

Summer 2025

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Leave fireworks to professionals

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Free trees

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The challenge course at Eastgate Park has been replaced with an aerial park that features 27 elements for guests to navigate, including cargo nets, barrels and swaying bridges at varying heights and difficulty.

Adventure Park with climbing wall and expanded aerial course opens

By **CHRISTINA FAINE**
Parks & Community Services
Public Information Officer

A newly designed Bellevue Adventure Park with challenging aerial features and a climbing wall is open for action at the South Bellevue Community Center at Eastgate Park, 14509 SE Newport Way.

“The new adventure park encourages play at new heights, challenging participants to climb, problem-solve and gain confidence in a fun and supportive setting,” said SBCC manager Dave Glenn.

For nearly two decades, the city has maintained a challenge course and zip line at SBCC. While the challenge course thrilled thousands over the years, including families, school groups and teams of coworkers, it was reaching the end of its life span in 2023 and has been

replaced by an Aerial Park that opened in April.

The new course – the Aerial Park – features technological advances in the industry, including a continuous belay system that allows users to safely navigate the course, while allowing more guests to use the features together. The Aerial Park more than doubles the number of previous features, with 27 elements for guests to navigate, including cargo nets, barrels and swaying bridges at varying heights and difficulty.

A new two-sided, 36-foot-tall wooden climbing wall is also part of the Adventure Park, offering both traditional dynamic belays and auto belays for both novice and experienced climbers.

Finally, the long popular Zipline Tour is the third element of the Adventure Park. Riders can zip through the trees at Eastgate

Park at up to 35 mph. There are seven zip lines and two suspension bridges.

Guests can customize their adventure by reserving time on one of the elements – aerial park, climbing wall or zip tour – or by purchasing a combination day pass to experience it all.

Bellevue Adventures also offers team-building programs for diverse audiences, from grade school to corporate groups. Group activities can take place at the new Aerial Park, Zipline Tour or on another adventure course on the site designed specifically for team building.

The course is owned by the City of Bellevue and operated by Northwest Team Building. For more information and to book a visit, go to Bellevue-Adventures.com.

Bellevue International Festival returns in August

Embrace Bellevue’s cultural diversity at the second annual Bellevue International Festival, on Aug. 2, 11:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at Crossroads Park. Enjoy performances and food from around the world.

Free and family friendly! Learn more at BellevueWA.gov/international-festival.



Joyas Mestizas, a Mexican folklórico group, performs at the first Bellevue International Festival in 2024. Photo by Adam Lu Photography.

Council Roundup

By CLAUDE IOSSO
It's Your City Editor

New 'Gateway' to connect Meydenbauer Park with downtown

The City Council on June 3 unanimously approved plans for expansion of Meydenbauer Bay Park that include a gateway plaza at Main Street and 100th Avenue, an accessible, zigzag walk, and lakeside promenade improvements that will connect the gateway to the marina and other parts of the park.

This will be the second phase of expansion for the park, expected to begin construction in 2029. In the first phase, completed in 2019, the park was expanded to include a curved pedestrian pier, larger beach, children's play area and kayak/paddleboard launch facilities.

After discussion, the council voted to proceed to the architectural and engineering design stage to support the permitting and construction of Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2.

Ashwood Park planning progresses

The City Council on April 22 approved an updated master plan for Ashwood Park that calls for a large open lawn with amphitheater-style seating, a plaza, an off-leash dog area, playground, parking, a restroom and picnic shelter.

The original 1990 master plan for the park, which is next to the Bellevue Library downtown, called for open space and a mixed-use building with a community center and affordable housing. However, the park has remained largely undeveloped. In response to requests from community members for improvements, the city launched a plan update in March 2024.



The community weighed in via surveys and meetings, considering multiple master plan alternatives before selecting Alternative F, with the features the council approved on April 22. The community also voted overwhelmingly to keep the name Ashwood Park.

The Parks & Community Services Board recommended Alternative F and keeping the current park name. Next steps include completion of environmental review and formal council adoption of the new master plan.

Leave the fireworks to the professionals

By HEATHER WONG
Fire Public Information Officer

Get ready for another dazzling Bellevue Family 4th, the Eastside's largest fireworks event, which will also feature live music and family entertainment at Downtown Park.

In addition to being a grand display set to live music by the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra, the fireworks presented by The Bellevue Collection on Friday, July 4, are safe and legal. Licensed professionals manage these displays in coordination with the Bellevue Fire Department, with the safety of everyone as a primary focus.

Personal fireworks – selling, using or possessing them – have been banned in Bellevue since 1994, with fines of up to \$1,000. Nationally, thousands of people, most often children and teens, are injured or killed while using fireworks. Private fireworks can and do cause fires too.

Fire prevention officers will conduct emphasis patrols the evening of July 4. The use of fireworks can be reported on the MyBellevue app.



City seeks input on Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plan updates

By JANELLE WETZSTEIN
Community Development Public Information Officer

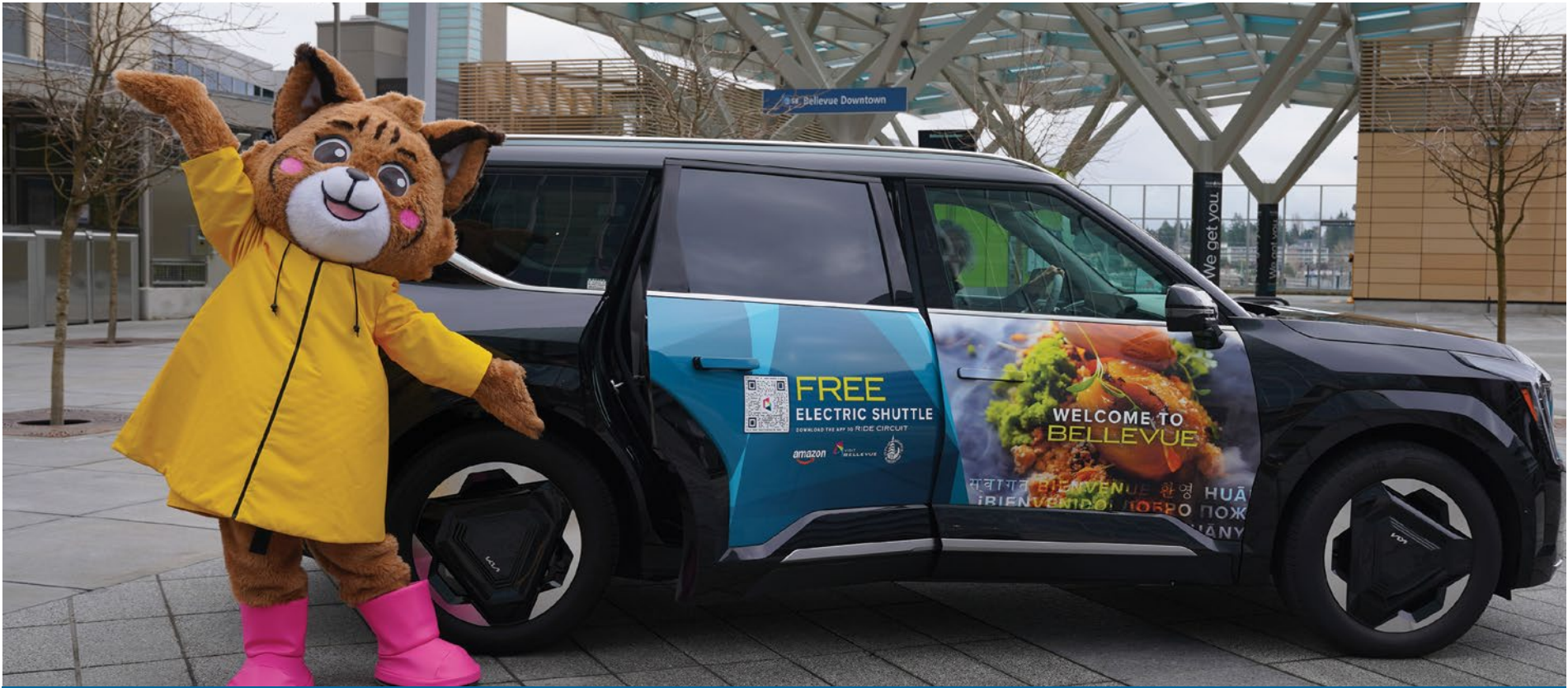
Bellevue's Planning Commission is reviewing final drafts of the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plan updates and seeking input from community members.

