

PRESERVING OPEN SPACE

Bellevue’s open spaces are an integral part of the city. Open space areas include ecologically sensitive and/or unique natural areas, greenways, wildlife corridors, historical agricultural lands, and publicly managed native growth protection areas (NGPAs). A variety of these open space areas enhance Bellevue’s “City in a Park” image. Well-distributed and connected greenways and open spaces provide important linkages for habitat and people, bring nature’s beauty closer to everyone, and maximize opportunities for enjoying the environment.

Combined with King County, Bellevue College and Bellevue School District-owned properties, Bellevue has approximately 3,300 acres of public park, school, and open space land. Much of this public open

space is located in a few large areas, such as Mercer Slough, Wilburton Hill, Lakemont Park, Coal Creek Natural Area, Kelsey Creek Park, and the Lake Hills Greenbelt.

Privately owned lands augment the open space system by enhancing the city's overall open space system. Golf courses, for example, provide an aesthetically pleasing expanse of manicured open space. Privately owned greenbelts and native growth protection areas (NGPAs) play an equally important role in providing open space. They protect critical areas and habitat while enhancing the visual setting of the built environment.

Where possible, it is the City's responsibility to classify and regulate native growth protection areas as permanent open spaces. Some trails through these spaces can be built to provide limited public access while still preserving the area for other purposes, such as wildlife habitat.

GREENWAY TRAILS

Greenways have historically provided a natural contrast to urban density. They combine the natural functions and separations provided by a greenbelt with the linear and connected orientation of a parkway. Connecting different sites via boulevards, trails, and natural areas makes parklands more usable, accessible by walking or biking, and visible on a day-to-day basis. The various parks and open spaces throughout the city become a system, achieving a sense of integration and completeness.



The Lake to Lake Trail System and Greenway illustrates this concept. Originating at public parks on the east and west sides of Bellevue, a system of signed trails and sidewalks extends across the city, linking a series of parks, schools, commercial areas and natural areas with unifying connections.

A key function of greenways in Bellevue is to link major regional parks and open spaces. Bellevue is surrounded by large regional State and King County parks as well as parks operated by neighboring cities. To make full use of these resources, a series of greenways are planned to increase Bellevue residents' access to regional facilities including the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, Lake Sammamish State Park, Marymoor Park and Bridle Trails State Park. These parks, in turn, either are or will be connected via trails and corridors to significantly larger state, county, and federal lands between the Cascade Mountains and Puget Sound. Bellevue parks, such as Mercer Slough Nature Park, Kelsey Creek Farm, and the Downtown Park, also serve as regional facilities which are, or will be, connected into the overall greenways network for the Eastside.

Major east-west and north-south greenway trail routes traversing the city have been designated and are considered top priorities in completing trail systems. The Lake to Lake Trail provides Bellevue's primary east-west trail connection linking Lake Sammamish with Lake Washington. Other future east-west trail connections include a trail across the northern boundary of the city, from Kirkland's Houghton neighborhood

to Marymoor Park. Aligned between this and the Lake to Lake Trail is a planned new trail alignment bisecting a redeveloped BelRed. In south Bellevue, a trail system extends from Coal Creek Natural Area to Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. To provide north-south connectivity, a greenway trail currently in phased development along West Lake Sammamish Parkway will provide a valuable and scenic link for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation from Cougar Mountain to Marymoor Park. Also, work is under way to bring trail use to the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC). This former rail line extends from the city of Snohomish south through Woodinville, Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue and Renton. The proximity of the ERC to high density employment and residential areas in Downtown Bellevue and BelRed make this future trail extraordinarily valuable for both recreational and commuter use. King County Parks will publish an ERC Trail Master Plan in 2016, and the City, County and Sound Transit will work cooperatively to open portions of the corridor to public trail use with interim trail improvements over the next five years. In addition to these two primary north-south greenways, there are other potential opportunities along power line and pipeline corridors through Bellevue. Partnerships to provide public access along those corridors should be considered.



LOCAL TRAILS

Trails play an important role in open space, especially in large parks, greenways, and wildlife corridors. Trails through forests, wetland and natural areas are the single most-used type of park amenity in Bellevue. Three out of four Bellevue residents report using the trail system more than once a year. One in three residents use the trail system frequently, walking on trails ten or more times per year. These local trails, which can also function as greenways, are often the sole means of connecting parklands and open space. They provide

pedestrians and non-motorized transportation users shorter and safer connections between various neighborhoods and open space. In addition to being the most-used type of facility, trails are also the top community priority for additional development as noted in the surveys completed 2015 and confirmed in the presentations and conversations with stakeholder groups.

Construction of well-signed trails within neighborhood areas creates a trail network connecting the neighborhood to the parks and open space systems within close proximity to people living in the area. Localized trail systems provide connections, allowing people to explore their immediate neighborhood area, and encourage interaction and a sense of community.

STREET TREES AND ARTERIAL LANDSCAPING

Street trees and arterial landscaping are invaluable assets. They are an essential part of the city's urban forest. The trees and plants filter air pollutants, produce oxygen, buffer noise, provide separation between pedestrians and vehicles and provide shade and beauty. Street trees add scale to the built environment and help soften effects of urbanization.

Arterial "greening" identifies streets and highways as part of the overall open space system.



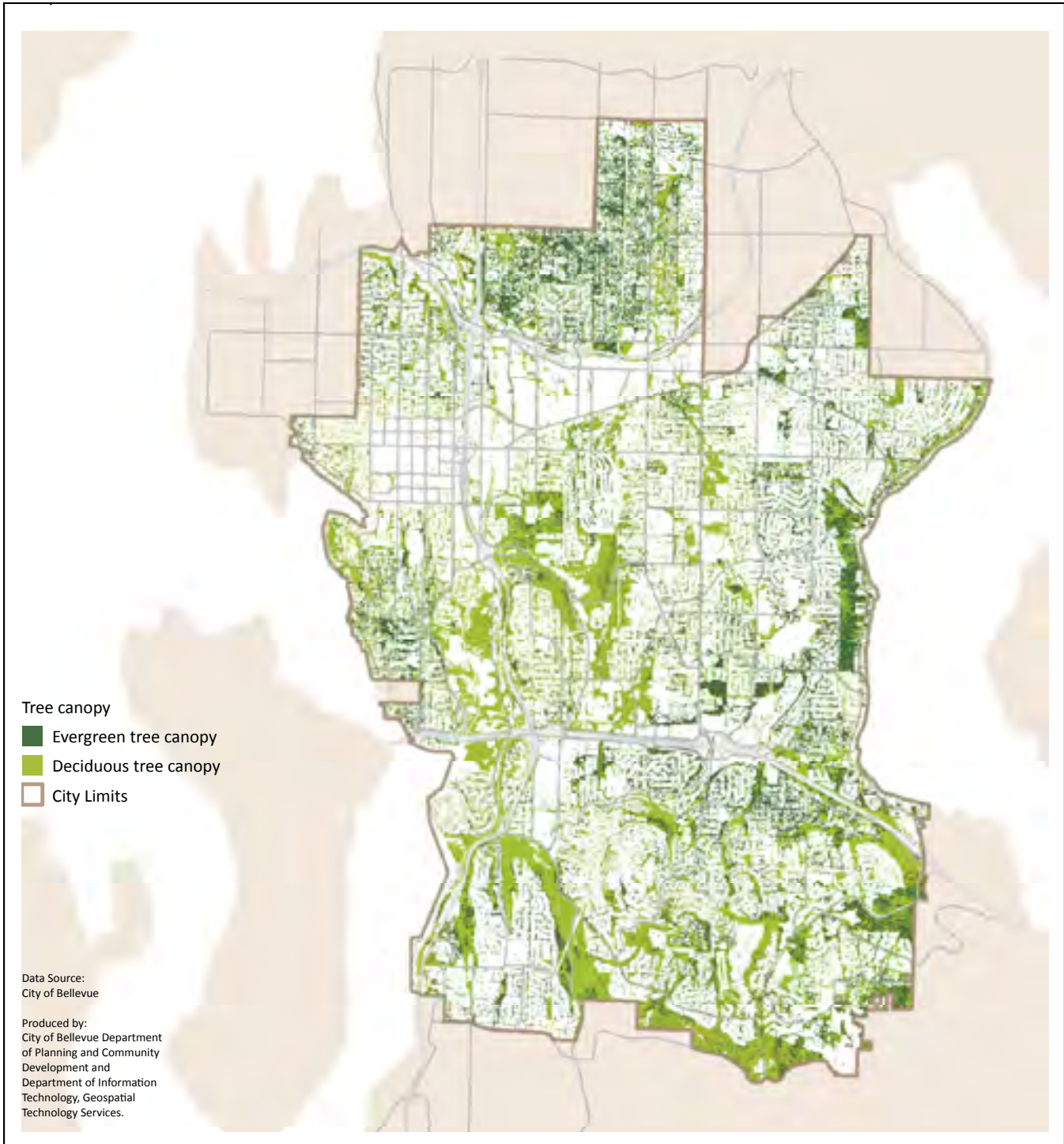
Parks & Community Services' Street Trees and Arterial Landscaping Program establishes a variety of landscapes along the city's street system. This program provides pleasant canopied boulevards and lush green arterial roads. In cooperation with the Transportation Department, the program has resulted in over 140 acres of streetscape landscaping adjacent to arterials and boulevards. These landscaped boulevards and arterial roads, such as 148th Avenue, enrich the visual experience for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Freeway landscaping should also be included as part of the open space concept. "Greening" the freeways can be easily achieved through re-vegetation. Interstate 90, Interstate 405, and State Route 520 are major gateways that form the first impression of Bellevue. Landscaping along freeways can be a reminder of the beauty of our natural environment and can offer the motorist a glimpse of the "City in a Park." A partnership with the State Department of Transportation is necessary to achieve this goal.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The pristine natural conditions that existed in our region 120 years ago have been radically altered by development. Bellevue's remaining natural areas are carefully managed to provide long-term environmental, recreational, and social benefits. Just as important as working to connect the large open spaces in Bellevue, stewardship programs must view activities on an ecosystem-wide basis, acknowledging the interconnectedness and interrelationships in nature. The 2015 Bellevue Comprehensive Plan includes a new set of policies aimed at environmental stewardship. Chief among the new policies is a target of increasing Bellevue's overall tree canopy from today's 36 percent back up to 40 percent of Bellevue's land area. Other policies focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and use of green building techniques in new development. Achieving these policies will take a concerted partnership of public and private land owners. As one of Bellevue's largest land stewards, Parks & Community Services plays a key role.





