

Neighborhood News

City of Bellevue

News for and about Bellevue Neighborhoods

May 2007

Neighborhood character study underway

May and June Planning Commission meetings will focus attention on neighborhood impacts associated with infill and redevelopment. Commissioners will be seeking public input as they consider how to address neighborhood concerns about redevelopment pressures on community character, including:

- * Loss of trees and vegetation;
- * Increase in hardscape and increases in barriers such as walls and fences;
- * Significant changes in size, scale and architecture from surrounding homes;
- * Resulting loss of privacy, sunlight, territorial views and neighborhood identity.



The City Council referred the redevelopment issues to the Planning Commission on April 16 after hearing results of staff research and focus group discussions. Staff review of single family development files showed that 75 percent of all redevelopment since 2000 has been concentrated in certain west and northwest Bellevue neighborhoods. In a detailed review of “teardown” redevelopment in the years 2004 and 2005, staff found:

- * A 163% average increase in house size;
- * A 71% average increase in lot coverage;
- * 96% of all cases involved architectural change (additional stories, or significant style changes);
- * 97% of all cases showed significant loss of trees and vegetation;
- * 98% of all cases showed a significant increase in impervious surface.

Focus group participants agreed that continual reinvestment in homes has a positive effect on the appearance, value and vitality of single family neighborhoods. At the same time, the focus groups concurred in expressing concern about the impacts of certain types of redevelopment that depart significantly from surrounding neighborhood character.

The Planning Commission is tentatively scheduled to discuss redevelopment and neighborhood character during their meetings of May 16 and 23, and June 13 and 20. Staff’s goal is to bring the Planning Commission’s recommendations back to the City Council in July. Meanwhile, the commission will welcome any oral or written comments on this topic. For more information, please contact Cheryl Kuhn, 452-4089, or Steph Hewitt, 452-2564. Written comments for the Planning Commission should be addressed to Christina Behar, Comprehensive Planning, City of Bellevue, PO Box 90012, Bellevue 98009, or email cbehar@bellevuewa.gov.

Lots of neighborhoods will get ‘enhanced’ this summer

Neighborhood parks, trails, playgrounds and gardens are popping up this summer across the Bellevue landscape. 2007 is proving to be a banner year for citizen-selected projects funded by the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP), with several projects wrapping up or getting started during the warm months of summer and fall.

Scheduled for completion this year are projects in:

- * *Crossroads* – Skate Park at Highland Community Center, and community garden (“pea patch”) at Crossroads Park;



- * *Bridle Trails* – Landscaped median on 140th Avenue NE, and trail improvements on 132nd/134th Avenue NE;
- * *Wilburton* – Kelsey Creek landscaping and habitat enhancement, and new trail on SE 7th Street connecting the International School and the Lake Hills Connector;
- * *Sammamish/East Lake Hills* – Trails through the 41.5 open space, and restrooms at Spiritridge Park;
- * *Northwest Bellevue* – Ashwood Park fountain and seating area, NE 24th Street sidewalk (design);
- * *Newport* – Coal Creek Park trail;
- * *West Bellevue* – Trail and wetland enhancement on 112th Avenue SE, traffic calming on 108th and 104th Avenues SE, and Surrey Downs/Bellecrest landscaping (already completed);
- * *Woodridge* – Sidewalk on 128th Avenue SE (already completed);
- * *Northeast Bellevue* – NE 8th Street streetscape (166th-168th NE), Ardmore School play equipment, and Northup Way sidewalk (165th-168th – design).

Other NEP processes include: the recent Factoria selection of sidewalk improvements on 130th Place SE; the May vote to select projects for funding in Somerset; and the initiation of a new NEP three-year cycle beginning with Eastgate/Cougar Mountain this month. For more information on the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, contact Ron Matthew, 452-4075.

County projects impact west Bellevue neighbors, commuters

King County is currently working on three wastewater treatment projects in Bellevue. Major traffic delays on Bellevue Way southbound were expected to begin in late April. Delays due to minor traffic modifications on SE 6th Street and 112th Avenue SE were scheduled to begin in June.

- Sewer Pipe Interceptor Replacement
King County is installing a new sewer pipe interceptor underneath Bellevue Way SE (near SE 30th Street) and along the access road to the Sweylocken Pump Station. At the end of April, southbound traffic on Bellevue Way was reduced to one lane in the shoulder, and Metro bus routes were affected. For information detailing this project, please visit: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wtd/projects/BellevueWay/index.htm> or call the 24-hour construction hotline at (206) 205-9196.
- Bellevue Pump Station Upgrade
Beginning in June, King County will be installing a new force main along SE 6th Street, under Bellevue High School and I-405, to Wilburton. Construction is expected to last one year and will primarily impact traffic on SE 6th Street and 112th Avenue SE. For more information about this project, please visit: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wtd/projects/bellevue/>.
- Wilburton Odor Control Unit
This project is not slated for construction in 2007, but King County is considering some locations near the Wilburton trestle and is proactively seeking public input about the facility's location.