Feedback is valuable in helping the commission develop a recommendation to the City Council on these plan updates. Feedback can be given at Planning Commission meetings, which are on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

As part of the Great Neighborhoods program, the council launched neighborhood area plan updates for Crossroads and Newport in September 2024, with a goal of approving plans relevant to each neighborhood's identity, opportunities and challenges. The plans highlight values, challenges and opportunities that the community identified, as well as a vision and urban design concepts, goals and policies that will guide the ways these neighborhoods will grow over the coming decades.

Since February, community members have had multiple opportunities to provide feedback on the draft vision and policies. The planning team also visited both neighborhoods to conduct public space workshops and drop-in events with the community.

To learn more about providing written or oral comments at an upcoming study session or public hearing, visit BellevueWA.gov/planning-commission. You can also learn more and provide online comments at EngagingBellevue.com. Look for Crossroads and Newport under Great Neighborhoods.



Belle the Bobcat, Visit Bellevue’s mascot, shows off one of the new BellHop EVs.

BellHop shuttle services wins 2025 Vision Award

By JANELLE WETZSTEIN
Community Development Public Information Officer

BellHop, the free shuttle service that has become an essential transportation option downtown in less than two years of existence, has received a 2025 Transportation Vision Award from the Seattle and Bellevue 2030 Districts.

“In the last 20 months, this standout program has quickly become an integral part of Bellevue’s urban mobility,” said Mayor Lynne Robinson. “BellHop’s unique service, which the city is proud to help fund, is certainly worth celebrating for its accessible,

sustainable electric vehicle transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. BellHop reinforces many city priorities, and we are proud to draw inspiration from innovative opportunities like this program as we update our 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan.”

BellHop is managed by Visit Bellevue, a destination management organization that is part of the Convention Center Authority, and Circuit, a private company that operates shuttles in several cities. The on-demand service is offered free due to a funding model that utilizes hotel room fees and partner support dollars.

Since its launch in 2023, BellHop’s all-electric point-to-point shuttles have provided nearly 115,000 rides to more than 150,000 passengers, reducing over 100 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Three new full-size Kia electric vehicles were added to the fleet in March.

While visitors to Bellevue use the service to access various points of interest around the city, community members also take BellHop to run errands instead of driving or using rideshare services. Half of the top 10 destinations for BellHop are grocery stores.

Bellevue Community Court launches in July

Therapeutic court will help people improve their lives and create safer, more productive community

By JUDGE LISA O’TOOLE
King County District Court

The City of Bellevue and King County District Court, its partner for municipal court services, are launching Bellevue Community Court, an alternative to traditional court for eligible, nonviolent, less serious (misdemeanor) cases.

Like community courts operating in other King County cities, the new court will work to identify and address the underlying challenges people face that often contribute to involvement with the criminal justice system. The goal is to increase safety for everyone by holding community court clients accountable, while helping them improve their lives.

Innovation in criminal justice

Many who repeatedly end up in court have struggled with challenges such as substance use, behavioral health problems and homelessness. Many who experience these challenges do not commit crimes. However, without added resources or intervention, these obstacles can be difficult to overcome and for some can lead to harmful behavior.

Like traditional court, Community Court will have a judge and prosecuting and defense attorneys, but rather than a trial, an assessment is conducted of the facts of each

case and the person charged, to identify their life challenges and strengths. This helps determine what actions the person will be required to take to complete the program.

If a participant successfully completes requirements such as counseling, treatment and/or community service, the charge will be dismissed.

For easy access for the public, the court will be held at the Bellevue Library downtown, alongside a community resource center. The resource center will enable participants and others to access multiple services – such as mental health and substance use counseling and job search assistance – all in one place.

An alternative that works

King County District Court regularly receives feedback from participants in existing community courts at Redmond, Auburn and Shoreline-Kenmore that the program has empowered them to make significant and lasting changes in their lives. An evaluation of a similar court in New York found that participants were significantly less likely to commit new crimes than those who had their cases heard in traditional court.

This fall, once Bellevue Community Court is fully underway, the community will be invited to an open house.



The halls of justice will have a different look at the Bellevue Library, where the Community Court will be in session.

Judge O’Toole is the King County District Court’s East Division presiding judge and hears criminal and civil matters at the Bellevue Courthouse. She will preside over Bellevue Community Court.



From left, City Manager Diane Carlson, Mayor Lynne Robinson and HDC Executive Director Patience Malaba pose with the award.

Bellevue earns award for affordable housing efforts

By JANELLE WETZSTEIN
Community Development Public Information Officer

Bellevue’s ongoing commitment to ensuring it remains a place where people from all income levels are welcome and able to thrive was recognized recently by the Housing Development Consortium.

By naming the City of Bellevue its 2025 Frank Chopp Public Sector Champion, the consortium honored the city’s sustained leadership in affordable housing, including its results-driven “Next Right Work” approach. Key initiatives include a streamlined permitting process to accelerate housing delivery and fee waivers for affordable housing projects.

In February, Bellevue established a dedicated Office of Housing to better coordinate affordable housing and homelessness efforts and strengthen partnerships citywide. Shortly after its formation, the new office issued requests for proposals for projects on city sites in Wilburton and BelRed that will add up to 400 new units of affordable housing.

Tree removal: What to know first

By AMANDA RICH ANDERSON
Development Services Public Information Officer

Thinking about removing a tree from your property? Before you break out the chainsaw, make sure you’ve completed the proper steps.