2013 Tree Canopy Coverage

The Forest Management Program provides a systematic process to manage the forest ecosystem. Starting with a site inventory and analysis, a natural resource management and enhancement plan is developed to improve degraded forest conditions resulting from past logging and land use practices and current development activities. Where necessary, inappropriate trees and invasive vegetation are removed and replaced to create a viable native natural ecosystem. With over 100 species of wildlife utilizing tree snags for nesting, breeding, food sources, and refuge, snag creation is also part of the Forest Management Program. The goal of the Forest Management Program is to re-establish natural ecosystems that will sustain wildlife and provide a visual amenity for the community.

Enhancement projects have also increased wildlife habitat and diversity through the creation of wetland ponds, such as those at Mercer Slough and Lake Hills Greenbelt, and improved water quality and reduced erosion through stream restoration projects, such as Phantom Creek through Weowna Park.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental education is an important component to a successful parks and open space system. Educating the public about the importance of our natural systems helps create an understanding of the systems' benefits. The public endorses environmental preservation when connections between the environment and quality of life are fully understood.

Parks & Community Services provides numerous opportunities for environmental education that give park visitors increased understanding and insight into the natural world. Effective interpretation of the finite state of natural resources creates a sense of wonder and instills a sense of responsibility and ownership to protect and manage resources wisely. Examples of environmental education and interpretation programs include the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center, the Ranger Station Backyard Wildlife Habitat Gardens, Washington State University Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden, Earth Day/Arbor Day celebrations and tree planting, Stewardship Saturdays, and Natural Resource Week. Volunteers contribute thousands of hours helping to enhance parks and open spaces. In addition to formal environmental education programs, use of the city's trail and open space system provides the public with informal environmental education opportunities as people experience these natural systems.



CAPITAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The 2009 Pedestrian & Bicycle Transportation Plan and the 2015 Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative are the primary resource for trail policies, standards, projects, implementation, and financing strategies. This plan provides the framework for building a safe, non-motorized transportation system to schools, parks, shopping areas, and places of employment. The following list of projects aligns with the Ped-Bike Plan and meets parks and open space goals:

Open Space, Greenways, Wildlife Corridors & Trails

OPPORTUNITIES:	ACQUIRE	DEVELOP	ENHANCE / PRESERVE
Greenway Connections/Extensions	●	●	●
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trails			
Lake to Lake Greenway Trails			
South Bellevue / Coal Creek Greenway Trails			
Marymoor to Cougar Mountain Greenway Trails			
Bel-Red Greenway Trails			
Richards Valley Greenway Trails			
Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) Greenway Trails			
Trail Connections/Extensions: Enhance connectivity and walkability by creating connections and improving wayfinding between neighborhoods and local parks	●	●	
Native Growth Protection Areas (NGPA) Stewardship	●		
Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan Implementation	●	●	



Park Facilities

The heart and soul of Bellevue's parks system are the neighborhood and community parks that dot the city from one end to the other. Each has its own distinct character and set of features that add both economic and social value to the neighborhoods in which they are located. These parks are responsible for Bellevue's image as a "City in a Park" and for the enviable quality of life that Bellevue residents enjoy.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood sites are designed to meet the active and passive recreation needs of their immediate neighborhood. In the 2015 park system survey, Bellevue residents included neighborhood parks in the top tier of park facilities that should be prioritized for additional development. Neighborhood parks are

Neighborhood parks should be sited and developed based on their accessibility and visibility. In some instances, neighborhood sites may be acquired, developed, or maintained in partnership with a school district, a community association, or business. In other instances, it is appropriate to require neighborhood park space in c



Community parks are of a scale suitable to contain a variety of features such as environmentally sensitive areas, structured and unstructured recreational activities, trails, classrooms, or swimming pools. They may also include features typical to neighborhood parks, such as a playground or open green space for picnicking or unstructured recreation.

Due to Bellevue's growth and rate of development, the opportunities for new community parks in the city are increasingly limited. Large tracts of undeveloped or underdeveloped land are scarce, and property values continue to escalate. It is too soon to rule out the potential of adding new community



parks to Bellevue's existing inventory, but as land values increase and opportunities for significant amounts of contiguous acreage decrease, any opportunities that may present themselves should be earnestly evaluated.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION AND NEIGHBORHOOD AREA NEED

A primary goal of the Parks & Open Space System Plan is to create a geographically dispersed system of park and recreation facilities that are within walking distance of all Bellevue residents. Neighborhood parks and trails are the main tool used to reach this goal. Geographic distribution is less of a priority for community parks since they are designed to serve the city as a whole. Siting of community parks is more dependent upon the availability of large contiguous parcels of land and the protection of sensitive areas.

To understand where new walkable neighborhood parks are needed, each park, trail and school yard access point is mapped including a 1/3 mile walking distance buffer from each point. This analysis displays areas of the city where residents do not have walkable access to a park, trail or school. Based on this analysis, ten of the 16 neighborhood areas display visible accessibility deficits in a neighborhood level of service. Of these, the BelRed, Crossroads, Downtown, Eastgate, Factoria, Newport, and Wilburton neighborhood areas displayed deficiencies significant enough to prioritize the acquisition and development of new neighborhood park sites. The remaining areas may be able to be served by developing parks on existing publicly owned land, acquiring new land for parks, or by improving pedestrian accessibility to existing parks through additional trail development.

ACQUISITION

For neighborhood parks, acquisition priorities will focus primarily on the areas determined to be underserved by level of service measures. For community parks, Parks & Community Services will continue to seek out large well-sited tracts of land for new community parks as well as acquiring available land adjacent to existing community parks where appropriate. For example, the acquisition of large open space parcels contiguous to Kelsey Creek Park and the Mercer Slough Nature Park expand these parks' capacity for passive recreation, wetland stewardship, preservation of wildlife habitat, and education. A strong commitment is also made to continue acquiring land adjacent to the Downtown Park, as envisioned in the park master plan.

DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

In addition to land acquisitions aimed at meeting park facility needs, attention will continue to be given to developing existing sites. Priority should be given to completing development of existing parks listed in the following table. These parks are needed to satisfy current demands for both structured and unstructured recreation uses.

CAPITAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Continued acquisition and development of neighborhood and community park facilities should occur based on opportunity and level of service standards. Major park facility initiatives include:

Park Facilities

OPPORTUNITIES:	ACQUIRE	DEVELOP	ENHANCE / PRESERVE
Add neighborhood parks in underserved subareas: BelRed (see Urban Park Systems) Crossroads Downtown (see Urban Park Systems) Eastgate Factoria Newport Hills Wilburton	●	●	
Develop existing undeveloped properties including, but not limited to: Bridle Trails BelRed (West Trib Property) Downtown Newport Hills North Bellevue (Chapin Property) Wilburton (Glendale Property)		●	
Add to or continue phased development of existing community parks, including but not limited to: Bellevue Airfield Park Bellevue Botanical Garden Crossroads Park Kelsey Creek Park Lewis Creek Park Mercer Slough Nature Park Robinswood Park Surrey Downs Park Wilburton Hill Park	●	●	



Active Recreation Facilities

The elements of the parks system that provide natural areas, waterfront access, gardens and trails are a valued resource available to anyone of any age, race, culture or socio-economic status. To complement and further expand Parks & Community Services' mission to build a healthy community, the City provides a network of indoor and outdoor active recreation facilities that can be programmed for specific sports or recreational interests of Bellevue residents. Active recreation facilities include indoor recreation buildings (such as community centers or the tennis center) and outdoor active or structured recreation facilities (such as sportfields or off-leash dog areas). These facilities cater to existing users' preferences for sports and physical activity and provide an opportunity to learn or experience a new form of recreation in a safe learning environment.

A unique challenge in providing relevant active recreation opportunities for Bellevue residents and park users is the ever-changing face of the Bellevue community. Parks & Community Services has goals for providing culturally competent services to all Bellevue residents. Specifically, the City has focused on providing a base level of recreation services to all residents, with a specific focus on youth, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. These three population groups were identified as areas of focus because each has a unique culture and set of needs that are often not fully addressed by private sector recreation providers.

An additional area of focus lies with meeting the recreation needs of an ethnically diverse population. Bellevue is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Washington State. Adequately serving Bellevue residents is challenging considering the wide range of cultural recreation preferences. Yet, there is a great opportunity for Parks & Community Services to provide community gathering spaces, facilities and programs exposing individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds to sports or recreation activities they may not have otherwise discovered.

This section specifically focuses on four types of facilities: community centers, sportfields, off-leash dog areas and facilities providing recreation and interaction for diverse cultures, ages and abilities.

2015 Community Survey Sample of Responses

Thinking of parks and recreational facilities available in Bellevue, is there any type of park or recreational facility you would like to see more of?

