

Introduction - The Planning Process

Why Plan?

Bellevue plans for people. People need a safe and secure place to live, an economy that provides jobs, ways to get around, schools and colleges, and recreational opportunities. It is the city government's responsibility to provide public services and facilities, develop policies, and adopt regulations to guide the growth of a city that meets the needs of its people. From incorporation to the present, the guide for Bellevue's growth and development has been the Comprehensive Plan.



Planning is all about people.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the orderly and coordinated physical development of a city into the future. A comprehensive plan anticipates change and provides specific guidance for future legislative and administrative actions. It reflects the results of citizen involvement, technical analysis, and the judgment of decision-makers.

The maps, goals, and policies of the plan provide the basis for the adoption of regulations, programs, and services which implement the plan. The plan serves as a guideline for designating land uses and infrastructure development as well as developing community services. Because Bellevue has been remarkably successful in achieving consistency between its comprehensive plan, regulations, and actual development, the present physical design and function of the city has evolved in an orderly fashion.

Who Plans?

Bellevue residents, business owners, and city staff work together to shape the future of their community through the ongoing development of the Comprehensive Plan. The planning process provides an opportunity for individual citizens to contribute to this effort by attending community meetings to identify issues of concern, by volunteering for citizen committees which oversee changes to sections of the Plan, or by serving on boards or commissions that function as citizen advisors to the City Council.



Citizens are actively involved in planning Bellevue's future.

In addition to the individual contributions from residents and business owners, the East Bellevue Community Council is involved in planning. For example, a community council representative may serve on a citizen advisory committee formed to review the Plan. In addition, community council meetings provide a forum to gather citizen input on planning issues. The informational meetings and courtesy hearings on comprehensive plan changes yield comments and suggestions that are conveyed to the Planning Commission and the City Council. As elected representatives of their community, they are also authorized to review and act upon certain land use decisions in their jurisdiction. Although their legal actions are valid only within their own jurisdiction, they evaluate the citywide implications of land use planning. The community council is also given the authority to advise and cooperate with the City Council on any local matters directly or indirectly affecting its jurisdiction.

The primary responsibility for formulating the Comprehensive Plan rests with the Planning Commission. The Commission is a citizens' committee appointed by the City Council to make recommendations to the Council for land use or policy changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Proposed changes to the Plan are discussed by the Commission at regular weekly meetings. Before making a recommendation, the Commission conducts public hearings on behalf of the Council. Information and comments presented by individual citizens, citizen committees, the community council, and other boards and commissions are weighed by the Planning Commission as it prepares a recommendation to City Council for revisions to the Plan.

The ultimate planning decisions are made by the City Council. The Council is responsible for initiating plan reviews, considering Planning Commission recommendations, and adopting the Comprehensive Plan. To implement the Plan, the Council is also responsible for adopting the city's budget, regulations and programs, and for levying taxes and making appropriations.

What's in this Plan?

This comprehensive plan is designed to be a readable, functional document that will guide Bellevue's future development and fulfill the city's regional responsibilities in growth management. This plan is organized into two volumes. Volume 1 contains the framework goals in the introduction, followed by the General Element chapters which contain goals and policies for each subject. Volume 2 contains goals and policies of the Subarea and Transportation Facility Plans.

Volume 1 is comprised of three sections. The first section contains introductory materials that establish: (1) the context for the Plan — Bellevue Yesterday, Today, and Challenges for Tomorrow; and (2) the framework for the Plan — Bellevue 2025 — which contains framework goals and statements that invoke an image of Bellevue's desired future and affirm community values.

The second section of Volume 1 contains all of the general plan elements. Each of the elements is organized into three basic components: (1) a statement or series of statements that synthesize the overall goal of the element; (2) an overview that describes the background and context for the element; and (3) a list of policies that, when implemented, will achieve the Plan's goals.

The final section of Volume 1 contains a Glossary of key terms.

How is the Plan Implemented?