Review the information at BellevueWA.gov/tree-removal, which has been updated to reflect changes to the city’s codes. More information is available at BellevueWA.gov/tree-code-update.

Inspections are required for tree removals

If you’ve applied for a tree removal only (GT) permit or are planning to, an initial inspection is required before any tree removal begins. A city inspector will visit your site to confirm which trees are approved for removal. This not only helps prevent misunderstandings – it also gives you a chance to meet the person reviewing and approving your permit in the field.

After the tree work is done, make sure to schedule the final inspection to close out your permit. This final check confirms that everything was completed according to the approved plan.

Why does this matter?

Tree permits help ensure safe, responsible removal that protects the environment, neighboring properties and our community’s tree canopy. Skipping steps in the process can lead to delays, confusion or even penalties—not to mention potential harm to Bellevue’s urban forest.

If you’re a GT permit holder, call 425-452-6875 or visit MyBuildingPermit.com to schedule your inspections. Got a Tree Removal Only permit or thinking about applying for one? Visit BellevueWA.gov/development-services for more details.

Taking the time to follow the permitting and inspection process helps protect your investment—and our shared environment.

Reserve free trees for your home or business

Early selection process for priority canopy areas

By SOFIA FALL
Sustainability Coordinator

Applications for Bellevue’s fifth annual Tree Giveaway open July 25, and updates to this year’s application process allow residents in priority canopy areas to order trees in real time. These updates will benefit residents by ensuring they receive the best species for their properties, while increasing tree canopy in underserved areas of the city.

Bellevue times its tree giveaway to coincide with the rainy months so trees have optimal conditions for growth over the critical first months after planting. Once the summer application period closes, trees will be dispersed to residents and community organizations on Oct. 25, along with free watering bags and mulch. Renters can apply with landlord approval to plant on their property.

Targeting priority canopy areas with a new application process

Trees offer many benefits, such as preventing flooding, improving air quality and providing shade that helps keep neighborhoods cool. But current tree canopy isn’t evenly distributed across Bellevue.

While the city as a whole boasts a tree canopy cover of 40%, coverage in certain neighborhoods is as low as 11%. Broadly speaking, communities of color and low-income communities also have historically had fewer mature trees.

The new quick and easy application process is designed to make sure trees are first distributed to the areas of Bellevue where they’re needed most: priority canopy areas. Unlike past giveaways, this year applicants located in priority canopy areas will be able to order trees right away after filling out their applications. All other applicants will be able to select trees as soon as the general tree ordering window opens.

Right Tree, Right Place

Bellevue’s popular Tree Giveaway program started in 2021 and has since distributed over 3,000 free trees to local homes and community organizations. This year, the city is again partnering with Amazon and 300 Trees to give out 700 trees to Bellevue residents.

For all the details and to apply, go to BellevueWA.gov/treegiveaway.



A resident picks up a tree at the 2024 tree giveaway.

City launches Safe Speeds Bellevue

By GILLIAN HAGSTROM
Transportation Public Information Officer

Traffic-related fatal and serious injuries in Bellevue have increased over the past decade, and 36 people were killed or severely injured on Bellevue streets in 2024 alone. In response, the city launched the Safe Speeds Bellevue program in May 2025 to support the Vision Zero goal to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes on city streets by 2030.

This new program will evaluate speed limits and reduce speeds on city streets. For the first phase of the program, Transportation staff are reviewing speed limits on all city streets with a speed limit of 30 mph or more. Safe speed limits will be recommended based on how these streets are designed and how they're used by people driving, walking, rolling and biking. The speed limits for most local streets in Bellevue are set to drop from 25 mph to 20 mph in 2026.

Why reduce speed limits?

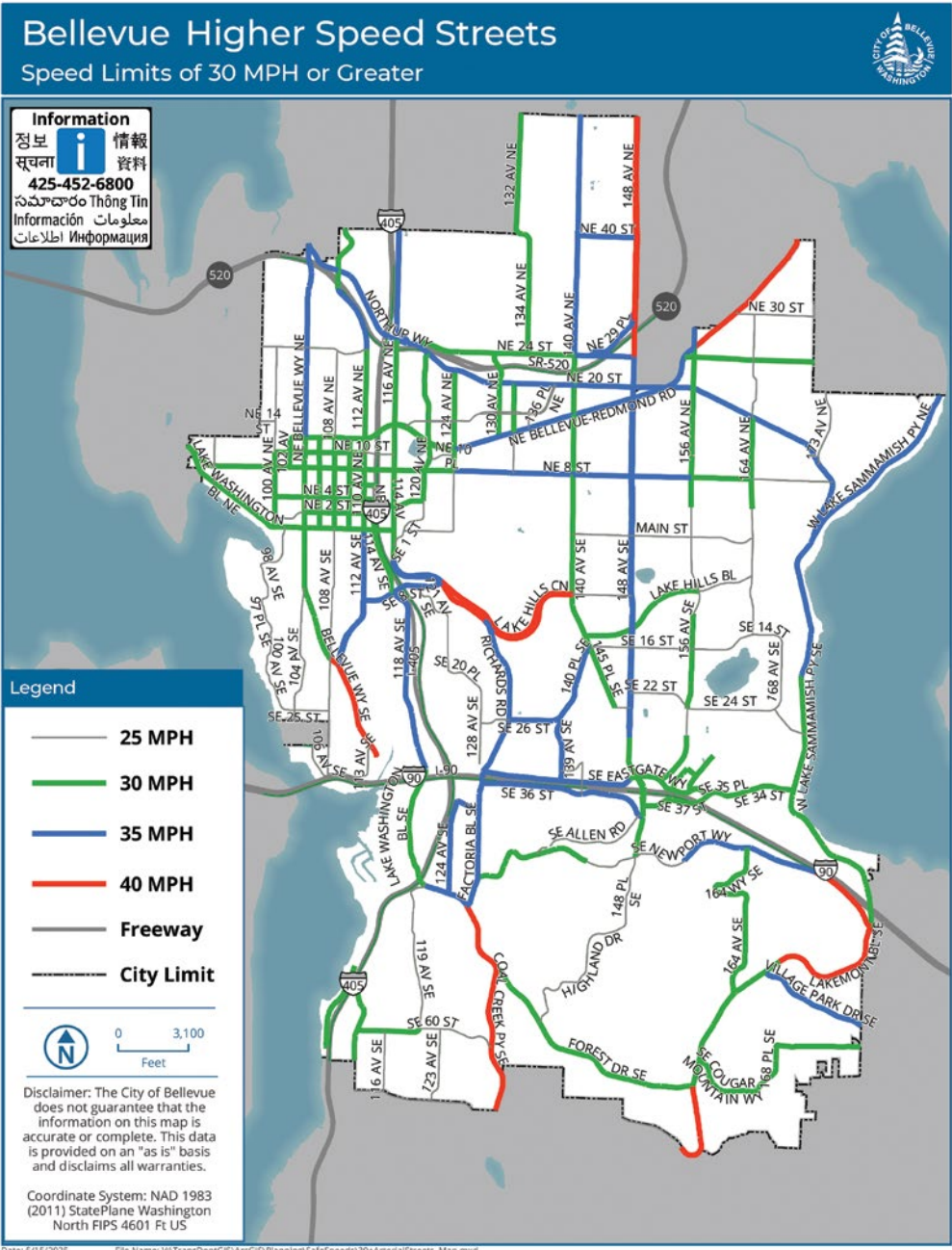
In Bellevue, almost 90% of fatal and serious injury crashes happen on streets with speed limits of 30 mph or higher, but these streets are only 25% of Bellevue's street network. Reducing speed limits is a practical and effective way to make these streets safer. Lower speeds decrease the likelihood of a crash occurring, and the severity of a crash when it does occur. Reducing speed limits is also proven in Bellevue, Seattle and other cities to reduce high-end speeding.