- Small playgrounds – each small neighborhood should have one lot with a park
- Off leash dog parks
- Beach parks/waterfront park, more swimming pools
- With continuing development in our city preservation of open spaces needs to be a priority. Also wish more of waterfront land was public access.
- Bicycle parks for young children
- Swimming pools!!! (for competitive swimming/lap swim)
- A paddling center for outrigger canoes, stand up paddling, dragon boat, kayaks, etc.
- Outdoor pickleball courts
- Nature preserves - or at least more trees in general
- Covered play area for little kids
- Frisbee course
- Need gyms like South Bellevue in Downtown Bellevue area (one in downtown, east and north sides of Bellevue)
- More safe biking trails through nature not crossing thoroughfares
- Outdoor workout areas and horseshoe pitching courts
- Maybe one play structure that is open but covered. Keeps rain off from slides but still open
- Outdoor theatre
- Rest rooms and drinking fountains
- Maybe food trucks or small coffee shop. People love to walk even if it is cold.
- Farm plots to grow vegetables
- Badminton facility
- Labyrinth



COMMUNITY CENTERS & COMMUNITY BUILDINGS



South Bellevue Community Center

Quantifying the need for active recreation facilities, and community centers in general, is a difficult task. Much in the same way as the location and design of future parks are decided, a series of factors are weighed in determining the need for additional community centers to serve Bellevue residents. These include geographic distribution of existing facilities, the population distribution and density of Bellevue residents, available land or facilities, cost, citizen input and the level of use of existing facilities. However, a very simple measure that can be used as a rule

of thumb is a standardized ratio that calls for one multi-use community recreation center for every 25,000 residents, equitably distributed throughout the city.

Using this simplified measure, based on a 2015 population of 135,000, the city's current demand is five community centers. At present, Bellevue operates four multi-use community centers, including Crossroads, North Bellevue, Highland and South Bellevue Community Centers. A strong senior program is provided at the North Bellevue Community Center, and programs for the disabled are included at the Highland Center. Crossroads Community Center does not specialize in a specific population, but serves the most ethnically diverse spectrum of users. South Bellevue includes a partnership with the Bellevue Boys and Girls Club and provides a range of fitness-related facilities and activities.

Considering the geographic distribution of existing community centers and future population growth areas, a fifth multi-use community center is recommended to serve Downtown (refer to the Urban Parks System section for a more detailed discussion). By 2035, the city's population is forecast to grow in size to 160,400, in which case planning for a sixth community may be needed within the long-term range of this plan. For geographic distribution, the need for a new center within the Northwest Bellevue or West Bellevue neighborhood areas may be studied.

Bellevue's existing community centers range in size from 15,000 to 34,000 square feet, but in some cases lack certain spaces that would make these full-service community centers. In particular, the North Bellevue facility lacks a gymnasium, the addition of which is recommended for that facility to reach its full potential for serving the community.

In addition to building and operating multi-use community centers, there are other methods used by Parks & Community Services to bring indoor recreation opportunities to park users. These approaches include:

- Providing limited or more specialized programs in smaller City-owned community buildings with a broader geographic distribution. For example, the Northwest Arts Center offers valuable studio spaces and programming for the arts community. Environmental education programs are available at the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center, the Lewis Creek Visitor Center and Lake Hills Greenbelt Ranger Station. Community meeting rooms are provided at several facilities across the

city. Historical interpretation programs are present at Winters House. The City should continue to explore opportunities to satisfy specialized or short-term needs with this smaller scale approach.

- Continuing and expanding the partnership with the Bellevue School District. Schools are important centers of neighborhood activities. Past partnerships have yielded important community facilities, such as the second gym at Tyee Middle School, the performing arts facility at Ivanhoe, and the use of school gyms for sports activities. The City will continue to seek opportunities to expand partnerships with the School District, including adult education, cultural activities, and human service needs.

- Establishing partnerships with other service providers. The City has partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue (Hidden Valley Fieldhouse, South Bellevue Community Center and the Main Club Downtown), Pacific Science Center (Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center), Jubilee REACH Center, Bellevue Botanical Garden Society and many other organizations to provide community programs and facilities that otherwise might not exist without the support of these agencies. It will be critical to expand these partnerships and explore new partners, including private enterprise, to provide additional services to the community.



Lewis Creek Visitor Center



Bellevue Boys and Girls Club Hidden Valley Fieldhouse

SPORTFIELDS

Several issues influence the level of user demand on the city's inventory of sportfields. While youth programs have priority for field time, adult participation in organized sports is strong, with softball and soccer being the most popular. The popularity of women's sports has increased, not only at the high school level, but for all age levels. The increased popularity of highly competitive "select" teams has placed greater demand for additional, higher quality fields. Finally, increased participation and interest have emerged in a wider variety of club



sports such as lacrosse, rugby, and cricket. In 2013, Parks & Community Services established a relationship with the Puget Sound Cricket Club, which uses Robinswood Park as a cricket pitch for youth and adults. Demands are not only placed on game-quality fields, but also on places to practice.

In working with the user groups and reviewing participation trends, Parks & Community Services expects that the demand for soccer fields (designed to also accommodate rugby, football, cricket and lacrosse) will continue to grow. The growth in baseball and softball is expected to moderate or be flat.

As the availability of large land tracts continues to diminish, it is increasingly important to make optimum use of the existing field inventory. The ability of the City to add new fields is extremely limited. Therefore, adding synthetic turf in place of existing natural turf is a priority. Synthetic turf increases the capacity of a field to serve users year-round.

OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

In 2010, Parks & Community Services conducted a study of off-leash dog areas. The study considered what other neighboring and regional cities were providing in terms of facility types and quantity. Currently, the city has one official off-leash area at Robinswood Park, which is scheduled to be improved and expanded. To provide additional capacity, more off-leash areas are recommended, distributed across the city. While demand for this type of recreational facility is growing, potential conflicts between off-leash dogs and other park users must be carefully considered. As such, candidate sites are those that:



- Are without established recreational use
- Consider previous community-based planning processes
- Provide generous residential buffers
- Assume close-by parking
- Are compatible with other uses
- Complement visual park character
- Can address sensitive environmental concerns

In studying off-leash facilities provided in neighboring cities and in speaking with local off-leash dog area users, it is clear that the 40-acre off-leash facility at Marymoor Park in Redmond is considered one of the premier off-leash facilities in the northwest. Considering Marymoor's close proximity to Bellevue, Parks & Community Services will focus on filling the expressed need for smaller sized facilities designed to primarily serve the needs of Bellevue residents.

FACILITIES SERVING DIVERSE AGE AND RECREATION PREFERENCES

Within the past ten years, Parks & Community Services has made a programmatic shift in terms of how and where age-specific services are provided. Prior editions of this plan have recommended facilities designed to serve older adults and facilities to serve youth and teens. The shift is to continue to expand services for specific age groups, but not necessarily in a discrete location intended to serve the entire city. Focus groups and discussions with Bellevue residents representing these age groups support this shift, in large part because of transportation barriers that are experienced by both age groups.

In order to accomplish this goal, space must be made available within existing community centers and other community buildings for programs such as age-specific fitness classes that can be effectively offered at multiple locations throughout the city as opposed to being offered only at one specific site.

There is also a need for unique facilities that may have a smaller base of users, but with numbers sufficient to justify one or more facilities to serve users city-wide. These facilities can be provided in one of two ways. Some facilities can justify charging a fee for services as a way to either limit or schedule use, or support the operating expenses of that facility. Examples of these include golf courses, indoor pools or tennis centers. Other facilities do not require scheduled access to operate efficiently or may be one element of a multi-use facility. Examples of such facilities include skate parks, designated off-leash dog areas, open unstructured areas used for new or non-traditional sports or games, and cultural programs. Parks & Community Services will continue to track community preference to provide a wide range of alternative sport and recreation programs and facilities to competently meet diverse needs.



CAPITAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Active Recreation Activities

OPPORTUNITIES:	ACQUIRE	DEVELOP	ENHANCE / PRESERVE
North Bellevue Community Center Addition		●	●
Facilities providing recreation and interaction for diverse cultures, ages and abilities		●	●
Community center serving Northwest, Downtown and West Bellevue neighborhood areas		●	
Sportfields Synthetic field surfaces Two lighted ballfields at Marymoor Park Lighted sportfields at Bellevue Airfield Park Lighted fields at selected community and school sites Improve school sportfields Ballfield at Wilburton Hill Park		●	●
Off-leash dog areas, expand Robinswood and add additional sites across the city		●	●
Enterprise Fund facility improvements Golf courses Robinswood Tennis Center Bellevue Aquatic Center Large group picnic areas with shelters and facilities			●



Urban Parks Systems

In a high-density urban environment, green spaces provide a soft and human-scaled contrast to the hard edges and large scale of the greater urban landscape. Interspersed among office buildings and retail areas, parks and open spaces bolster the feeling of a “City in a Park” and are an important amenity necessary to attract visitors and potential businesses. Parks, plazas, green spaces, broad sidewalks, seating areas, through-block pedestrian trail corridors, artwork, and seasonal colors enhance the richness and variety of the built environment.

Urban park system development or planning is underway in three areas including Downtown, BelRed and the Eastgate I-90 Corridor. Downtown has achieved and is continuing to build out this higher-density urban lifestyle that didn't exist in Bellevue 20 years ago. BelRed is just beginning its transformation, and the Eastgate I-90 Corridor is at the starting gate. To attract new residents and employers to these areas, a significant, new style of parks and open space system is envisioned. Parks designed for urban areas differ substantially from those designed to serve lower density single family neighborhoods. As such, the unique challenges of developing an urban park system are described in this section, focusing first on Downtown, then on Bel-Red and Eastgate, and finally on issues that equally affect these areas.