Adopting a comprehensive plan is the first step toward realizing the city's vision. The vision is achieved when the Plan is implemented. Bellevue's implementation program is comprised of a combination of short-term and long-term actions. Some of the short-term actions include amendment of regulations such as the Land Use Code and the Traffic



Bellevue's skyline as seen from the Downtown Park.

Standards Code and approval of rezones that match the Plan’s land use designation. Long-term actions include subarea planning; monitoring, evaluating, and amending the Plan as conditions change; and developing a capital investment program that allocates resources to projects that will spur the city’s development in the direction envisioned in the Plan.

Profile and Vision

The Comprehensive Plan provides us with a picture of Bellevue as it is today and as we want it to be in the future. The plan is the foundation for preserving our heritage, meeting our challenges, and building an ideal future.

Bellevue Yesterday

The Early Days: Coal Mines, Logging, and Farms

Until the 1860s, the Bellevue area was inhabited primarily by Native Americans. Earliest accounts refer to longhouses somewhere in what is now the Wilburton Subarea. When coal was discovered in the Coal Creek area, settlers began to arrive, and by 1867, extensive mining was underway at the Newcastle Coal Mine. One of these early settlers was William Meydenbauer who claimed a homestead in 1869 on a bay in Lake Washington that now carries his name. Later his homestead was the site for a whaling station where whalers spent their winter months.

Late in the 19th century as more homesteaders claimed land, the community acquired permanent residents and a name, Bellevue. The first schools and churches were soon established, and commerce and industry followed. Along with the existing coal mining, logging emerged as an important industry. It is reported that the land now occupied by Bellevue Square was covered by trees, some measuring as great as 325 feet tall and nine feet in diameter. As the trees were harvested, farming replaced logging as a way to earn a living from the land.



Bellevue's first permanent school was built in 1892 at the southeast corner of Main Street and 100th Avenue.

By the 1920s, a road system connected Bellevue with other Eastside communities, and these communities were connected to Seattle by a network of small ferries that plied the waters of Lake Washington. This transportation network was important to Bellevue's thriving community of Japanese farmers who provided the region with fruits and produce from fertile truck farms. Remnants of these farms are still producing at Mercer Slough and in the Lake Hills Greenbelt.

Connections to Seattle: Building Bridges over Lake Washington

Events early in the 1940s were destined to change this small farming community forever. In 1940, the completion of the Lacey V. Murrow floating bridge provided a land link from Seattle to Mercer Island. This more direct route to Seattle from Bellevue invited a new influx of residents seeking a nice place to live among the trees with a short commute to downtown Seattle. The impacts of the bridge opening, including increased land values, were followed a year and a half later by the deeply regrettable internment of the Japanese farmers and their families. These two events spelled the end of Bellevue's agricultural era and the birth of its suburban era.

The quintessential evidence of Bellevue's emergence as a suburb was the 1946 opening of what is now known as Bellevue Square, the first shopping center in this region and one of the first such centers in the nation.

The Transition: Semi-Rural to Urban

Although Bellevue had emerged as the hub city on the Eastside by the early 1950s, it was still an unincorporated area in King County. With a growing population needing fire and police protection as well as other municipal services, Bellevue citizens voted to incorporate on March 24, 1953. At the time, Bellevue's population was 5,950. The importance this fledgling city placed on planning is evident from the first official act of the City Council. Ordinance No. 1 established a Planning



Bellevue was incorporated in 1953.

Commission. The Commission began immediately to involve the public in the preparation of a comprehensive plan which was adopted in 1958.

More growth, spurred by a second bridge across Lake Washington in 1963, supported the first comprehensive plan's vision that Bellevue would become a major city. The following decades were characterized by planning actions that shifted Bellevue's image from a semi-rural small town, to a bedroom suburb, to the Eastside's major employment, residential, and commercial center. Some of the key planning decisions are highlighted below at the end of this section.