Lower speed limits coming to four streets

Based on direction from the council, staff will reduce speed limits on four streets this summer and add additional speed limit signs to increase awareness. The speed limit on portions of 124th Avenue Southeast/Southeast 38th Street and Northrup Way from Bellevue Way to 120th Avenue Northeast will be reduced from 35 to 25 mph. The speed limit on Village Park Drive and a portion of Northeast 40th Street will be reduced from 35 to 30 mph.

Learn more and give input

Visit BellevueWA.gov/safe-speeds to learn more about the program and check on upcoming opportunities to provide input.



Behavioral health treatment helps residents find emotional well-being

By CHRISTINA FAINE
Parks & Community Services
Public Information Officer

As part of its mission to ensure that residents' essential needs are met, the city funds organizations that help people during economic and personal crises. While mental health challenges and substance use disorders have always existed, in recent years, these challenges have emerged as more frequent problems for local youth and older adults, due to increasing isolation and stress.

"Mental health and substance use disorders can impact anyone," notes Toni Esparza, Parks & Community Services assistant director. "They are not dictated by income, zip code or race. But some of our community members are more isolated and experience higher levels of stress due to things out of their control. We can all play a part in supporting each other, by having open conversations about behavioral health and encouraging our loved ones to seek help when it is needed.

"Our trusted community partners are experts in meeting community members where they are at with support services responsive to language and cultural needs," Esparza said.

Although the pandemic and related restrictions are in the rearview mirror, the new normal features fewer day-to-day connections for many. Since COVID,

community-based organizations have reported seeing increasing isolation among both young people and older adults.

Behavioral health is defined as the emotions and behaviors that impact overall well-being and everyday functioning. People with behavioral health challenges often must also contend with stigmas around mental health conditions and substance use disorders, leading to fractured relationships with their loved ones.

Bellevue funds seven behavioral health providers that offer prevention and education programs, treatment and resource navigation. These nonprofits provide proactive and responsive interventions and supportive programming to help people in Bellevue develop coping skills, strengthen social connections and improve their overall well-being.

Individual counseling from Friends of Youth made all the difference for a high school girl experiencing severe social anxiety that prevented her from attending events with friends or preparing for the future. With counseling, the girl was able to identify and pursue goals. Eventually, she was accepted into an out-of-state university and was looking forward to joining its music programs.

When the behavioral health team at International Community Health Services (ICHS) Bellevue Clinic began treating a 55-year-old man experiencing prolonged

grief disorder, he was struggling to keep his job and having suicidal thoughts.

His ICHS health care provider prescribed antidepressants, which addressed his depression, and through counseling helped the man gain emotional stability so he could reconnect with his family and resume full-time work.

A young woman in court-ordered substance use treatment with IKRON (Integration of Knowledge and Resources for Occupational Needs), was able to regain control over her life.

A combination of group sessions and individual therapy over 10 months inspired her to set goals for herself, not just for treatment but for her future, including getting into school, repairing broken relationships and building a stronger support system.



Staff at IKRON provide group and individual therapy that helps clients regain control over their lives.



Scrap Cooking Club will help you cut food waste

By BETHANY KOGUT
Conservation and Outreach

Did you know that roughly a third of the food produced in the world is never eaten? When this food is wasted, the resources that go into growing, processing and packaging it are wasted too, along with the money used to buy it.

At Bellevue Utilities' Scrap Cooking Club, you will learn how to reduce food waste, making the dollars you spend at the farmers market or grocery store go further, while reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

At the Aug. 8 class, tips on ways to store food so it stays fresher longer and recipes that use the parts of the food you usually toss. Carrot tops, anyone? Access is offered to our new Scrap Cooking newsletter, providing tips and cookbook recommendations year-round!

The Scrap Cooking Club is part of the Sunny Side Up-Cycle series of Greener Living Classes this summer. These classes are focused on saving you money by upcycling the things you already have for new purposes, from food scraps to textiles to cleaning materials. Visit BellevueWA.gov/greener-living-classes to register and see for class descriptions.

How to Get Rid of Anything (virtual)

- Wednesday, July 9, 6-7 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 13, 6-7 p.m.

Sustainable Stitching (in-person)

- Tuesday, July 15, 6-7:30 p.m., Bellevue Library Makerspace

POP! Phase Out Plastic (virtual)

- Tuesday, July 22, 6-7 p.m.
- Friday, July 25, 12-1 p.m., **in-person** at Bellevue Botanical Garden
- Monday, Aug. 4, 6-7 p.m., virtual

Scrap Cooking Club (in-person)

- Friday, Aug. 8, 12-1 p.m., Bellevue Botanical Garden

A shred event too

Bellevue residents are invited to safely recycle sensitive paper documents at a paper shredding and recycling event at the Sammamish High School parking lot, Saturday, Aug. 16, 9 a.m.-noon or when the collection trucks are full.

Shredded paper can no longer go in home recycling or composting carts. Please bring documents in paper grocery bags – limit five bags or four file-size boxes of paper per car, no exceptions.

Ham radio operators ready to answer call in emergency

By HAZEL PHILLIPS
Emergency Management Administrative Assistant

Amateur radio operators could play a key role for the City of Bellevue in the case of an emergency. If cell phone and other radio frequencies are clogged with traffic or otherwise inaccessible, ham operators in the Bellevue Communications Support team can transmit crucial messages for the city via other frequencies.

A team of about 30 hams has been supporting Bellevue's Office of Emergency Management for more than a decade. An amateur radio license is desired, but not required. The ham team meets monthly. For more information, send emails to officers@k7bel.org.

Emergency Management, a division of the Fire Department that prepares city staff and the community for local hazards, emergencies or disasters, has additional opportunities for volunteers in outreach and emergency response support.

"There is a role for everyone." Emergency Manager Carl Lunak notes. "We need accountants, technicians, liaisons, administrative assistants...they all have a role to play during a disaster. Having folks from all backgrounds is incredibly valuable to our preparedness and response efforts.