DOWNTOWN BELLEVUE

Downtown is the city's financial and business hub and the area where the majority of new residential and employment growth is occurring and will continue to occur well into the future. Downtown represents less than two percent of Bellevue's land area, but will accommodate exponentially higher percentages of Bellevue workforce and resident populations. Maintaining a livable urban environment while accommodating significant new growth depends on creating a parks and open space system that responds to the unique needs of this community.



Meeting Downtown's parks, open space, and recreation needs requires a different approach than used elsewhere in the city. Limited land availability with its resulting high costs precludes opportunities that exist in other areas and requires a distinct treatment for open space needs and solutions.

A system of coordinated and connected open spaces requires commitment from both public and private sectors. Public-private partnerships will be critical to meet the recreation needs of the people who live and work in the Downtown neighborhood. Since most land in Downtown is privately owned, the City is dependent to a degree upon developers to incorporate exciting and inviting public spaces into their development projects. To accomplish this goal, the City provides incentives through the zoning code allowing Downtown developers to achieve greater development potential in exchange for amenities that



benefit the pedestrian experience and add to publicly accessible open space. These amenities can include arcades, plazas, active recreation areas, public art, and landscaped green spaces.

While this method of providing public spaces has resulted in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor public amenities, there are drawbacks. The private developers designing these spaces may not place the highest priority on serving the public. This can result in public spaces that are

awkwardly placed, difficult to find, disconnected from the street and otherwise unwelcoming. Also, control and management of these spaces remains private, and rules governing access can be more restrictive in policy or practice than in a publicly owned park.

The core objectives for the park and trail system in Downtown were conceived in 2002 as part of the City's overall Downtown Implementation Plan initiative. The report identified emerging themes and developed recommendations addressing urban trail system connections, parks and open space areas, active recreation opportunities, a community center, and human services needs. The City launched a re-assessment of the Downtown land use code in 2014 that evaluated the livability and economic vitality of Downtown. That process validated the original 2002 plan for adding public park space and trails. As that planning process continues into 2016, the amenity incentive system for development may be adjusted to recalibrate the system to match the current need for amenities in the area, including additional public parks.

Southwest Quadrant

The Downtown Park, at just over twenty-one acres, is the cornerstone of the Downtown open space system. It provides interesting, attractive, and safe places for active and passive recreation uses. The park's large open space areas provide a prime location for special events throughout the year. Completion of the Downtown Park circle, per the updated 1997 Master Plan, continues to be an important goal. The "Complete the Circle" project was funded through the 2008 parks levy. It is designed and ready to be implemented. A new and expanded playground designed for universal access is also ready for construction of its first phase with the fundraising assistance from the Bellevue Rotary. One element of the master plan yet to be realized is creating a more prominent visual park presence on Bellevue Way. This will enhance Bellevue's "City in a Park" image on this key Downtown arterial.



Visual and physical connections from the Downtown Park to Meydenbauer Bay will provide links between the Downtown and Meydenbauer Bay Park. Because of the Downtown's close proximity to the Bay, connecting these two amenities enhances the uniqueness of this environment and provides additional recreational, retail, and tourism opportunities.

Northeast Quadrant

The three acre Ashwood Park is currently maintained with a large grass area, hardscaped plazas and a parking lot used jointly by the King County Regional Library and park users. A new master plan for the park was identified as a Bellevue City Council priority in 2014. Significant change has occurred in the area with the departure of the Rosalie Whyte Doll Museum and the arrival of KidsQuest Children's Museum. The combination of Ashwood Park, the library and KidsQuest all within the same block has established Ashwood as a preferred place for families seeking to live a more urban lifestyle. Absent for many decades, school buses have now returned to NE 10th Street for pick-up and drop-off each day. Now that the

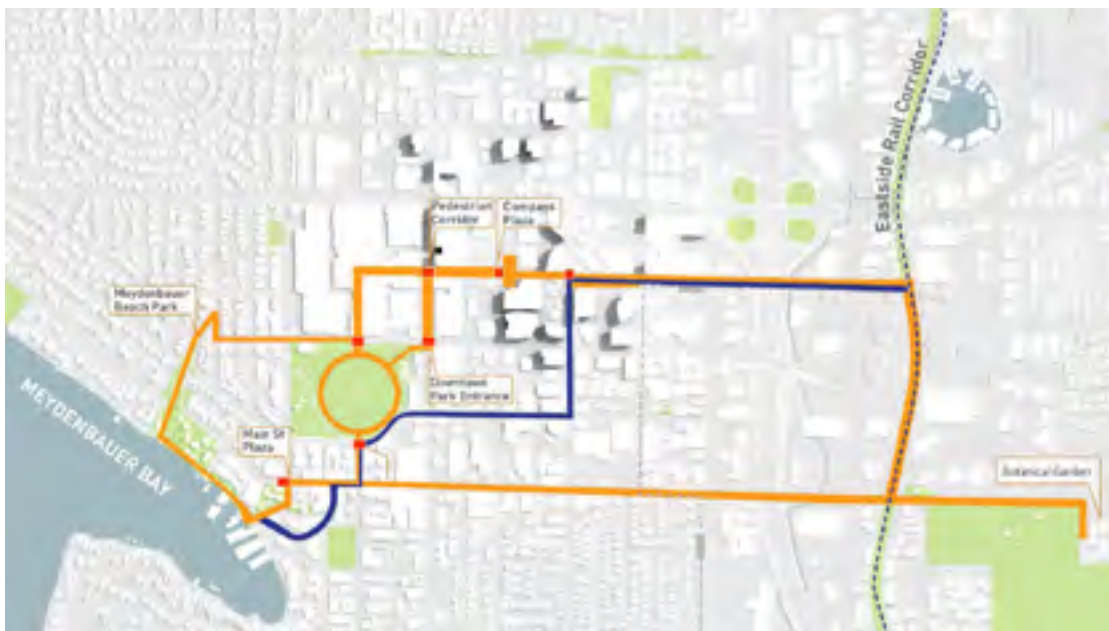
character of the neighborhood is better understood, the new master plan will reflect a contemporary vision for the park. Future planning for the park will include the plaza south of the library and the Ashwood Plaza at the northeast corner of NE 10th Street and 110th Avenue NE.

Northwest and Southeast Quadrants

The Downtown open space system plan includes a minimum of 2.5 to 3 acres of parkland in addition to linear transitions and corner parks in Downtown's northwest and southeast quadrants. Although the context and form of these urban parks will differ from the more traditional suburban neighborhood parks, at least half of each site is proposed to be passive, green open space. These green open spaces will offer respite from a highly urban environment by providing neighborhood gathering space and areas for informal recreational opportunities. The remaining space is expected to provide more formalized hardscape areas, including plazas, water features, gardens, seating areas, and walking paths. These major open spaces, connected by urban trail systems, will support Bellevue's "City in a Park" experience. The Southeast Quadrant has taken steps toward achieving this plan with the purchase of two small properties along NE 2nd Street and the new park space on Main Street to be constructed by Sound Transit on top of the tunnel portal for light rail.

The Grand Connection

The 2014 City Council Vision included the following idea, commonly referred to as the Grand Connection. In the future, "from the sparkling waters of Meydenbauer Bay Park you can walk or bike east, through Downtown, across the I-405 Park to the Wilburton West center for business and entertainment. Along the way you enjoy nature, culture, street entertainment, a world fusion of food, and people from all over the planet." In 2015-16, the City will begin a formal planning process to refine the grand idea and set implementation steps. This work will complement the planning work underway for the Eastside Rail Corridor trail, setting the stage for a future where pedestrians and bicyclists will have a level of access into, out of and through Downtown Bellevue that will rival the level of access currently provided to cars and buses.



BELRED



Sketch envisioning a redeveloped BelRed Subarea

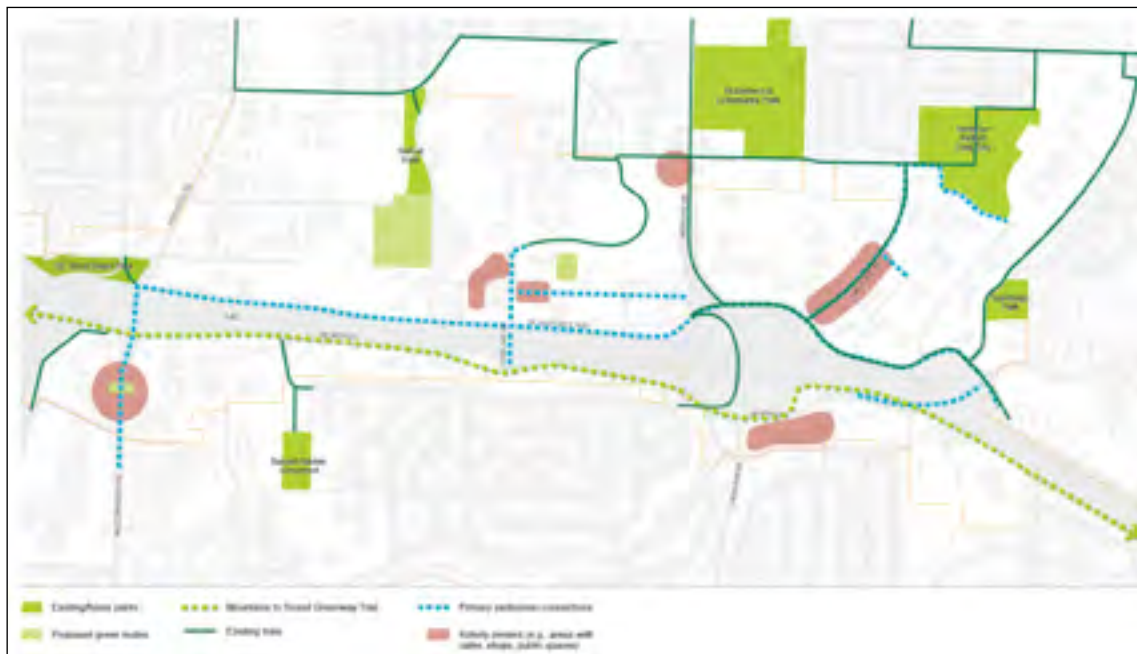
In 2008, the Bellevue City Council approved zoning and land use code changes that created the potential for a massive redevelopment of the BelRed area. In general, this area includes 900 acres north of Bel-Red Road, south of State Route 520 and east of Interstate 405. With construction of two light rail stations set to begin in 2016, the area is on its way toward transforming from low-density light industrial land uses to a high-density residential and employment center. According to the *BelRed Subarea Plan*, the goal for providing parks and open space is “to create a robust, aesthetically beautiful, and functional parks and open space system that serves the needs of Bel-Red and the broader community, and that connects with and complements the larger Bellevue parks and open space system.” Parks & Community Services illustrated this vision with a BelRed Parks, Open Space and Trails System Plan, setting guidelines for the character of the system that will come about over time.