BELLEVUE ON THE CUTTING EDGE

PLANNING HIGHLIGHTS

The 1950s – Setting the Framework for a Major New City

- Planning Director Fred Herman's vision and leadership leads to the creation of a plan that guides Bellevue's development from a small town to an urban center.
- A zoning code requirement for landscaping in commercial districts lays the foundation for Bellevue's park-like setting.
- Lake Hills, a planned community east of Bellevue, brings opportunity for homeownership to thousands of families.

The 1960s – Growing through Major Annexations and Land Acquisition

- Aggressive annexation program nearly quadruples the city's land area and population.
- Countywide Forward Thrust and local bond funds allow major parkland acquisitions that set the stage for "City in a Park."

The 1970s – Planning a City that Protects Its Neighborhoods and Environment and Recognizes the Benefits of a Vital Downtown

- 100-member Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee works on major plan revision.
- Rapid growth in the 1960s focuses attention on preserving and protecting single-family neighborhoods by focusing commercial and multifamily growth in designated areas.
- Bellevue creates one of the nation's first open drainage systems in an urbanizing area to carry storm water runoff and to protect wildlife habitat and spawning streams.

The 1980s – Recognizing Bellevue as the Eastside’s Center for Working, Living, and Playing

- Bellevue sets a course to create a mixed-use, people-friendly, urban place in the Downtown.
- Bellevue’s Sensitive Areas Ordinance regulates development near wetlands and streams and on steep slopes.
- City’s image as a “City in a Park” is enhanced with acquisition of more parkland and development of the Downtown Park, the Lake Hills Greenbelt, and portions of the Lake-to-Lake trail system.
- Urban Design Element is adopted to create a distinctive, people-oriented, and aesthetically appealing city.
- Bellevue develops leading edge Transportation Demand Management programs to reduce auto dependence.
- City funds variety of neighborhood safety and enhancement programs such as Neighborhood Enhancement Program and Neighborhood Traffic Control Program.
- City’s role in human services expands to include needs assessment, funding, and support of regional efforts to address human service issues.

The 1990s – Assuming Bellevue’s Role in the Region

- Bellevue takes major strides to increase affordable housing supply, and works with other Eastside jurisdictions to form the regional housing coalition—ARCH.
- Bellevue assumes leadership role in working with local and regional governments as the region grapples with implementation of the state Growth Management Act.
- To reduce urban sprawl, Countywide Planning Policies concentrate growth in Urban Centers, such as with Downtown Bellevue becoming the leading urban center for King County outside Seattle.
- Bellevue expands significantly south of I-90 with a series of annexations in the Newport Hills and Lakemont areas.

The 2000s – A Dynamic and Maturing City

- Bellevue turns 50 years old, and begins work to re-vitalize its older commercial centers to ensure they remain vibrant in the 21st century.
- City nears completion of annexing all remaining lands within its Potential Annexation Area, growing to its ultimate geographic limits.
- City re-thinks protection of Critical Areas (steep slopes, wetlands, riparian corridors) to ensure protections meet the “best available science” standard.
- City acquires park and open space land throughout the city, continuing Bellevue’s reputation as a “City in a Park.”

Bellevue Today – What Makes This A Special Place

A “City in a Park”

When viewed from the air, Bellevue clearly fulfills its image as a “City in a Park.” Lying between Lakes Washington and Sammamish, interlaced with miles of urban forests, open streams, wetlands, freshwater lakes, and foothills rising to almost 1,400 feet, Bellevue is blessed with a rich natural environment.



A City in a Park

The city treasures and protects these natural places, maintaining more than 2,432 acres – nearly 10 percent of its land area – in city-owned open space, including natural areas and developed parks, greenbelts, and wetlands. Even in the heart of the downtown business district, Bellevue’s Downtown Park provides a green respite, an informal gathering place and a popular location for special events and celebrations. Abundant vegetation softens the impacts of commercial areas and blends them into the natural environment.