Volunteers will have access to training and guidance from Emergency Management staff. There are several ways that community members can get involved.

Community Engagement and Outreach

Volunteers will teach their friends, neighbors and other community members about emergency preparedness and teach life-saving disaster skills. Community engagement and outreach volunteers give emergency preparedness presentations, staff information booths and facilitate emergency preparedness activities in their neighborhoods.

Emergency Response Support

Depending on the scale of the incident, Emergency Response Support volunteers may staff the Emergency Operations Center or emergency shelter.

Volunteers from all different backgrounds are needed and encouraged to join. All potential volunteers must undergo a background check and short interview. For more general information about the volunteer program, including an online application, please visit BellevueWA.gov/emergency-management-volunteering or send an email to oem@bellevuewa.gov.



Dan Chaney (front) and Scott Blomquist of the Bellevue Communications Support team practice communicating via ham radio at City Hall.



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Mercer Slough farm stand is back for blueberries

By CHRISTINA FAINE
Parks & Community Services Public Information Officer

With blueberry season just weeks away, a lot of Bellevue residents are probably thinking about picking those juicy, azure gems of delight. For the first time in several years, Mercer Slough’s fields are an option.

A new Mercer Slough farm stand, completed in August 2024 to replace the old one rendered inaccessible by the light rail line, is open year-round, five days a week. At 2220 Bellevue Way SE, the stand sells fresh fruit and vegetables, cut flowers and other local produce.

Cha New Life operates the stand, along with the one at Larsen Lake. Blueberry sales and u-pick usually get going after the Fourth of July. Learn more at BellevueWA.gov/blueberries.

The Mercer Slough and Larsen Lake farm stands illustrate how Bellevue’s agricultural past meets the present. In 1979, the city acquired the Overlake Blueberry Farm, which had operated in Mercer Slough since the 1930s. The Mercer Slough master plan approved by the City Council in 1990 emphasized maintaining and diversifying Bellevue’s agricultural heritage.



The Mercer Slough stand is a short walk, either along the sidewalk or via Mercer Slough Nature Park trails, from the South Bellevue light rail stop and park and ride. The stand also has a small parking lot and bathrooms.

Startup 425 Accelerator graduation and demo day

By JANELLE WETZSTEIN
Community Development Public Information Officer

Startup 425 – a collaborative effort administered by the City of Bellevue to expand entrepreneurship throughout Eastside communities – celebrated the graduation of its second accelerator cohort in early June.

The 15-week program, which launched its first cohort in October 2024, provides much-needed support to burgeoning entrepreneurs navigating the venture-scale and small business startup process. Accelerator participants receive hands-on training and guidance from city staff and program mentors to help bring their ideas for new businesses into fruition.

“Through this program, entrepreneurs can gain the basic knowledge needed to launch their businesses,” said Startup 425 coordinator Levi Velez Reed. “As we saw with our inaugural cohort that graduated in January, high interest continued for this second class, with more than 110 applicants for 40 available spots. We also had support from more than 50 mentors who volunteered to share their expertise with the entrepreneurs.

On June 2, the accelerator held a graduation ceremony at Bellevue City Hall and demo day presentation at Redmond Senior Community Center, which featured new businesses from all six of Startup 425’s partner cities. Graduates are now looking forward to applying their newly acquired knowledge to their real-world future business endeavors, with five new businesses presenting their respective companies during the graduation event.

“I came in with an idea; I’m leaving with a business,” said accelerator participant Zachary Ramirez, founder of SavorySuite. “This program reminded me how powerful local support can be for early-stage founders. Startup 425 bridges the gap between great ideas and real-world traction – and I’m grateful to have been part of it.”

Find out more at Startup425.org.



Graduates of the first Startup 425 accelerator cohort in 2024 pose in City Hall.



Two councilmembers step down; replacements appointed

By CLAUDE IOSSO
It’s Your City Editor

On March 28, Councilmember Janice Zahn stepped down to focus on her duties as a newly appointed state representative. About a month later, on May 2, Councilmember John Stokes resigned to focus on his family.

The City Council unanimously appointed Claire Sumadiwiryra to Zahn’s seat on March 18, and she was sworn in on April 1. Twenty residents had applied. The council chose five finalists and picked Sumadiwiryra from that group.

On April 15 the council unanimously appointed one of the other finalists from the Sumadiwiryra appointment process, Vishal Bhargava, to take Stokes’ seat. Bhargava was sworn in on May 6.

Both appointment terms end after certification of the November general election. Sumadiwiryra and Bhargava are running for election, along with 12 other candidates for a total of five seats on the council.

Sumadiwiryra has lived in Bellevue for more than 30 years and owns a small business downtown. She has also been involved in several local nonprofits and boards. Bhargava had been a member of Bellevue’s Planning Commission since 2020 and brings more than a decade of experience in urban planning, technology leadership and community service.

Zahn served on the council for six years, after her 2017 election. She advocated for safe and supported neighborhoods, affordable housing and equitable infrastructure investments. At the state Legislature, she represents the 41st District.

Stokes, a retired attorney, served on the council for 13 years, including a term as mayor in 2016 and 2017. During his tenure, he consistently pushed for affordable housing, environmental protections, mental and behavioral health services and equitable community development.

Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update prepares for climate change

By **SOFIA FALL**
Sustainability Coordinator

This summer, as Bellevue residents prepare for hiking, paddling, swimming, biking and all sorts of outdoor recreational activities, many also report bracing for periods of extreme heat and smoke related to climate change.

Although we can't reverse climate change or avoid all impacts, Bellevue won't face hot summers unprepared. The updated Sustainable Bellevue Plan will offer a roadmap to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, responding to impacts of climate change and ensuring Bellevue is a livable and thriving community for generations to come.

In the process of drafting an update to the plan, which will cover city and community actions from 2026 to 2030, city staff has collected input from thousands of community members through surveys and other outreach. Staff are translating community priorities of greenhouse gas emissions reduction, improved transit access and expansion of sustainability programs for renters and homeowners into updated goals and strategies for the new plan.

To ensure the updated Sustainable Bellevue Plan reflects the voices and priorities of all in the Bellevue community, the city partnered with community-based organizations Eastside for All, Indian American Community Services, Chinese Information Services Center, Africans on the Eastside, Global Social



To encourage participation in the update of the Sustainable Bellevue plan, staff met with people at the second annual EarthFest at the Bellevue Botanical Garden in April. Residents here participate in the first EarthFest at the Garden in 2024.

Business Partners, United Hub, and Little Masters Club to codesign engagement opportunities. The sustainability team cohosted focus groups, workshops and other events with these partners throughout early 2025.

For Earth Month this April, the city's sustainability team cohosted the second annual EarthFest event with the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Over 2,000 residents stopped by to participate in sustainable crafts and environmental education booths and to learn about the plan update and clean energy rebate programs.

As the sustainability team continues work on the plan update, there will be many opportunities to engage throughout the remainder of 2025, starting with an open house. Learn more at BellevueWA.gov/environment and subscribe to our newsletter.

