Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) Finishes Well, Neighborhood Leadership Gatherings Begin

After 24 years, the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) is drawing to a conclusion.

Originally launched in 1988, NEP provided residents the opportunity to select small capital projects for city-funded improvements in their neighborhoods. NEP sparked community efforts to come together with the City of Bellevue and build something positive in their own neighborhoods. The success of NEP has been attributed to its guiding philosophy – that residents themselves are in the best position to decide how to improve their own neighborhoods. After running twenty four years, the most critical small neighborhood projects (well over 430 projects!) have been completed! These projects met a wide array of neighborhood needs; improving playgrounds, parks, trail connections, sidewalk links, landscaping and public art.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Projects ran on a three-year cycle – with residents voting in their neighborhood areas for their top priorities for small capital projects. Beginning in 2011, with the fiscal reality prompting cost-saving measures, the City of Bellevue prioritized completing its commitments for its approved NEP projects. As these projects near completion, the Neighborhood Enhancement Program will come to an end. All previously approved projects will be completed, but no further applications for NEP projects will be considered.

The City remains committed to listening to neighborhoods and looking for new ways to invest in the health and vitality of our neighborhoods. The guiding philosophy of NEP, that residents themselves are in the best position to decide how to improve their own neighborhoods, still holds true today. Neighborhood Outreach will be revitalizing the Neighborhood Match program to leverage community collaboration and provide small matching grants for neighborhood projects. Neighborhood Forums will provide platforms to deepen our neighborhood conversations about the issues that matter to us most, including topics like public safety, environmental stewardship and economic development.

And most importantly, Neighborhood Outreach will be responsive to new ideas and community input on how to best strengthen our neighborhoods and work together to maintain the quality of life that we have come to enjoy. This year we will convene “Neighborhood Leadership Gatherings” to identify emerging areas of need and help shape the next vision for neighborhood investment. Neighborhood leaders are invited to share their priorities for 2013 at the first gathering on Feb. 26, 5:30-7 p.m., at City Hall.

We have much to celebrate with the accomplishments that occurred through the Neighborhood Enhancement Program. If you would like to comment, share a success story of how NEP impacted your neighborhood or participate in new neighborhood initiatives to build up our communities, please contact Mike McCormick Huentelman, Neighborhood and Community Outreach Manager, at mmhuent@bellevuewa.gov or 425-4502-4089.
Bellevue Women to Share Cultural Practices Around Death and Mourning

Bellevue residents from all over the world will get an opportunity to share their stories and their rituals around death and dying at a Cultural Conversations meeting on Tuesday February 12th (1 p.m.) at the Crossroads Community Center.

Rita Egrari, a long time Cultural Conversations participant will share her own personal story of loss in a multi-cultural family and give the group a chance to learn about the Bhai faith rituals. Other women will also share their stories to include many other faiths and cultural practices including stories from Taiwan, China, Somalia and the US. The meeting will begin promptly at 1 and will end at 2:30 p.m.

Sharing stories is a powerful way to learn about cultures other than your own. When we gain knowledge through stories we can support and connect with our neighbors with deeper understanding and respect. Participants will have an opportunity to share their own experience and perspectives in small groups during the event.

Cultural Conversations was launched in 2010 as a partnership between diverse women in the community and the City’s Neighborhood Outreach Team. The concept was initiated by women who hoped to develop community connections and enhance their knowledge and understanding of different cultural practices and world views. Monthly gatherings include women from all around the world. The events are free, refreshments are served and women of all ages, faiths and cultures are welcome to attend. Meetings are held Tuesdays at Crossroads Community Center, 16000 NE 10th St. Meetings scheduled through June 2013 are:

- Mar. 19, 1-2:30 p.m. Cultural expectations
- Apr. 23, 1-2:30 p.m. Stress relievers in different cultures
- June 4, 1-2:30 p.m. Cultural attitudes toward money & financial security

For more information, contact Ying Carlson at 425-452-4342 or ycarlson@bellevuewa.gov or Barb Tuininga at 425-452-2800 or btuininga@bellevuewa.gov

Lake Hills Shopping Center Moves Forward on Development

The development of the new Lake Hills Commercial Center is underway! The recently vacated commercial center is now ready for demolition to begin in the next couple of weeks. The construction of a new garage is planned to begin this spring, with new residential and commercial construction to follow. This is an exciting time to watch the progress as the commercial center is transformed into a vibrant retail and residential space for the community. So please, pardon the dust and stay tuned!

For more information, please contact Liz Stead at 425-452-2725 or estead@bellevuewa.gov
Come Plan Bellevue’s Future with Us

Ever think about what Bellevue will be like in the future? Think about how much has changed in the past 30 years. Bellevue has gone from a sleepy bedroom community to a city that is a diverse regional center of commerce with global connections.

The next 30 years are sure to bring more dramatic changes. What will our neighborhoods look like? How will we get around? Where will we play, shop, and work? Will it still be a city you want to live in – and leave to your children?

Bellevue city planners want to hear your hopes, concerns and visions about the future as they begin to update the Comprehensive Plan, the city’s vision for the future. The Comprehensive Plan will look to what Bellevue will be like in 2030, 2040, and beyond. It helps the city plan for places to live, learn and play, for jobs and a strong local economy, and for creating and preserving a healthy environment.

Your participation is vital to provide thoughts on what issues should be the focus of the update, to help guide and shape the plan, and to ensure that the plan continues to embrace the community’s vision.

For more information, visit the City website at http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/comp-plan-update.htm or contact Paul Inghram at 425-452-4070 or Pinghram@bellevuewa.gov

Neighborhood Leadership Gathering

The Neighborhood Outreach Team will be hosting a Neighborhood Leadership Gathering in February at City Hall. This is an excellent opportunity for the leaders of neighborhood associations and boards, as well as emerging community leaders to share their neighborhood priorities for the coming year. It is also a chance to meet our new Neighborhood Outreach staff at the City.

When: February 26th, 5:30-7:00pm
Where: Room 1E-113, Bellevue City Hall, 450 110th Ave NE

February Meetings
(All meetings are in City Hall unless otherwise noted. Agendas are subject to change. You may confirm with Neighborhood Outreach the day before or day of the meeting. Or consult the city web pages listed below to download agendas.)

2/4 City Council (6:00 study session, Council Conference Room) East Link Land Use Code Amendments, PSRC Growing Transit Communities, Hearing Examiner matter on Sammamish High School CUP (8:00 regular session, Council Chambers) State of the County Report, Consent Calendar, Ratify Countywide Planning Policies http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm


2/7 Bellevue Network on Aging (8:30-10:30am, 1E-120) Civic Engagement presentation, Committee reports http://www.bellevuewa.gov/network_on_aging.htm

2/11 City Council (6:00 extended study session, Council Conference Room) King County Solid Waste ILA, East Link Land Use Code Amendments Public Hearing, Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Update http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm

2/12 Parks & Community Services Board (6:00, 1E-112) Agenda to be determined http://www.bellevuewa.gov/parks_board.htm


2/18 President’s Day – All city offices closed


2/19 City Council (6:00 study session, Council Conference Room) Transit Master Plan, East Link Land Use Code Amendments, Downtown Transit Plan Update (8:00 regular session, Council Chambers) Sammamish High School CUP http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm

2/25 City Council (6:00 extended study session, Council Conference Room) Regional Issues, Solid Waste Contract discussion, Comprehensive Plan Update, Medical Marijuana http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm


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 programs to enhance neighborhoods, call 452-6836.