Great Neighborhoods

Bellevue is a great place to live, and in 2004, more than 116,000 people make their home in the city. Residents choose from a variety of housing types and living environments, ranging from the quiet, older neighborhoods of east Bellevue, to the new apartment and condominium neighborhoods in the



Bellevue neighborhoods offer attractive living environments.

Downtown, to the Cougar Mountain view lots near Bellevue’s southern edge. Convenient and family-friendly neighborhoods offer excellent schools and neighborhood amenities. The community also provides options in senior and assisted housing for residents who would like to stay in Bellevue as their housing needs change.

A Strong Economy

Once a bedroom community, Bellevue is now the major employment center of the Eastside, with a local workforce of more than 130,000 people. The city's regional shopping centers and large commercial areas – including Downtown, Eastgate, Overlake, and the SR 520/Bel-Red Corridor – provide jobs for workers from throughout the region. Large community retail and mixed use centers at Crossroads and Factoria serve the shopping needs of the entire city while smaller centers provide goods and services to homes in their immediate area. The vibrant economy not only bolsters employment, but also helps keep city tax rates low.

A Vibrant Downtown



Downtown Bellevue is the Eastside's major urban center.

Bellevue's Downtown is among the Northwest's most distinctive business districts, featuring a successful mix of office towers, stores, theatres, restaurants and hotels, along with such institutional uses as museums, the regional library, and Meydenbauer Convention Center. An increasing number of people live in Downtown, where new apartment and condominium complexes are coalescing into true urban neighborhoods.

Well Maintained, Safe, and Clean

Visitors to Bellevue often remark that the city feels "safe and clean." Residents and businesses value well-maintained homes and properties. The city places a high priority on maintaining public infrastructure, opting to ensure that existing facilities are in good shape before building new ones. Bellevue is also a safe place, with relatively low crime rates for a community of its size.

A Regional Role – Anchor of the Eastside

Strategically located at the intersection of Interstate 90, State Route 520, and Interstate 405, Bellevue is both the geographic center and the economic anchor of the Eastside. The Countywide Planning Policies reinforce Bellevue's decisions to concentrate growth in the Downtown, preserve neighborhoods, emphasize mobility, protect critical areas, and provide affordable housing.

Today's regional problems, such as traffic congestion and urban sprawl, demand solutions on a regional scale. Bellevue works as a leader in the region to find those solutions, and to formulate and carry out growth management policies that work for the entire region.

Educated and Involved People

Bellevue is one of the most highly educated communities in the nation, with 54 percent of adult residents having achieved a Bachelor's Degree or higher. The city is also increasingly diverse, with almost one in four Bellevue residents born outside the United States, according to the 2000 federal Census. Residents have a strong sense of community and a high percentage are active in volunteer activities, community associations, and projects that help shape the city.

A Dynamic and Maturing Community

In 2003, Bellevue celebrated its fiftieth birthday with a year-long series of community events. The city has come a long way since the early days of coal mines, logging, and strawberry farms. For most of its history, the city has been annexing new territory, developing vacant land, and building new roads, parks, and utility systems. Today, Bellevue has come of age. Annexations in the next few years will be the city's last. Basic transportation systems, utility infrastructure, and parks are in place. As the economic and cultural hub of the Eastside, Bellevue faces a different set of issues, opportunities and challenges than those confronting the city in earlier decades.



The Farmers' Market supports local farmers.

Challenges for Tomorrow

Following are some of the critical community challenges which this Comprehensive Plan should address as Bellevue continues to evolve over the next twenty years.

Maintaining and Improving Neighborhood Livability

Bellevue's older neighborhoods, dating back to the 1950s, are beginning to show signs of age. The city's challenge is to work with residents to attract investment, maintain vitality and ensure these neighborhoods continue to be "great place to live." At the other extreme, Bellevue's new Downtown neighborhoods need investments in amenities that will help them develop as quality residential environments. To ensure that funding is available to cover these investments, the city may need to re-evaluate its overall financial strategy.