Celebrating Earth Week with Keep Bellevue Beautiful

By **SARINA MILLER**
Community Relations Coordinator

Bellevue showcased its community spirit during April's Earth Week 2025, as neighbors, local businesses and civic groups rallied to take part in litter cleanup efforts across the city.

At least nine groups from the city's Adopt-A-Street program organized their own cleanup events throughout Earth Week (April 19-26). Equipped with safety vests, trash grabbers and plenty of enthusiasm, participants collected litter along their adopted routes.

Dozens of other volunteer and corporate groups reached out to Keep Bellevue Beautiful, which manages several city cleanup programs. Graduates of the 2024 Bellevue Essentials class participated, as did teams from Visa, Trane Technologies, Kitsap Bank, SAP Concur, the Lake Hills Neighborhood Association and Wright Runstad & Company.

"Thanks to your efforts, we had a fantastic turnout of over 40 participants, and the event was a resounding success," said the coordinating staff member from Visa. "I am excited about the prospect of organizing several more of these events this coming summer and look forward to continued collaboration with you."

The momentum continued in late May, with Amazon, a long-time partner of Keep Bellevue Beautiful, hosting its own annual downtown cleanup event. More than 150 Amazon employees collected trash, supporting the city's ongoing beautification efforts downtown and beyond.

To learn more about the Keep Bellevue Beautiful program or to get involved, visit BellevueWA.gov/keepbellevuebeautiful.

Switch to solar and save on energy bills

By **SOFIA FALL**
Sustainability Coordinator

With the summer sunshine in full force now, it's the perfect time to learn how you can harness solar energy to power your home or business and save on energy bills. Solar panels are also an excellent way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by your home or business.

Through Solarize Eastside, Bellevue homeowners and businesses can sign up for free solar assessments and group purchasing discounts. Community members have until Friday, July 4, to visit SolarizeEastside.org to learn more and sign up for an assessment.

Electricity powering Bellevue's buildings makes up 33% of our city's greenhouse gas emissions; natural gas in buildings accounts for an additional 14%. Combined, this makes Bellevue's buildings our biggest contributor to citywide emissions overall—surpassing even emissions associated with passenger cars.

It isn't just large commercial buildings that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions – the ones that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, contributing to global warming and climate change.

Energy used to power Bellevue's homes and apartments accounts for 20% of communitywide emissions.

Switching from natural gas furnaces and stoves to energy-efficient electric appliances like heat pumps is the most impactful way to reduce emissions from buildings. But rooftop solar is also an important piece of the sustainability puzzle and, through net metering, solar also has the double benefits of reducing operator energy bills while supporting Puget Sound Energy's transformation to 100% renewables.

What is net metering?

Net metering is the key to energy savings with solar for Bellevue homes and businesses, allowing solar system owners to offset lower winter power generation with energy credits banked from summer sunshine.

Permits are required for solar panels and most utility and electrical work.

Learn more from the Development Services Department (BellevueWA.gov/development-services).

Nowruz celebrated at City Hall

In celebration of the holiday of Nowruz, the city partnered with the Alefba Group to host a free community gathering on March 22 at City Hall. Visitors enjoyed tea and Persian pastries and fruits, heard uplifting music and posed for photos with a "haft-seen" – a traditional table setting featuring food items that are cherished symbols of Nowruz.

Nowruz, which in Persian means "new day," is an ancestral festivity based on the solar calendar, marking the first day of spring and symbolizing nature's renewal. It is celebrated on the vernal equinox in the northern hemisphere.



Dancers pose with a "haft-seen," which features food items that symbolize renewal.

Bellevue to begin testing adaptive signal technology for all road users

By LAURA MILSTEAD
Transportation Public Information Officer

Imagine an intelligent traffic signal system so smart it could sense when a child or older adult is making slow progress crossing a street and automatically extend the walk signal – no button presses required.

The Transportation Department is going to pilot such an advance starting this summer with its “Safer Signals” project.

With embedded road sensors at nearly all of Bellevue’s 200 intersections, the city already operates an intelligent traffic signal system that allows transportation engineers to improve traffic flow, manage congestion or adjust for special events in real time.

To promote safer, more inclusive streets, the city is bringing “adaptive signals for all” to its intersections. With more than half of local crashes involving people walking, biking or using mobility devices – and many of these occurring at intersections – the city is prioritizing vulnerable road users through intelligent technology.

The city received \$1.43 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s SMART grant program for a Safer Signals pilot project. The funding will support the installation of advanced traffic signal systems designed to adapt in real time to the needs of everyone in the intersection, not just people driving.



Traditional traffic signals focus on keeping vehicle traffic flowing efficiently. But they often fail to account for those on foot, bike or using mobility aids. Bellevue’s adaptive signal pilot seeks to change that using sensors, cameras and artificial intelligence to detect when people are in the crosswalk and adjust signal timing on the spot.

These adjustments are small, averaging just three seconds, but they can make a big difference in safety.

Real-time responses to real-life needs

The system works much like how traffic lights adjust for emergency vehicles. But instead, these adaptive signals respond to people—adjusting walk times, managing vehicle turn movements and triggering no-turn-on-red signals when pedestrian and vehicle volumes are high.

Who do you call about graffiti on overpasses and light rail stations

By AMANDA RICH ANDERSON
Development Services Public Information Officer

Graffiti can be frustrating to see in our neighborhoods, especially when it appears along major roadways or at transit stations. The City of Bellevue shares your concerns and is committed to keeping our public spaces safe, clean and welcoming.

While the city promptly addresses graffiti on property we own or manage, many frequently tagged areas – like freeway walls, overpasses and light rail stations – are owned and maintained by other public agencies. In those cases, the best way to ensure the graffiti is addressed is to report it directly to the property owner.

When the graffiti is on:

- **freeway overpasses, embankments or freeway and overpass signs**, report it to the state Department of Transportation ([WSDOT.wa.gov/about/contacts/report-graffiti](https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/report-graffiti).)
- **light rail stations and transit facilities**, call or text Sound Transit Security (206-398-5268) or use the Feedback form at [SoundTransit.org](https://www.soundtransit.org).

The City of Bellevue does not remove graffiti from WSDOT or Sound Transit property, but the city shares information and coordinates with our partners. By reporting graffiti directly to the responsible agency, you help keep our region clean and support efficient maintenance.

A new approach to prevention

To help reduce tagging, Sound Transit is piloting a new approach by working with graffiti artists to create original artwork at some of its stations. The goal is to transform frequently vandalized spaces into community-oriented art that discourages further graffiti.

Reporting graffiti on city property

For graffiti on city property or private property in Bellevue, please use the MyBellevue app or contact Code Compliance (425-452-2047 or codecompliance@bellevuewa.gov).

Did you know?

The City of Bellevue can’t remove graffiti from property we don’t own, such as transit stations, freeways, overpasses and embankments. It will be cleaned up faster if it is reported to the agencies that own and maintain those areas.

