

**Public Involvement Program
for the
Surrey Downs Park
Master Plan**

November 2007 – June 2008

City of Bellevue



November 14, 2007

Background and Project Vision

The City of Bellevue is embarking on a master planning process for Surrey Downs Park, located at 546 112th Ave. SE. A part of the fabric of the community for over 40 years, the park was home to Surrey Downs Elementary school from 1960-1986. In 1986 the Bellevue School District approved the sale of the property to King County, and it is now the location of the district courthouse.

In 2005, after years of negotiations, the City acquired the site from the County. Today, the courthouse and accompanying offices occupy the northern portion of the 11.46 acre parcel. The courthouse continues its daily operations and functions under a lease use agreement with the City. Although there are no current relocation plans in place, it is expected that within the next few years the courthouse will relocate.

The remaining portion of the site is a public park containing both passive and active recreational elements. It is popular and well used by the surrounding neighborhoods. Park assets include two programmable ballfields, a pedestrian loop trail, hazelnut grove, children's play area, and a small basketball court. In addition, the southern wing of the courthouse building was demolished in 2006 and redeveloped into an open playfield extension of the park.

The realization of the City's vision necessitates the successful completion of the Master Plan. The Master Plan will lay the groundwork for the site's redevelopment by identifying opportunities and constraints of the site, and connections to the surrounding neighborhoods. With proper long-term vision and design creativity, we expect this site to become a wonderful new community asset and addition to the City's parks and open space inventory.

Public Involvement Goals

The Master Plan will not be successful without significant consultation with the public. This public involvement program has been created to achieve the following goals:

- Provide a wide range of opportunities for diverse interests to be informed about and involved in the development of design alternatives for Surrey Downs Park.
- Create a process that is transparent, inclusive, and broad, but also focused and productive so that the master planning process continues to move forward and achieve results.
- Provide a comprehensive understanding of the full range of community visions, values, and priorities, so that the Parks & Community Services Board and City Council can make informed decisions related to Surrey Downs Park.
- Create a sense of community cohesiveness and ownership in Surrey Downs Park.

Planning Issues

The project's objective is to develop a comprehensive and cohesive Master Plan for Surrey Downs Park. The following issues are expected to help shape the Plan:

- **Long-Term vision.** While significant short-term issues exist, this plan will focus on the long term vision of the park and provide clear direction for future site development.
- **Neighborhood enhancement and protection.** This project must identify strategies to identify and assess potential neighborhood impacts related to park development.
- **Recognition of history.** The Master Plan should acknowledge the heritage of the Surrey Downs neighborhood and should assess opportunities to preserve, note, or incorporate elements associated with the site's history.
- **Link with downtown.** The site occupies a unique location relative to the downtown community, and this relationship will be explored through this planning process.
- **Superior design.** The plan should reflect a high standard of excellence and the tradition of Bellevue as a "city in a park".
- **Coordinated planning process.** This planning effort requires solid coordination with affected stakeholders, neighborhoods, partners, and jurisdictions.
- **The park as a community amenity.** The site has historically served needs beyond the immediate neighborhood, included uses such as an elementary school, district court and sportsfields. Green spaces and public parks in Bellevue are becoming increasingly important as the city grows. Surrey Downs is a potential jewel in the city's park system. The park development program will seek to incorporate a wide range of interests and perspectives about how the park should function in the future.
- **There are some limitations.** Although all participants are invited to broadly share their visions and values for Surrey Downs, some uses may not be suitable for a park of this size and context. For example, the park is not large enough to accommodate a sports complex with numerous large recreational fields.
- **The impacts of light rail are being assessed through a separate process.** Residents have been concerned about the potential impacts of a light rail line on Surrey Downs Park. The City is aware of this concern and has established a separate process to address these issues related to the location and operation of a light rail within Bellevue. The "Light Rail Best Practices" project serves as the forum within which to discuss issues and concerns related to light rail. A preferred alternative for light rail in Bellevue is not expected to be announced until late 2008.

- **The master planning process will consider all ideas and alternatives and for the construction/use of a community center facility.** The City of Bellevue has been approached by the Boys and Girls Club regarding the potential construction of a new facility at the park. No decisions have been made on this, or any other proposed facility at Surrey Downs. The Master Plan will determine the types of uses most suitable for Surrey Downs over the long term. The Boys and Girls Club have been invited to participate in the master planning process.
- **The future of the District Court building.** The City has not made a decision on the future of the District Court. The current lease expires at the end of 2008, but can be extended. However, the master planning process is proceeding on the assumption that the district court will vacate Surrey Downs Park.

Core Constituencies

The master planning process is open to any and to all people who choose to participate. Some of the groups that are likely to be involved include:

Community/Civic Groups

Those who work for the betterment of Bellevue are likely to be interested in park opportunities and improvements, funding options, and any impacts associated with new uses.