Achieving Downtown's Potential as an Urban Center

Whether Bellevue can realize the Downtown residential and commercial growth and development pattern envisioned in this plan is largely dependent on factors beyond the city's control, such as economic conditions and consumer demand. The challenge is to provide an effective foundation to envision, encourage and guide development that achieves the desired outcome as described in this plan and vision.

Growth Strategy Outside Downtown

Bellevue needs to put more effort into defining the roles of employment areas and shopping centers outside Downtown. This is important, because a diversified development strategy is key to Bellevue's economic future. The city needs to ensure it has the land use and building types that meet the needs of a changing market, and that older commercial areas remain vital and productive economic generators.



A variety of retail opportunities help meet the changing needs of Bellevue's citizens.

Maintaining Economic Vitality

To keep its economy strong, Bellevue must formulate and carry out an effective economic development strategy. The city must clearly define roles and priorities, and set aside the resources necessary to realize Bellevue's potential.

Regional Governance

Bellevue is part of a large and complex metropolitan region of 3.4 million people, Central Puget Sound. With four counties, 70 cities, Indian tribes, ports, and many

other special purpose districts, decision-making in this region is often characterized as fragmented. More work is needed to represent Bellevue's interests while helping the region make better decisions and prioritize limited resources.

Maintaining the Quality of City Services and Facilities While Meeting New Needs

In recent years a number of external events have compromised the city's ability to maintain high service levels. With such challenges as tax-rollback initiatives, a retrenchment in county roles and services, and state legislation that has the potential to erode local revenues, the city will need to re-think approaches and funding sources to meet the future capital needs of a livable, maturing community.



Bellevue provides top quality fire services.

Changing Demographics, Including the City's Role in Human Services

With the increasing social, cultural, and economic diversity of its population, Bellevue must develop ways to recognize, appreciate, and utilize this diversity in creating an inclusive community. The city needs to refine its services to meet the needs of a demographically evolving community.

Maintaining a Quality, Sustainable Urban Environment

Bellevue's strong commitment to environmental stewardship will be tested as the city absorbs more growth impacts. The challenge is to maintain the balance between growth and environmental protection, while dealing with such external developments as recent changes in environmental regulations.



Protecting the environment helps sustain wildlife.

Developing a More Dynamic Arts and Culture Sector

Bellevue has a strong foundation of arts and cultural activities. In the past several decades, performing and visual arts organizations have matured and developed stronger audiences

from the Eastside’s growing population base. Yet, while Bellevue has the aspiration to take on a cultural role commensurate with its role as the Eastside’s commercial and transportation center, the city has not yet developed a clear sense of what a more mature cultural sector should look like, or how to get there.

Housing Affordability and Choices

In the face of diminishing undeveloped land, rising development costs, and high housing values, innovative methods will be needed to increase the supply of affordable housing – particularly for elderly residents on fixed incomes, and for workers in lower paying service jobs. The challenge is to continue cooperative efforts between public, private, and nonprofit sectors to find financial resources, and to maintain a regulatory framework that protects community values and the environment.

Achieving Mobility Through Reduced Dependence on Single-Occupant Vehicles

Expanding mobility options – providing alternatives to drive-alone vehicles – is one key to improving mobility. More and better-directed local transit service, high occupancy vehicle facilities, and incentives to encourage people to use these options will help. High Capacity Transit, whether dedicated busway or light rail, also provides a major opportunity for increased mobility. The challenge will be to ensure these investments are accomplished in a way that maximizes their contribution to mobility and to the city’s land use vision.



MEETING THE CHALLENGES FOR TOMORROW

Bellevue 2025

This vision for our community preserves the best qualities of Bellevue today and directs us toward our city's future. To achieve balance in the city's development, the Plan is guided by the following **Vision** which must be viewed as a whole without pursuing one part to the exclusion of the others.