WSDOT spent \$1.4 million on graffiti cleanup over two years – money that could have gone to essential maintenance like pothole repair and snow removal.

Taggers often target new infrastructure—sometimes just days after construction finishes.

Removing graffiti on freeway signs can cost up to \$50,000 – and may require lane closures. Reporting it keeps roads safer.

Some graffiti covers important information. Reporting it directly to the agencies helps protect drivers and transit riders and operators.

AANHPI art at City Hall

Visitors check out an exhibition at City Hall of works by local artists in honor of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Curated by art gallery owner Mami Shimomura and presented with MG2, the exhibition showcased the diverse talents and narratives of artists with AANHPI roots.

Artworks from 15 artists use colors, textures and stories to illuminate the unique cultural legacies and experiences of AANHPI peoples. The exhibition was on display for most of May. An opening reception featuring taiko drumming and a lion dance was held May 8 at City Hall.



Project Roundup offers deeper dive on select projects

Online ‘Projects in Your Neighborhood’ upgraded

The Project Roundup highlights a few current capital projects from the Transportation, Utilities and Parks and Community Services departments that we are currently designing, constructing, or completing. To see other city projects planned for your area visit our online tool: Projects in Your Neighborhood at BellevueWA.gov/capital-projects.

NE Eighth Street and I-405 Crossing Improvements

Department: Transportation | Status: Construction

Improve the experience and safety of people walking and rolling along Northeast Eighth Street over Interstate 405 by installing new marked crosswalks, adding flashing pedestrian beacons, and installing and upgrading curb ramps. This project will also improve the look of this crossing, which serves as a gateway into downtown Bellevue, by adding landscaping. Work is happening nightly, 9 p.m.-5 a.m., Sunday to Thursday, and is anticipated to be complete later this summer.

Project contact:

Sara Haile, project manager,
shaile@bellevuewa.gov | 425-452-7835

BellevueWA.gov/nep | BellevueWA.gov/levysafety



150th Avenue SE Mobility Improvements

Department: Transportation | Status: Construction

The Transportation Commission identified mobility improvements to 150th Avenue Southeast as a high priority area as part of the 2019 Eastgate Transportation Study. In early June 2025, the city began constructing a new southbound travel lane on 150th Avenue, starting north of Southeast Eastgate Way and continuing to Southeast 38th Street. The scope also includes additional right and left turn pockets at the intersections of Southeast 37th Street/150th Avenue Southeast and Eastgate Way/150th Avenue Southeast, which will help alleviate congestion during peak hours, improve highway access and provide additional roadway capacity.

Project contact:

Paul Krawczyk, project manager
pkrawczyk@bellevuewa.gov | 425-452-7905

BellevueWA.gov/150thavese-mobility

Meydenbauer South Reservoir

Department: Utilities | Status: Design

Bellevue will need additional reservoir volume by about 2030 to serve anticipated population growth in downtown, BelRed, Wilburton and other neighborhood areas. Reservoirs are tanks used for drinking water, storing water for firefighting, buffering strain on the water supply system during peak demands, and allowing for continuous service during brief supply shutdowns. After two years of community engagement and feasibility considerations, Meydenbauer was selected as the location for the new reservoir and is now in the design phase.

The project includes a proposed pump station next to the reservoir and over a mile of water transmission main pipe. The preliminary design phase is scheduled for completion this summer, with final design and permitting to follow. The project team will continue to host regular community meetings through the design and construction phases. Construction is anticipated to start in the summer of 2027 and finish by fall 2030.

Project contact:

Jay Hummel | jhummel@bellevuewa.gov

BellevueWA.gov/meydenbauer-south-reservoir



Kelsey Creek Culvert at Lake Hills

Department: Utilities | Status: Design

The Kelsey Creek Culvert at Lake Hills will be replaced with a larger one and other improvements will be made near Larsen Lake and the Lake Hills Greenbelt. Lake Hills Boulevard runs through the project area and is used by an average of 10,500 vehicles per day. There have been several flooding issues in recent years, including a water main break in the Federal Field parking lot. The project is crucial to solving drainage and flooding issues in the area, concerns about the capacity and instability of the Kelsey Creek culvert, and significant maintenance needs for other sewer pipes in the area. The project will have six elements:

1. Construct a larger culvert to replace the current culvert, west of the current location.
2. Restore the water main to the north and above the new culvert.
3. Replace the current sewer pipe with a larger and steeper pipe.
4. Realign the Lake Hills Greenbelt Trail.
5. Slightly raise the level of Lake Hills Boulevard and Federal Field parking lot.
6. Realign Kelsey Creek to the west of its current location in the Lake Hills Greenbelt.

Construction is anticipated to start fall 2025.

Project contact:

Bob York | ryork@bellevuewa.gov | 425-452-6141

BellevueWA.gov/kelsey-creek-culvert

Community Calendar

Bellevue Botanical Garden

Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main St.

Docent Tours

Every Saturday and Sunday through October, noon-1 p.m.

Introducing the plants, gardens and history of the garden. Meet at the Shorts House.

Free, donations encouraged.

Nature Journaling

Aug 2, Sept 6, 9-11 a.m. for adults and noon-1 p.m. for youth (7 -14 years old)

Details and additional offerings at BellevueBotanical.org/events

Bellevue Family 4th

July 4, 5-10:30 p.m.

Downtown Park, 10201 NE Fourth St.

Family activities and evening fireworks set to music performed by the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra.

425-453-1223 or BellevueDowntown.com/events/family-4th

Chalk Art Fest

July 30, 3-6 p.m.

Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th St.

Sidewalk art, face painting, bounce house fun and sno-cones. Chalk will be provided; attendance is free. All ages welcome.

Downtown Movies in the Park

July 16-Aug. 20, Tuesday nights at dusk. Movies canceled in the event of rain.

Downtown Park, 10201 NE Fourth St.

Free movies with free popcorn on a 40-foot screen. Premovie entertainment begins at 7:30 p.m.

- July 16 - "Moana"
- July 23 - "DC League of SuperPets"
- July 30 - "The Mighty Ducks"
- Aug. 6 - "Back to the Future III"
- Aug. 13 - "Harry Potter"
- Aug. 20 - "High School Musical"

425-452-4240 or outdoormovies@bellevuewa.gov or BellevueOutdoorMovies.com

Songs of Summer - East Lake Washington District Flower Show

- July 19, 12:30-3:30 p.m
- July 20, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main St.

Free



"A Fairy Modern Midsummer"

- Aug. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16 at 7 p.m.
- Aug. 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17 at 2 p.m.

Bellevue Youth Theatre, 16051 NE 10th St.

\$13 for live tickets | \$8 livestreaming link

Visit the box office, call 425-452-7155 or go to BellevueWA.gov/byt

"Romeo and Juliet"

Aug. 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Theatre on the Green - Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th St.

Bring a picnic and enjoy a night out in a peaceful, family-friendly environment.