Highland Park and Community Center are the only significant publicly owned park and recreation resources in the neighborhood. An extensive new system of neighborhood and community parks, restored natural areas and trail systems is envisioned. In order to build this system, the City created incentives within the Land Use Code to encourage private developer support in the acquisition and creation of the system. In addition, the City will also need to invest funds in the near future aimed at assembling and acquiring parcels of land that will be redeveloped into park, open space and trails, at a time when new residential and office space development occurs.



EASTGATE I-90 CORRIDOR

Between 2010 and 2012 the area north and south of I-90, from Factoria east to the Lakemont Boulevard interchange was the subject of a land use and transportation study. The resulting recommendations provide a framework by which the auto-dependent area can redevelop in a way that provides residents, workers and students in the area with better multi-modal transportation connections and increased community amenities such as parks and trails. The plan focuses on maximizing linkages to the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail and adding small-scale parks and open spaces in and among the commercial areas.



URBAN TRAIL SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

Trails through natural areas are the highest used and more desired type of facility for future development in Bellevue. Parks & Community Services has established a trail system the public perceives as a safe, well-maintained community asset. At the same time, the City is working to shift the transportation system to provide multi-modal opportunities and choices for residents and workers. Bellevue's trail system is a trusted brand that can aid in adding walkable access to Bellevue's existing and newer urban areas. Downtown, BelRed and Eastgate I-90 have potential for providing aesthetically pleasing and functional pedestrian linkages, which will encourage people to explore both the public and private spaces located within walking distance from where they live and work.

The City has set standards for transportation infrastructure projects and provides incentives to private developers to invest in non-motorized transportation amenities. These provide the public with inviting, attractive and functional pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments. Examples include dedicated off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities, small street-side plazas, fountains, seating areas, landscaping and public art.

In Downtown, the major Pedestrian Corridor is located between Bellevue Way and 110th Avenue NE, along the NE 6th Street right of way. The corridor acts as a significant component of the Downtown's

open space system and provides an east/west pedestrian spine through the center of Downtown. In addition, there are a number of mid-block pedestrian connections designated to “break up” the Downtown’s superblocks. These mid-block connections provide a safer and more human scale to the Downtown and provide more pedestrian-friendly features such as landscaping, benches, artwork, and fountains in an environment that encourages lingering. A similar plan has been designed for the larger Bel-Red area that envisions a network of urban trail connections allowing pedestrians and bicycle users to navigate easily within the area and connect to other trail systems within the city.

Pedestrian-friendly corridor opportunities include:

- Adding wayfinding and signage to the existing and future mid-block connections in Downtown, branding them as urban trails, similar to other trails throughout Bellevue.
- Major north-south trails where possible along 106th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE (the geographic ridge in Downtown), 110th Avenue NE and along the 15th/16th Street corridor in BelRed and the Mountains to Sound Greenway in Factoria/Eastgate.
- Connecting the Lake to Lake Trail to Lake Washington along Main Street or 2nd Avenue NE to complete a major component of the urban trail system.
- Connecting the trail system to key destinations, such as Bellevue Square, Bellevue Arts Museum, Meydenbauer Convention Center, Meydenbauer Bay, restaurants, the King County Regional Library, and major parks.
- Connecting existing City trail systems to the future Eastside Rail Corridor.

The urban trail system should integrate recreation nodes and urban plazas. Opportunities abound to create a vibrant and changing environment of both indoor and outdoor routes that enhance the pedestrian experience regardless of the weather.

ARTERIAL AND FREEWAY GATEWAYS

The design of urban gateways, when viewed from the I-405, I-90 and neighboring arterials, spotlights the quality of the streetscape that will be found throughout the city. These gateways deserve special design consideration to ensure a visually pleasing entrance that entices people to enter and explore these urban areas. The gateways can incorporate architectural elements, a variety of vegetation, water features, decorative paving, and interpretive or directional signage. Landscaped medians, similar to those used on Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street, also identify key locations such as the west terminus of the Pedestrian Corridor and the Downtown Park, and benefit pedestrians at major mid-block crossings.

CAPITAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

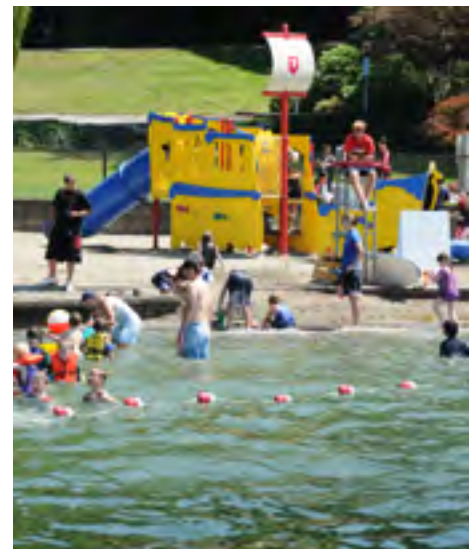
Urban Parks System

OPPORTUNITIES:	ACQUIRE	DEVELOP	ENHANCE / PRESERVE
Downtown NW & SE quadrant neighborhood parks Downtown Park Ashwood Park Main Street linear buffer greenway Urban Trail System Grand Connection Community center serving Downtown	●	●	●
Bel-Red Open space and off-street trail development Multi-purpose trail development Park acquisition and development	●	●	
Eastgate I-90 Corridor Open space and off-street trail development Multi-purpose trail development Park acquisition and development	●	●	●

Waterfront Access

Bellevue is bounded on the west by Lake Washington and on the east by Lake Sammamish. In addition, Phantom and Larsen Lakes are located within the city limits. However, for many in Bellevue, the lakes and shorelines are an unseen resource. Because of urban development, topography, and the almost continuous private ownership of the shoreline, the general public has limited visual and physical access to these lakes.

Of the 14 miles of shoreline along Lakes Washington and Sammamish, approximately 12 percent or slightly over 1.7 miles is in public ownership, with most located on Lake Washington. This



Chism Beach Park

ratio of public to privately owned waterfront is not sufficient to meet the demand of Bellevue residents. Since 2001, Bellevue residents have consistently listed community beaches, waterfront parks and boat launches as the top three priorities for additional parks development. To address this demand, Parks & Community Services continues to place a high priority on acquisition and development of additional waterfront while simultaneously optimizing the use of existing shoreline parks. This can be done through programming and special events, providing lifeguard services during busy seasons and by enhancing signage and wayfinding strategies to make it easier for park users to easily access these facilities.

MEYDENBAUER BAY

Meydenbauer Bay is a major focus for increasing Bellevue's access to the waterfront. The ultimate goal is to connect this waterfront parcel to the Downtown's commercial and residential areas and the Downtown Park. Achieving this vision will create a regionally significant park and waterfront destination.



Images from the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan



Developing Meydenbauer Bay Park and connecting it to Downtown is Bellevue's singular opportunity to identity itself as a waterfront city. The bay provides both a destination point and an opportunity to recognize the water's historical significance in the city's development. The City's Downtown Implementation Plan and the 2014 City Council Vision acknowledged the significance of visually and physically connecting Downtown to Meydenbauer Bay. Connecting Downtown to Meydenbauer Bay as part of the Lake to Lake Trail system and the Grand Connection to Wilburton and the Eastside Rail Corridor would provide convenient access to unequalled waterfront amenities.

LAKE SAMMAMISH

Waterfront acquisition opportunities on Lake Sammamish are limited. Much of the shoreline is steep and not suitable for public access. Where possible, acquisition priorities should focus on less steep areas to the north and south. A new park site on Lake Sammamish should accommodate swimming, picnicking, and support facilities. One undeveloped park site on Lake Sammamish has been acquired for future development. A developed park on Lake Sammamish could also serve as a destination point for the eastern end of Bellevue's Lake to Lake Trail system.

Vasa Park, a privately owned waterfront park within Bellevue, has 540 lineal feet of Lake Sammamish waterfront access and is open to the public for an entrance fee. Partnerships with the property owners should be explored to ensure the park remains available for public use. The City should pursue future public ownership of Vasa Park should the opportunity arise.

ENATAI TO MERCER SLOUGH

Enatai Beach offers a rare opportunity to combine boating and water-oriented activities with Mercer Slough's wetland and passive recreation activities. Both areas are highly visible and have excellent access from the I-90 freeway and from the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail. Providing a physical and functional connection between these two popular water-oriented sites would be a significant benefit to Bellevue's residents.

DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



SE 40th Street Boat Launch

Enatai Beach Park and the SE 40th Street Boat Launch are key access points on Lake Washington, especially for boating enthusiasts. Additional boat launching facilities are very limited on Lake Washington, with one lane available in Kirkland, one on Mercer Island, and eight at Renton's Gene Coulon Park. Currently, kayaks and canoes can be rented from the boathouse at Enatai Beach Park. Developing the next phase of Enatai Beach Park will provide non-motorized boat launching opportunities and should be considered a high priority. The SE 40th Street Boat Launch is Bellevue's primary motorized boat launch

facility. Parking capacity should be further expanded to accommodate overflow occurring during peak boating use, which will require additional acquisition. The Swayolocken boat launch in Mercer Slough Nature Park currently allows for the launch of both motorized boats for use in Lake Washington and non-motorized boats for use in Mercer Slough. This launch is scheduled to be redeveloped and improved.

Although Chism Beach is developed and open to the public, only about half of the existing waterfront is readily accessible. Redevelopment of this park is needed to better utilize this valuable asset. Additionally, renovation and redevelopment of Clyde Beach Park will offer opportunities to restore shoreline conditions to a more natural state while creating enhanced public access and recreation opportunities.

ACQUISITION CONSIDERATIONS

Continued acquisition of waterfront property is challenging due to cost and limited opportunities. Acquisition will take time and depend on opportunity. Resources must be available to acquire key waterfront properties when they become available. Creative acquisition strategies, such as lease-backs, renting, and life estates, have been used to acquire some of the waterfront land assembled to date. The continued use of these less-than-fee techniques will be critical as the City continues to acquire these properties. More aggressive pursuit of grants and other outside revenue sources will also be needed.

CAPITAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Waterfront Access

OPPORTUNITIES:	ACQUIRE	DEVELOP	ENHANCE / PRESERVE
Meydenbauer Bay Park		●	
Meydenbauer Bay Park to Downtown Park connection	●	●	
Connect Enatai Beach Park to Mercer Slough Nature Park	●		
Complete phased development of Enatai Beach Park		●	
SE 40th Boat Launch addition	●	●	
Sweyolocken Boat Launch redevelopment			●
Lake Sammamish waterfront	●	●	
Chism Beach redevelopment			●
Clyde Beach redevelopment			●
Additions to existing waterfront parks	●		



Partnership Opportunities

Increasing service demand and decreasing funding capabilities lead the City of Bellevue to seek innovative ways to maintain existing parks and facilities and to increase recreation opportunities. Developing partnerships with other public agencies, the school districts, and private for-profit and non-profit organizations will help meet increased demands for service. In addition, partnerships enable Parks & Community Services to serve a broader clientele, offer new services, and provide existing services more effectively than could be provided individually.

By definition, partnerships must be a collaborative relationship between two or more organizations with similar missions that pool their resources and work together to deliver mutually beneficial services. Some existing City partners include: the Bellevue School District, Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, Pacific Science Center, Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue, Jubilee REACH Center, Eastside Heritage Center, Youth Eastside Services, Master Gardeners of King County, and A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). Many more partnership possibilities exist which could help enrich and expand park, recreation and community services for Bellevue residents.

REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL PARKS AND FACILITIES

One challenge inherent in providing park and recreation facilities in East King County is the fact that there are fifteen different municipalities, most of which operate independent park and open space systems. Yet, residents of the Eastside will use any park in any city that meets their specific need. A problem arises in the case of a large scale or highly specialized recreation facility designed to serve a population greater than any one city. These facilities include competitive aquatic centers, ice skating rinks, sports stadiums, outdoor sports complexes, and regional trail systems. To provide these facilities to their residents, Eastside jurisdictions must work together in partnership with each other and in some cases with for-profit or non-profit organizations to assemble the necessary resources to develop and operate such facilities. The City of Bellevue is committed to working through partnerships to develop additional regional or subregional facilities where demand exists.

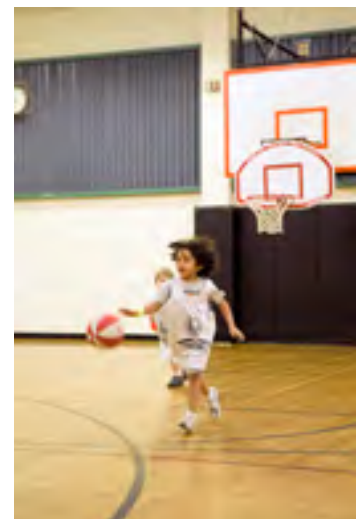
One example of such a facility is a regional aquatic center. In 2009, Parks & Community Services completed a feasibility study exploring a range of facility options and operating models. The study was commissioned in response to a general lack of indoor community pool facilities on the Eastside that are configured to adequately serve the competitive needs of the region. The study found that there is a market for a large-scale aquatic facility that would serve competitive teams, clubs and the general public. Five types of facilities were studied ranging in size and cost from a \$19 million outdoor facility to an \$84 million national-level indoor competitive facility. A community organization, Swimming Pools for Leisure Active Sports and Health (SPLASH), has organized to support development of a multi-use, 50-meter complex for recreational and competitive use on the Eastside.



Another regional project with a significant role for Bellevue is the Eastside Rail Corridor. The Corridor is somewhat unique in that while approximately seven miles of the corridor crosses through the city, Bellevue does not have an ownership interest. The corridor is owned by King County Parks with the exception of a two-mile segment owned by Sound Transit. Across the whole corridor several other public entities — including Redmond, Kirkland, Renton, Woodinville and Puget Sound Energy — are involved in planning the future use of the corridor.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

School District properties are important components of Bellevue's open space system. Using school sites to supplement City-operated recreational facilities is needed to satisfy community demand for active indoor and outdoor recreation space. The Bellevue School District operates 29 schools within or adjacent to the city; the Issaquah School District operates two schools within Bellevue's city limits; and the Renton School District has an elementary school immediately adjacent to the city boundary. In addition,



Tyee Community Gym

other public schools such as Bellevue College and private schools within Bellevue can offer partnership opportunities for Bellevue.

Elementary schools, usually eight to ten acres in size, are suitable for passive and/or unorganized activities and youth athletics. They incorporate many uses typical of a neighborhood park. Middle schools, usually about 20 acres in size, have indoor and outdoor sports facilities. High schools, averaging 35 to 40 acres in size, have tennis courts, sportfields, tracks, and multiple gyms for competition and recreation.

The partnership between the City and Bellevue School District has evolved within the past several years. Parks & Community Services used to schedule community use of school district outdoor recreation fields. The school district has now taken over that responsibility. While the partnership in this area has waned, other partnerships are growing. Eastside Pathways is a community movement to increase academic and life skills outcomes for all children in Bellevue. The City and School District are heavily engaged in this collective impact work. In other areas, the District's Equity Office has worked closely with the city's Diversity Advantage Initiative to work on areas of common interest around access, equity and integration within Bellevue's increasingly diverse resident population.

As the community demographics change over time, the need for school facilities will also change. The Bellevue School District has a policy that gives local municipalities first right of refusal to purchase surplus school lands. In the event school properties are surplus, top priority should be given to acquiring these properties for park-related purposes. Many of Bellevue's existing parks have been developed from surplus school property. When evaluating the appropriateness of acquiring a surplus school site, the City considers the property characteristics and particular needs of the area in which the site is located. The criteria are applied in the following order:

- **Distribution:** Priority is given to sites in areas showing deficits in available parks or open space, or if deficits would be created if these public properties were sold.
- **Adjacency:** Priority is given to sites that are adjacent to existing parks, because they represent opportunities to expand or increase available recreational space.
- **Existing facilities:** Priority is given to sites with existing recreational facilities such as gyms, ballfields, tracks, and playgrounds.

PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT AND NON-PROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to Parks & Community Services' traditional partnerships with the Bellevue School District and other public agencies, the department has become more innovative in exploring other partnerships to benefit Bellevue residents. Many examples can be given of partnerships with local non-profit organizations that provide recreation opportunities or community services to Bellevue residents. Crossroads Park is home to two facilities serving children and youth, Kindering Center and Youth Eastside Services. The City has established multiple partnerships with Jubilee REACH Center, a non-profit utilizing an old school district facility to provide a wide range of human services and programs for children, youth, teens and families in the Lake Hills neighborhood. As an emergency response initiative, an agreement with a non-profit agency has been established to offer an overnight shelter for homeless individuals during cold winter weather. All of these examples are instances where non-profits make use of Parks & Community Services facilities and vice versa.

Due to real estate values and commercial lease rates, the city of Bellevue is a challenging place for non-profit agencies to find or afford the space needed to offer their programs. Similarly, Parks & Community Services experiences space constraints that limit the full range of programs and services that could be offered if space were available. Using partnerships to create the highest and best use of existing public and non-profit facilities and collaborating to secure more space within the community is an important part of making needed recreation and community services available to Bellevue residents. An example of this could be giving preference, where appropriate, to non-profit housing providers when leasing single or multi-family homes on property owned by Parks & Community Services.

Another type of partnership witnessed in many park systems across the country are non-profit organizations established to benefit a specific park or program. These are commonly referred to as “Friends of” organizations. The King County Library System has an established a “Friends of” network for individuals interested in supporting their local library. To date, these types of organizations have not been established in significant number for parks in Bellevue. However, one example is the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, which raises funds for and assists in the operation of the Botanical Garden. Their support was critical to the recent redevelopment of the Botanical Garden. Similarly, the Bellevue Youth Theatre Foundation was established to assist in fundraising for the new Bellevue Youth Theatre at Crossroads Park. Another example is the Eastside Heritage Center, which has long supported the historical interpretation of landmarks managed within the parks system.

Establishing partnerships with private for-profit corporations is another avenue to leverage and expand the impact of existing public investment in parks, open space, recreation and community services. In these cases, opportunities can be developed for grants or other forms of financial investment geared to fit with the mission or purpose of the private enterprise. Establishing these partnerships can help create connections within the local business community.