Bellevue is one of the outstanding cities in the United States. It is:

A "City in a Park"

A dedicated steward of environmental quality, where key natural features are preserved and restored

A model of superior urban design and "people places"

A community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods

A city that meets the housing needs of all citizens

A regional economic center with a strong and diverse economy

A city with a great Downtown—viable, livable, and memorable

The Eastside's transportation hub, offering an array of mobility choices

The center of arts and culture for the Eastside

A community that cares for people and families in need

A safe and secure community

A city served by outstanding facilities and services

A leader in meeting regional challenges

An active and engaged community

MEETING THE CHALLENGES FOR TOMORROW

Bellevue 2025

Imagine the Year 2025

The following is a mental picture of Bellevue’s ideal future, assuming the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan are successfully realized.

A “City in a Park”

Bellevue’s open space network reinforces its reputation as a City in a Park, providing abundant access to the natural environment, continued development of community parks, and newer neighborhood and mini-parks. An extensive waterfront park opens Meydenbauer Bay to Downtown and other parts of West Bellevue and, on the other side of the city, a major park provides swimming and boat access to Lake Sammamish. The city’s open spaces are linked with trails and greenways that provide wildlife corridors, pedestrian routes, neighborhood connections, and access to magnificent views of the lakes and mountains.

A dedicated steward of environmental quality, where key natural features are preserved and restored

Bellevue takes the lead in promoting a quality, sustainable urban environment. Growth is occurring without harm to environmentally sensitive land and water resources. Many wetlands, riparian corridors and shorelines are protected in their natural state; others are being restored so they provide higher quality fish and wildlife habitat. As a result, more salmon are found in local creeks and streams, fish are spawning in several locations. The urban forest is recovering, and in many parts of Bellevue the tree canopy is increasing. These gains have been achieved through a combination of city programs, incentives, education, and regulations.

A model of superior urban design and “people places”

Commitment to urban design has helped make Bellevue a city of distinction, with “people places” that nurture a sense of community and neighborhoods that retain their unique character despite growth



Sidewalk cafes and retail shops bring local residents and business people to Old Bellevue.

and change. Key historic features are preserved, linking us to our past. Bellevue has completed the annexation of land within its urban growth boundary, and all development now occurs under the city’s design and environmental protection guidelines.

A community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods

High quality neighborhoods make Bellevue a “great place to live.” Individual homes are well maintained, as are the public facilities that serve the residents. Remodeling and upgrading have made older neighborhoods attractive to young families, while respectful development has enabled these neighborhoods to retain their character. At the other end of the spectrum, new, higher density neighborhoods thrive in the Downtown and in mixed-use areas like Factoria.



The Crossroads Park serves a diverse community.

Neighborhood shopping centers have redeveloped to meet the needs of nearby residents, and all Bellevue neighborhoods are now linked to schools, parks, and commercial areas by a complete pedestrian system of sidewalks and trails.

A city that meets the housing needs of all citizens

The diversity of housing types and densities reflects the variety of needs in the community and Bellevue’s changing demographics. The city has options for families with children, couples, singles, and seniors. Some of these options are innovative, such as transit-oriented development, cottages and other small-lot single family housing, and accessory dwelling units. Bellevue’s support of regional efforts to create affordable housing has paid off, and people who work in Bellevue can afford to live here. Affordable housing options are available for retail and personal service workers, a significant part of Bellevue’s workforce, and for residents with low incomes or special needs.

A regional economic center with a strong and diverse economy

Bellevue’s economy is dynamic and resilient, due in part to its highly educated workforce. Firms employ people in such fields as technology, health care, finance,

law, professional services and international trade. Attracted to the quality of life in this community, energetic and talented workers create a culture of innovation and new companies offer solid family-wage jobs. Retail employment continues to be another strong focus, and tourism is an expanding industry as entertainment and cultural amenities flourish.