"Aesop's Fables"

Aug. 13, 6:30-7:20 p.m.

Theatre on the Green - Northwest Arts Center, 9825 NE 24th St.

Bring a picnic and enjoy a night out in a peaceful, family-friendly environment.

Crossroads Movies in the Park

July 31-Aug. 21; Thursday nights at dusk

16000 NE 10th St.

Free movies on a 40-foot screen with free popcorn. Family activities at 7 p.m.; movies start at dusk (around 9 p.m.)

- July 31 - "Cool Runnings"
- Aug. 7 - "An American Tail"
- Aug. 14 - "Wicked"
- Aug. 21 - "The Wild Robot"

Movies will be canceled in the event of rain, excessive smoke or excessive heat.

425-890-3157 or dwardrop@bellevuewa.gov

Arts in the Garden

- Aug. 22, noon-5 p.m.
- Aug. 23, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Aug. 24, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main St.

Discover more than 25 unique artists and a wide variety of 3-D garden art available for purchase among the flowerbeds and woodlands at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Free entry. Prices vary for artwork. Event parking in garden lot: \$10

"Amplify"

- Aug. 22, 23 at 7 p.m.
- Aug. 24 at 2 p.m.

Bellevue Youth Theatre, 16051 NE 10th St.

Presented by Beyond the Stage Youth. FREE!

Bellevue Youth Theatre Auditions for fall season

Sept. 2-4, 5-6:30 p.m.

Bellevue Youth Theatre, 16051 NE 10th St.

425-452-7155 or BellevueWA.gov/byt



Beach Park Lifeguards

Enatai, Meydenbauer and Newcastle: June 21-Sept. 1, noon-7 p.m.

Chism and Clyde: June 28-Aug 17, noon-7 p.m.

BellevueWA.gov/beach-parks

Ranger Hikes, Discussions and Movies

Times and locations vary.

Explore local wildlife and natural history with ranger-led tours, discussions and nature movie events.

BellevueWA.gov/natural-resource-programs

Lewis Creek Park, 425-452-4195
Mercer Slough Nature Park, 425-452-2565
Lake Hills Greenbelt, 425-452-7225

SEASONAL

Day Camps and Recreation Programs

Register now for summer and fall recreation programs and day camps.

425-452-6885 or register.bellevuewa.gov

Kayak, canoe, paddle board rentals

Best Kayak Rentals at Meydenbauer Bay
9899 Lake Washington Blvd. NE

Best Kayak Rentals at Enatai Beach
3519 108th Ave. SE

See BestKayakRentals.com for hours.

Farm Stands

Lake Hills Farm Fresh Produce Stand
15550 156th Ave. SE
Hours vary. 425-233-1198

Larsen Lake Blueberry Farm
700 148th Ave. SE
Hours vary. 206-485-4812

Mercer Slough Farm Stand
2220 Bellevue Way SE
U-Pick usually opens by July 4.
Hours vary. 206-485-4812



City Contacts	
City Hall 450 110th Ave. NE / P.O. Box 90012, Bellevue, WA 98009-9012	
Service First (general information)	425-452-6800
City of Bellevue website	BellevueWA.gov
City Council Office	425-452-7810
City Offices	
City Clerk's Office	425-452-6806
Public Records	BellevueWA.gov/records
Development Service records	425-452-7914
Police records	425-452-4452
Other records	425-452-4283
City Manager	425-452-7228
Community Development	425-452-7892
Conflict Resolution Center	425-452-4091
Development Services	425-452-6800
New permit applications	425-452-4898
Inspection requests, application and status, pay fees	425-452-6875
Simple permits, inspection requests	MyBuildingPermit.com
Application and inspection status	MyBuildingPermit.com
Code Compliance	425-452-2047
Diversity Program	425-452-7886
Fire Emergency	911
Fire Non-Emergency	
General Information	425-452-6892
Inspection	425-452-4254
Fire prevention	425-452-6872
Human Resources	425-452-6838
Information Technology	425-452-4626
Neighborhood Outreach	425-452-6836
Parks & Community Services	
Aging Services	425-452-4200
Information, Recreation, Youth Sports	425-452-6885
Ballfield, Park Rentals	425-452-6914
Park Maintenance	425-452-6855
Human Services	425-452-6884
Probation	425-452-6956
Community Centers	
Crossroads Community Center	425-452-4874
Highland Community Center	425-452-7686
North Bellevue Community Center	425-452-7681
Northwest Arts Center	425-452-4106
South Bellevue Community Center	425-452-4240
Marina	425-452-5255
Mini City Hall	425-452-2800
Police Emergency	911
Police Non-Emergency	
General Information and Records	425-452-6917
Crossroads Station	425-452-2891
Factoria Station	425-452-2880
Crime Prevention	425-452-6915
Transportation	
Administration	425-452-6856
Utilities	
Administration	425-452-6932
Billing/Customer Service	425-452-6973
Water, Sewer, Street Maintenance and Emergency	425-452-7840
Other Numbers (Not city government)	
Regional Animal Services of King County	206-296-PETS
Republic Services (recycling, yard debris, garbage)	425-452-4762
Metro Transit/Sound Transit	206-553-3000

It's Your City is published for people who live or work in Bellevue. For questions or comments about this publication, contact Claude Iosso, 425-452-4448 or ciosso@bellevuewa.gov.
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COUNCILMEMBER

Now accepting applications for fall Bellevue Essentials

By JANELLE WETZSTEIN
Community Development Public Information Officer

Have you ever wondered how the City of Bellevue makes decisions or how you can play a bigger part in shaping your community? If so, Bellevue Essentials could be perfect for you. This 10-week civic engagement course offers a behind-the-scenes look at city government, giving residents in Bellevue the chance to learn, connect and get involved.




Applications for the fall 2025 session are being accepted through Wednesday, July 23. The session runs Sept. 10 to Nov. 12 and includes eight Wednesday classes, 5:30-8:30 p.m., along with one Tuesday evening class and one Saturday afternoon field trip that takes participants into Bellevue's neighborhoods and parks.

Participants will have the opportunity to meet with City Councilmembers, as well as city leadership and staff who manage city-run programs and services. Through interactive learning and real-world scenarios, participants gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities that shape life in Bellevue.

Since it started back in 2013, more than 400 people have graduated from Bellevue Essentials. Many alumni now serve on city boards, commissions and neighborhood associations, making meaningful contributions to their community every day.

Session tuition is \$150, with fee waivers available. To graduate, participants must attend at least eight of the 10 sessions. Applications are due by Wednesday, July 23, at 5 p.m. Apply online or learn more at [BellevueWA.gov/bellevue-essentials](https://bellevuewa.gov/bellevue-essentials).

For questions or accommodations, contact Sarina Miller at 425-452-4295 or samiller@bellevuewa.gov.

 For alternate formats, interpreters or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance 425-452-4448 (voice) or email ciosso@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.
CMO-25-47556