For questions regarding any of these projects, please contact Doug Marsano, Community Relations Manager, at (206) 684-1235 or via email at doug.marsano@metrokc.gov.

Electrical system, facilities under review

Express your opinions about electrical facilities and systems as the City continues to discuss an amendment to the Electrical Facilities / Utilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Outreach efforts began with an April open house, where neighborhood association leaders and interested individuals were invited to share comments and concerns about the electrical system and facilities serving Bellevue. As part of this discussion, community members, city staff, and Puget Sound Energy staff are working to find a balance between PSE's mission to provide efficient electrical service and the City's desire to protect neighborhoods from incompatible electrical facilities. For more information on this process, including upcoming discussions before the Planning Commission, please contact Nicholas Matz, 452-5371, or email nmatz@bellevuewa.gov.

Discover Lewis Creek programs

Fun and educational programs exploring the world of nature and wildlife are available to summer visitors at Lewis Creek Park. The one-hour programs are free, but pre-registration is required. Call 452-4195 to sign up for the June 1 Summer Bug Safari, June 9 Native Plant Walk, June 24 Forest Habitat, July 7 Noxious Weeds, July 12 Slithering Snakes, July 17 Wildlife Ways, July 25 Predators of the Sky, Aug. 3 "Toadally" Amphibians, Aug. 11 Track Trek, and Aug. 23 Cool Camouflage programs.

May 2007 meetings

(All meetings are in City Hall unless otherwise noted. Agendas are subject to change. Please feel free to confirm with Neighborhood Outreach the day before or day of the meeting.)

- 5/1 Human Services Commission** (6:30, Council Conference Room) Presentation by King County Alliance for Human Services, update on Regional Human Services Funding Initiatives
- 5/1 East Bellevue Community Council** (6:30, Lake Hills Clubhouse) Hearings on Comprehensive Plan Amendments related to the Southeast Bellevue Subarea Plan Map, Land Use Code Amendments concerning the Master Development Plan approval process, and the Hancock/Muren rezone application
- 5/3 Bellevue Network on Aging** (8:30 a.m., 1E-120) Civic Engagement Project presentation, logo discussion
- 5/3 Environmental Services Commission** (6:30, 1E-112) Farewell for Commission members Diane Pottinger and Jean-Pierre Ruiz, Natural Drainage Practice Project update
- 5/7 City Council** (6:00 study session, Council Conference Room) State of the Port report (8:00 regular meeting, Council Chambers) Human Services Commission update, appointment to Transportation Commission, Performance Measures Survey, resolution supporting Medic1 levy, West Nile virus contract
- 5/8 Parks & Community Services Board** (6:00, Council Conference Room) Agenda to be determined
- 5/8 Public meeting on Eastside Academy** (5:30, First Presbyterian Church Rm. S-150, 1717 Bellevue Way NE) Proposed operation of private Christian high school for 25-35 at-risk students
- 5/9 Planning Commission** (7:00, Council Conference Room) Tour and study session on Electrical Facilities section of the Comprehensive Plan/Utilities Element
- 5/10 Transportation Commission** (6:30, Crossroads Community Center auditorium) 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program public hearing and study session; Ped/Bike Plan update
- 5/10 Public meeting on Chestnut Hill Academy** (6:30, Room 1E-108) Proposed change of use to allow private K-8 school in office building under construction at 13717 SE 26th St.
- 5/14 City Council** (6:00 extended study session, Council Conference Room) Domestic partner benefits, first quarter budget monitoring report, supplemental Capital Investment Program (CIP), Transportation Facilities Plan list and impact fees, NE 6th and Downtown project coordination
- 5/15 Human Services Commission** (6:30, Council Conference Room) Briefing on immigrant and refugee issues, including ESL, Cultural Navigator Pilot, demographics; Cultural Diversity Program update; recap of state legislative actions
- 5/16 Planning Commission** (7:00, Council Conference Room) Study session on Neighborhood Character, briefing on Bel-Red preliminary preferred alternative
- 5/21 City Council** (6:00 study session, Council Conference Room) Development Services update, Bel-Red Draft Environmental Impact Statement (8:00 regular meeting) Parks & Community Services Board update, adoption of impact fee schedule, action on domestic partner benefits
- 5/23 Planning Commission** (7:00, Council Conference Room) Public hearing on 2007 Comprehensive Plan Amendments; briefing on the Ped/Bike Plan update, follow-up discussion of Neighborhood Character, Utilities Element Amendment, Community Retail Design Guidelines
- 5/28 Memorial Day Holiday** – City offices closed
- 5/29 City Council** (6:00 extended study session, Council Conference Room) Regional issues including jail study results, court study information on site and financing options, regional corridors, pricing/tolling; economic development, discussion of Utilities Element focusing on electrical transfer stations and underground utilities

Bellevue's Neighborhood Outreach Office offers a variety of programs and partnerships for neighborhood leaders and active residents. To learn more about citizen involvement opportunities and activities to enhance neighborhood quality, contact Cheryl Kuhn, 452-4089, or your Neighborhood Liaison.