One project that could benefit from partnership with an existing non-profit agency, a new “Friends of” organization, or even a for-profit partner is the establishment of a Cultural Center in Bellevue. This project was first recommended in the 1993 Cultural Diversity Task Force Report and Community Action Plan. It was later supported in the Cultural Compass and the recent Bellevue Diversity Advantage plan, adopted by the City Council in 2014.



The concept of the Cultural Center is to provide a facility that would facilitate education and dialogue among ethnically and socially diverse communities within Bellevue. Bellevue is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Washington State. This diversity presents unparalleled opportunities for community enrichment and economic development. For example, the Crossroads Bellevue Shopping Center incorporates ethnic and cultural diversity into its business model as a strategy to attract shoppers with the co-location of ethnic food vendors, shops and cultural arts programming. In 2016, Bellevue's Diversity Advantage Initiative will form a community-based stakeholder group to begin forming the shape a Cultural Center may take in Bellevue.

CAPITAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Partnership Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY:	ACQUIRE	DEVELOP	ENHANCE / PRESERVE
Elementary, middle and high school recreation site improvements			●
Partner with other City departments to create parks		●	
Partner with other public agencies to create parks, including but not limited to Bellevue School District, Cascade Water Alliance, Sound Transit, Seattle Public Utilities, Washington State, King County and Bellevue College	●	●	
Partner with private non-profit or for-profit organizations to create parks where advantageous to achieve capital project goals	●	●	
Aquatic facility	●	●	
Historic building preservation			●
Cultural arts center	●	●	



Historic, Cultural and Art Resources

Bellevue's historic places, buildings and cultural heritage are the community's inheritance from the past. Preserving and interpreting that cultural history is a gift to the future. The City has a strategic vision of arts and culture called the Cultural Compass. The vision identifies eight goals with associated strategies aimed toward preserving and building cultural assets and infrastructure for the Bellevue community.



F.W. Winters House – circa 1930s and today Image courtesy Eastside Heritage Center [1999.09.01]

Parks & Community Services recognizes the important role of preserving and commemorating the city's past through historical sites that are located within the parks and open space system. In the September 2015 representative sample survey of Bellevue residents, 50% of respondents felt it important that Parks & Community Services play an active role in preserving historical structures and heritage sites. Parks & Community Services also provides opportunities for citizens to enjoy contemporary cultural and arts resources. Many parks and facilities provide cultural events and arts programs. For example, public art is displayed in some parks and buildings through a partnership with the City of Bellevue Arts Program. Interpretation of Bellevue's history and offering opportunities to experience cultural arts are important components of building a healthy community.

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Incorporated in 1953, some question whether Bellevue has any history of which to speak. But, the natural features that draw many to live in Bellevue today have been drawing people to this area for hundreds of years. Native American settlements and trade routes crossed from lake to lake, and not long after European settlers arrived in Seattle, they began to make their way across Lake Washington to Bellevue's shores. Yet, the Bellevue that most people picture in their minds came about during the exponential growth that occurred in the 1950's and 1960's. Today, in 2016, that Mid-Century period is becoming a significant historic timeframe of its own.

The 1997 Bellevue Historic and Cultural Resources Survey documents the area's architectural and cultural heritage, including Bellevue's inventory of historic buildings, structures, and objects. The survey identified, described, and evaluated the significance of surviving structures representing the different phases of Bellevue's history.

Parks & Community Services maintains a stewardship responsibility for a number of these historical and cultural properties, due to their location within the parks system. These include:

- Hans Miller Homestead at Robinswood Park
- Highland Community Center
- Winters House, Sullivan House and the Overlake Blueberry Farm at Mercer Slough Nature Park
- Twin Valley Barns in Kelsey Creek Park
- American Pacific Whaling Fleet Buildings at Meydenbauer Bay
- Larsen Lake Blueberry Farm in the Lake Hills Greenbelt
- Cal and Harriet Shorts House and the Sharp Cabin at the Bellevue Botanical Garden
- McDowell House adjacent to the Bellevue Botanical Garden

A new opportunity to preserve an iconic historic structure in Bellevue will come about with the future development of a regional trail along the Eastside Rail Corridor. The corridor, owned primarily by King County Parks, includes the Wilburton Trestle, which is listed on the Washington Heritage Register. The City of Bellevue will work closely with King County to plan for a future trail that includes use of the Wilburton Trestle. The Trestle spans 975 feet and extends 102 feet up from the ground below. With expansive views of Downtown Bellevue and Mercer Slough, the Trestle will be a thrilling and beautiful piece of history for trail users to experience.

Several historic buildings, including the Fraser Cabin in Kelsey Creek Park and the Danieli/Matsuoka Cabin in the Lake Hills Greenbelt, were relocated to park sites when the cabins were threatened with demolition. Unfortunately, relocating historic structures often eliminates their historical context. However, much of the property adjacent to the original sites of these structures had been dramatically altered, and the City determined it was more important to preserve a piece of history by relocating the structures rather than allowing them to be demolished.

Highlighting the historic character of elements within the parks system is an effective way to encourage park visits and physical activity. For example, organized hikes through Coal Creek Natural Area are arranged with a guide who can point out historical evidence of coal mining in the region. Similarly, the Heritage Loop Trail within Mercer Slough Nature Park leads visitors around a trail with markers and interpretive signage describing the history of agriculture within the Mercer Slough. The Winters House, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, anchors the loop trail. Through a partnership with the Eastside Heritage Center, ongoing exhibits and special events highlight the history of the house, its farm and life in early Bellevue. The city's agricultural heritage can also be experienced at Kelsey Creek Farm and within the Lake Hills Greenbelt. Preserving the last vestiges of our agricultural heritage in these parks provides opportunities for public education and hands-on farming experiences.



These acts of historic preservation and interpretation become increasingly important as Bellevue's built environment continues to age. As a general rule of thumb, the historic significance of a building starts to be evaluated when the structure reaches 50 years old. The homes, buildings, parks and places constructed when Bellevue was a fledgling city are just now reaching that 50-year-old threshold. For example, Bellevue has many examples of Modern style homes and commercial buildings that could now be considered historically significant. Defining the City's role in preserving examples of such structures and places is an important public discussion to facilitate.

Parks & Community Services embraces its role in preserving and interpreting the portion of the city's historic and cultural resources that are located in parks. However, the City does not have a city-wide historic preservation program. With a limited role, the City is reliant on maintaining and preserving these sites with other public and private partners. Through partnerships, the City can provide opportunities for the Eastside Heritage Center and other community groups to utilize existing historical structures and places for interpretation and educational purposes. Likewise, the City can work with these groups to explore grant opportunities for the purpose of historical education and interpretation, as well as acquisition or restoration of historical properties.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ART RESOURCES



Bellevue's collection of outdoor sculptures, fountains, objects, and paintings acts as a museum without walls, fees, and viewing restrictions. It is accessible to everyone every day. This collection enriches the community's quality of life, provides a sense of place, and adds interest and vitality to the landscape. In addition to static displays of visual art, parks provide a backdrop for structured or unstructured performing arts.

In recent years, the need for the parks system to accommodate performing arts has heightened. The popularity and positive outcomes of the Bellevue Youth Theatre program resulted in the design and construction of a new indoor theatre with an integrated outdoor amphitheater at Crossroads Park. Opened in March 2015, the theatre has been used by a wide variety of community performing arts groups. The prior theatre building at Ivanhoe Park has been maintained and remains in use as a performance and practice venue for many community arts groups.

Adding additional indoor performance space is supported by the City's *Cultural Compass Plan*, adopted by the City Council in 2004. In addition to indoor space, public opinion gathered for the update of this plan noted a need for existing and newly designed park features to include space designed to accommodate performing arts outdoors. Features could include amphitheaters, band shells or open outdoor stages. These features could be used for special events and professional performing arts presentations or used anytime by anyone visiting the park who feels compelled to take to the stage – with or without an audience. In 2015, a travelling theatre group staged a Shakespeare play at Downtown's Ashwood Park for several hundred attendees. The amphitheater at Crossroads Park, and the terraced circle to be completed at Downtown Park, will help address some of this demand.

Parks & Community Services maintains a strong partnership with the City's Arts Program to create opportunities for individuals to experience visual and performing arts. The purpose of the Arts Program is as follows:

The City of Bellevue accepts a responsibility for expanding the public experience with visual arts. Such works of art create a more visually pleasing, humane environment, and add to the overall beautification and cultural climate of the City of Bellevue and the quality of life of its citizens.

To implement this mission, the Bellevue Arts Program has a strategic vision with three basic goals:

- Use public art to define and enhance an urban walkway from City Hall to the waterfront.
- Facilitate private investment in public art.
- Engage neighborhoods in commissioning public art.

The parks system often houses public art purchased by this program. As caretaker for these resources, the Department works cooperatively with Bellevue Arts Program staff and Bellevue Arts Commission to ensure that artwork is acquired and sited appropriately in the parks system. Parks & Community Services will continue being an active partner with other public and private organizations involved in expanding the city's arts and cultural opportunities.

Project Prioritization Criteria

The ultimate goal for Bellevue's park system is to create an interconnected web of parks and open spaces all within easy access of residential and commercial neighborhoods so that Bellevue remains a "City in a Park" for generations to come. This will be accomplished by appropriately balancing the City's investments among priorities of acquiring park and open space land, renovating and redeveloping existing parks, and developing new parks. Equally important is attracting new investment in the system through partnerships and funding relationships with other public and private institutions.

This section pulls all of the capital project objectives from the focus areas and maps the approximate location of each (if known). These include capital investments for acquisition, development, and redevelopment projects. Investment necessary to fund renovation of existing parks and facilities is discussed in the following chapter.