A city with a great Downtown—viable, livable, and memorable

Downtown Bellevue is the hub of the Eastside’s economy, with a vibrant mix of office and retail employment, arts and cultural attractions, hotels, and housing, linked to the Puget Sound region by regional freeways and the High Capacity Transit system. More than 60,000 people work here, and almost 14,000 live in high quality apartments and condominiums. Vital residential neighborhoods surround the core and, in the southwest corner, Old Bellevue thrives as a unique area with a strong sense of Bellevue’s past. The entire Downtown is pedestrian-friendly, and is humming with activity in a variety of public places, including the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor and Bellevue Way’s “grand shopping street.” Restaurants, theaters, museums, nightclubs, a major performing arts center and other attractions bring Downtown alive 18 hours a day.



Mixed-use developments offer additional housing choices for residents.

The Eastside’s transportation hub, offering an array of mobility choices

The city’s transportation system is based on moving people and goods rather than moving cars. Auto dependency has been reduced by convenient and workable alternatives, including connections to the High Capacity Transit system, frequent neighborhood transit service, enhanced use of carpools, and an integrated pedestrian and bicycle system. Emphasis is on balance, not on the use of one mode to the exclusion of others. Both land use and transportation work together to provide mobility and to shape a high quality urban environment, less dominated by the auto and more sensitive to air quality, energy conservation, and protection of livable neighborhoods.

The center of arts and culture for the Eastside

Supported by strong leadership in both the public and private sectors, Bellevue has a national reputation for the visibility and strength of its arts and cultural offerings and the capacity of its cultural institutions. Unique and dynamic cultural districts have emerged in Downtown, Crossroads, and Eastgate/Factoria, which enhance the vitality of these mixed use neighborhoods.



The Bellevue Arts & Crafts fair draws more than 300,000 visitors to Bellevue each July.

Based on these attractions, and its ability to celebrate its ethnic and cultural diversity through the arts, Bellevue is known as a “must visit” place in the region. This enhances the city’s attractiveness to workers and residents of all ages seeking creativity and innovation.

A community that cares for people and families in need

Bellevue is a community that cares for and nurtures all of its people. The city plays an active role in shaping and supporting a system of human services which not only assists people in times of need, but also promotes the development of healthy individuals and families. The city is a recognized leader in engaging both public and private partners throughout the region to respond to the changing needs of its people, including youth and seniors and individuals with special needs. Overlake Hospital provides “state of the art” medical care.

A safe and secure community

Bellevue residents continue to feel secure and safe, as the city places the highest priority on protecting the community and preventing crime. Preparedness remains a major focus to assure that the city can respond effectively in an emergency.

A city served by outstanding community facilities and services

Public infrastructure is in excellent shape. The city has built new streets, sidewalks, utilities and other facilities as needed, and has restored much of its older

infrastructure. All of this has been done in a way that is sensitive to and helps reinforce the character and quality of the city's neighborhoods. Bellevue has financed these maintenance, restoration and construction projects by carefully prioritizing needs, making the most efficient use of



The Eastgate Park & Ride garage provides parking for transit users along I-90.

limited funding, and in some cases finding innovative new funding sources and partnerships. The Bellevue School District has a national reputation as one of the best public school systems in the country. Bellevue Community College educates workers in the latest job skills and enriches Eastside residents with its continuing education offerings.

A leader in meeting regional challenges

Jurisdictions across the Eastside and the Central Puget Sound region have realized they must work together more effectively if the region is to make headway on such pressing issues as transportation, water supply, and environmental protection. Bellevue is recognized and valued as a leader in finding common ground and effective solutions to these interjurisdictional issues. The region continues to work together on growth management, resulting in closer-in, transit-friendly development that is less expensive to serve with public infrastructure. Farms, forests and open space are protected, and a highly valued part of this region's character.

An active and engaged community

Bellevue enjoys high levels of civic engagement as community groups, businesses and individuals work with city staff to identify and achieve community goals. The city makes citizen involvement a high priority, and Bellevue residents feel an increasing interconnectedness and sense of community. People

get involved, volunteer, and vote. The development of more community gathering places facilitates public discourse and interaction. There is an increasing capacity in Bellevue neighborhoods to participate in matters of interest, to help shape the community, and to engage in problem-solving.



Citizens in Bellevue get involved.