

With proper planning, great things are possible

By Steve Kasner, East Bellevue Community Council Chair

With persistent community prodding and proper planning, great things can happen.

A flurry of positive developments for East Bellevue – including construction of a new Lake Hills Library, revival of the Kelsey Creek Shopping Center and a makeover of 145th Place Southeast – can be traced in part to the East Bellevue Community Council's advocacy.

Some people have asked me why all of this activity is happening in our area now. These projects are actually the culmination of more than a decade of hard work, including urging from the EBCC over the years.

Major projects take years to plan, design and build. As I have stated before, input from us gets the ball rolling. Please continue to provide us feedback on anything that is important to you.

Lake Hills Shopping Center Developments

The (new) Lake Hills Library has been open for over a year, and is always jam-packed with a very diverse group of our neighbors working on so many things. Due to our feedback, the temporary Sunday hours became permanent.

Over the next few years the Lake Hills Shopping Center will continue with its phased development to add more shopping and eventually living quarters around the perimeter of the property. I believe it will be a great community resource when it is finished.

The old Lake Hills Library space has been sold to the Bellevue Boys and Girls club, which will expand its excellent programming on this side of the city.

Staff from the BBGC came to the EBCC to highlight some of their innovative ideas, which include a unique partnership with the Samena club to provide more child care. In these tight money times, partnerships are crucial to stretching limited funds as far as they will go.

145th Place Southeast Makeover

In 2007 the city made major improvements to 145th Place Southeast between Southeast Eighth and Southeast 16th streets, adding bike lanes, sidewalks, a median and landscaping. This summer the city began extending the improvements to 145th Place southward, adding bike lanes, sidewalks, a center turn lane and medians between Southeast 16th and Southeast 24th streets.

Southeast 22nd Street is also being improved between 145th Place Southeast and 156th Avenue Southeast.

About a third of the way done, the project is targeted for completion next spring. If you have any questions about it, contact Marina Arakelyan, Senior Project Manager, 452-4632 or marakelyan@bellevuewa.gov.

Kelsey Creek Shopping Center Revival

There is lots of construction activity at the Kelsey Creek Shopping Center, with a new health club set to open in the former Kmart building by the end of the year. A grocery store should be open in the first quarter of next year.

City planner Mike Upston and/or the project owners Nat or Brian Franklin provide regular updates on the project's progress.

Mitigation funds paid to the city for this project have been used to enhance approximately seven acres of wetland along Kelsey Creek in Lake Hills Greenbelt Park. Invasive vegetation is being replaced by native plantings and habitat structures to help increase habitat diversity, protect water quality and create a healthier, more productive ecosystem.

Completion of the mitigation project is expected later this fall. For additional information contact Parks staff members Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor, 452-2740, or Dan DeWald, Natural Resource Manager, 452-6048.

EBCC Participation

In other EBCC news, we have updated our bylaws to include a section on electronic participation.

If you have suggestions to make our community a better place, drop into a meeting or send us a note so we can consider your input. Or even better, go vote for the people you believe can best represent you in the years to come.

The EBCC meets the first Tuesday of every month in the Lake Hill Clubhouse across from the Samena Club. You can sign up at http://www.bellevuewa.gov/ebcc_agendas_2011.htm to receive alerts whenever agendas are posted.

Thanks for reading and have a great day.