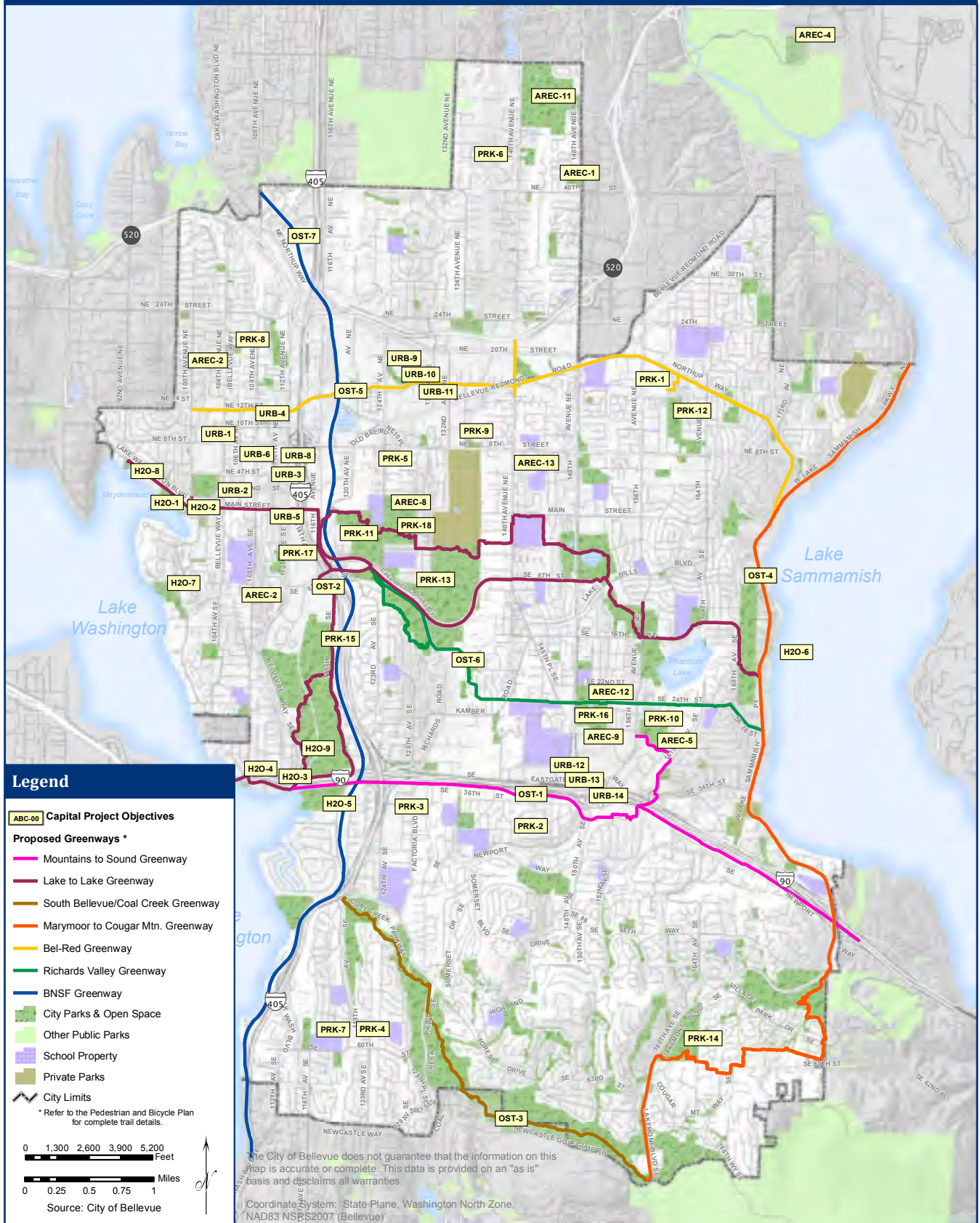
Projects recommended in this plan will be implemented according to the following criteria:

- Parks & Open Space System Plan consistency. Is the project consistent with the mission, vision, goals, objectives, standards, and recommendations of this plan?
- City Council priority. Does the project respond to a City Council priority, an adopted plan or ordinance?
- Maintenance and operations impacts. What are the maintenance and operations impacts of this project and are there opportunities for partnerships? Will the project create a revenue stream sufficient to support itself?
- Citizen input. Is the project a Parks & Community Services Board priority or is it supported by another board or commission, advocacy group, through public surveys, the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, or other public input?
- Geographic distribution. Will the project help meet the distribution standards of parks and park facilities throughout the city?
- Multiple benefits. Does the project serve multiple user groups or respond to objectives in numerous plans?
- Special funding available. Does this project have the potential for special funding?

- **Affordability.** Is alternative funding available to match with the CIP funding? What is the benefit/cost analysis?
- **Neighborhood impacts.** Would the project have positive benefits to the surrounding neighborhood, and does the community support this project?
- **Suitability of site.** Are the proposed site's natural systems, topography, and neighboring land uses suitable for the project?
- **Economic impact.** Would this project have a favorable economic impact to Bellevue?
- **Urgency.** Is the project or acquisition a time sensitive opportunity that will be lost?



Capital Project Objectives



RECOMMENDED CAPITAL PROJECT LIST AND MAP

Open Space, Greenways, Wildlife Corridors and Trails

OST-1	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-2	Lake to Lake Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-3	S. Bellevue / Coal Creek Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-4	Marymoor to Cougar Mtn Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-5	Bel-Red Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-6	Richards Valley Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-7	Eastside Rail Corridor Greenway Trails: Multi-use Connections
OST-8*	Connect / Extend Trails: Enhance Connectivity and Walkability
OST-9*	Native Growth Protection Area Stewardship
OST-10*	Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan Implementation

Park Facilities

PRK-1	Add Neighborhood Park: Crossroads
PRK-2	Add Neighborhood Park: Eastgate
PRK-3	Add Neighborhood Park: Factoria
PRK-4	Add Neighborhood Park: Newport
PRK-5	Add Neighborhood Park: Wilburton
PRK-6	Improve Undeveloped Sites: Bridle Trails
PRK-7	Improve Undeveloped Sites: Newport
PRK-8	Improve Undeveloped Sites: Northwest Bellevue
PRK-9	Improve Undeveloped Sites: Wilburton
PRK-10	Continue Phased Development: Bellevue Airfield Park
PRK-11	Continue Phased Development: Bellevue Botanical Garden
PRK-12	Continue Phased Development: Crossroads Park
PRK-13	Continue Phased Development: Kelsey Creek Park
PRK-14	Continue Phased Development: Lewis Creek Park
PRK-15	Continue Phased Development: Mercer Slough Nature Park
PRK-16	Continue Phased Development: Robinswood Park
PRK-17	Continue Phased Development: Surrey Downs Park
PRK-18	Continue Phased Development: Wilburton Hill Park

*This project may not display on the project map as it could occur city-wide or does not yet have a physical location.

Active Recreation Facilities

- AREC-1 North Bellevue Community Center Addition
- AREC-2 Community Center Serving Northwest, Downtown and West Bellevue
- AREC-3* Sportfields: Synthetic Field Surfaces
- AREC-4 Sportfields: Two Lighted Ballfields at Marymoor Park
- AREC-5 Sportfields: Lighted Fields at Bellevue Airfield Park
- AREC-6* Sportfields: Lighted Fields at Community and School Sites
- AREC-7* Sportfields: Improve School Sportfields
- AREC-8 Sportfields: Ballfield at Wilburton Hill Park
- AREC-9* Off-leash Dog Areas: Expand Robinswood and add additional sites
- AREC-10* Facilities Serving Diverse Cultures, Ages and Abilities
- AREC-11* Public Golf-Related Facility Improvements
- AREC-12 Robinswood Tennis Center Improvements
- AREC-13 Bellevue Aquatic Center Improvements
- AREC-14* Add shelters and facilities to large group picnic areas

Urban Park Systems

- URB-1 Downtown: Add Neighborhood Park in NW Quadrant
- URB-2 Downtown: Downtown Park
- URB-3 Downtown: Add Neighborhood Park in SE Quadrant
- URB-4 Downtown: Ashwood Park
- URB-5 Downtown: Main Street Linear Buffer Greenway
- URB-6 Downtown: Add Community Center
- URB-7* Downtown: Urban Trail System
- URB-8 Downtown: Grand Connection from Meydenbauer Bay to ERC
- URB-9* Bel-Red: Open space and Off-Street Trail Development
- URB-10* Bel-Red: Multi-purpose Trail Development
- URB-11* Bel-Red: Park System Acquisition and Development
- URB-12* Eastgate I-90 Corridor: Open space and Off-Street Trail Development
- URB-13* Eastgate I-90 Corridor: Multi-purpose Trail Development
- URB-14* Eastgate I-90 Corridor: Park System Acquisition and Development

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Waterfront Access

- H2O-1 Meydenbauer Bay Park
- H2O-2 Meydenbauer Bay Park to Downtown Park Connection
- H2O-3 Connect Enatai Beach Park to Mercer Slough Nature Park
- H2O-4 Complete Enatai Beach Park Phased Development
- H2O-5 SE 40th Boat Launch Addition
- H2O-6 Lake Sammamish Waterfront
- H2O-7 Chism Beach Redevelopment
- H2O-8 Clyde Beach Redevelopment
- H2O-9 Swayolocken Boat Launch Redevelopment
- H2O-10* Additions to Existing Waterfront Parks

Partnership Opportunities

- PTNR-1* Elementary, Middle and High School Site Improvements
- PTNR-2* Partner with Other City Departments to Create Parks
- PTNR-3* Partner with School Districts and Other Public Agencies
- PTNR-4* Partner with Private Non-Profit or For-Profit Organizations
- PTNR-5* Aquatic Facility
- PTNR-6* Historic Building Preservation
- PTNR-7* Cultural Arts Center

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