Green Space Enthusiasts

The master planning process is likely to attract participation from those who live and/or work throughout Bellevue. Those who enjoy walking, biking, or simply sitting peacefully in a quiet space will be interested in how the park can best be designed and planned for the future.

Surrey Downs Community

The Surrey Downs Community has expressed a strong interest in the master planning process, and will be an important contributor to the Plan. Those who live in closest proximity to the park are an important resource, because their close relationship with the park can add valuable insight to the planning process.

The Community Club will want to participate in this exciting master planning process. Those members particularly involved in open space planning for their neighborhoods can make a valuable contribution by sharing their ideas for the future of Surrey Downs Park.

Park Users

A variety of individuals and groups use the park now, and will want to be involved in the master planning process. These include neighbors, parents, sports/athletic groups, youth

recreational groups, walkers and joggers, bikers, and various others. All of these park users are likely to participate in the park planning process.

Youth Groups

Surrey Downs offers the opportunity to engage youth in the planning process, especially with the close proximity of Bellevue High School. By inviting their participation, youth can often bring long-term vision and design creativity to the park planning process.

Public Involvement Activities

Organize Mailing/Distribution List

Key to the success of the master planning process is a comprehensive up-to-date mailing list. This list will include physical addresses, as well as email addresses, of a broad range of groups and individuals. It will be updated continually throughout the master planning process.

Timeframe: Initial list developed by the third week of October 2007; updates will occur throughout the development of the Master Plan.

Information Materials

Postcard invitations will be distributed prior to each public meeting to provide project information, advertise the event, and obtain feedback. The first postcard will be sent to the project's email/ mailing list prior to the first workshop. Subsequent postcards will be sent prior to each of the public open houses associated with the Master Plan. The postcards will also be used as a handout at the workshops, and will be available to any interested parties who request it. The postcards will also provide clear direction on how to comment on, and be involved in, the master planning process.

Timeframe: The first postcard will be distributed two weeks prior to the first public meeting. Subsequent postcards will be distributed well in advance of each public meeting.

Public Meetings

A series of three public meetings will be conducted throughout the master planning process:

Meeting #1: November 15, 2007

At this workshop, attendees will be invited to “dream big” about Surrey Downs Park. The Master Plan team will present their “inventory and analysis” of the park, which will include a listing of the facilities, active and passive recreation that currently takes place, and possibilities for both indoor and outdoor programming. Working in small groups, meeting participants will share their visions, values, and ideas for the future of Surrey Downs.

Meeting #2: January 2008

This meeting will feature the presentation of three-four planning alternatives for Surrey Downs. Attendees will be invited to comment on those alternatives, describing what they like the most – as well as the least – about each of the alternatives under consideration. There will be opportunities to discuss and describe various elements of the alternatives, and the alternatives could be “mixed and matched” to come up with a single, preferred alternative for the park.

Meeting #3: March 2008

At this workshop, The Berger Partnership will present how they have consolidated the work from workshop #2 into a single preferred alternative. Meeting attendees will be able to further discuss and comment on this alternative, providing further “tweaking” as needed to develop a final Master Plan alternative and design scheme for the park.

Project Website

The City of Bellevue’s website will provide both information and opportunity to comment on the Master Plan. The website itself will also be regularly updated with information such as project announcements, public meeting summaries, and workshop materials.

The website will be particularly useful to those who cannot attend the public meetings. Meeting materials and surveys will be regularly posted, so that anyone who accesses the website can provide the City with their feedback on the design process.

Timeframe: The project website will go live prior to the first public meeting, meeting materials and the survey will be posted just after the first public meeting, and will continue to be posted after each meeting. Project website maintenance will be ongoing throughout the master planning process.

Outreach to Youth

A planning process such as the one anticipated for Surrey Downs Park can be an exciting and interesting curriculum opportunity for local high school students. Efforts will be made to engage Bellevue’s youth in the Master Plan, beginning with outreach to Bellevue High School. Students might attend the workshops to share their ideas, and/or a class project might be created that would allow for students to be actively involved in both the design process and the civics lessons associated with community involvement.

Timeframe: Inquiries will be made to the high school beginning in October 2007 regarding their level of interest in participating in the project. Activities will be subsequently scheduled in proportion to the interest and time that can be committed to from high school teachers and/or students.

Media Outreach

If the level of media interest is high enough, features articles about the master planning process will be placed in a variety of newspapers, including the eastside editions of *It's your City*, and the *Bellevue Reporter*. These articles will share information about the process and will also provide the website address and key phone numbers if readers want to share their views with City staff.

Timeframe: November 1 – June 2008.

Public Involvement Report

The comments and results gathered through the public meetings, website surveys, and other public involvement activities will be regularly summarized throughout the process. As the Master Plan is being completed, a final summary report will also be generated. This report will be distributed to city staff, the Bellevue City Council, and numerous others, ensuring that subsequent decisions about the park can be made with as much information as possible.

Timeframe: The report will be submitted with the final Master Plan in June 2008.

**For more information or to provide comments:
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