



Neighborhood News

January 2026



Celebrate MLK Day by helping to preserve Bellevue's forest

Volunteer for a morning of service on Monday, Jan. 19, 9 a.m.–noon

Celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by helping to preserve local forest health at Wilburton Hill Park on Monday, Jan. 19, 9 a.m.–noon. Help remove invasive plant species and plant native trees and shrubs alongside the City of Bellevue and our partners Earthcorps. This project received funding from Amazon.

Registration is required at earthcorps.org/volunteer/calendar/. No experience is needed; tools, gloves and refreshments will be provided by EarthCorps. Be sure to sign in when you arrive.



Explore wellness at Bellevue's MLK Health Fair on Jan. 19

11 a.m.–3 p.m., Crossroads Bellevue

By Emily Inlow-Hood

Deputy Communications Officer

To honor the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., the City of Bellevue and the Bellevue Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will be hosting the MLK Health Fair on Monday, Jan. 19, at Crossroads Bellevue.

During the health fair, you'll find a large range of activities and resources focused on improving health outcomes and fostering a sense of community. Discover local health organizations and connect with experts who are passionate about creating a more equitable society.

Explore various health-related booths, where you can learn about preventive care, mental health resources, fitness tips, and much more.

Learn more at BellevueWA.gov/MLKHealthFair.



For alternate formats, interpreters, or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance 425-452-2735 (voice) or email jwetzstein@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI, and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.

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BelRed Look Forward: Draft code updates available for review

By Amanda Rich Anderson

Development Services Public Information Officer

The City of Bellevue is updating its land use code to support the future vision for the BelRed area. A draft of the proposed code changes is now available for public review and community feedback is welcomed.

The draft changes aim to align development regulations with recent updates to the city's Comprehensive Plan and Subarea Plan. They will support more housing and job growth, encourage transit-oriented development and expand medical-related uses.

The BelRed code update will also promote affordable housing strategies, street design improvements, stream restoration and the growth of the BelRed Arts District.

The community will be invited to participate in engagement opportunities, including an in-person event, in the coming weeks.

Learn more at
BellevueWA.gov/belred-look-forward.

Updated parking requirements for new development coming in 2026

By Shawn Edghill

Development Services Code and Policy Senior Planner

The City of Bellevue is updating its land use code to comply with new state laws related to parking. Senate Bills 5184 and 6015 changed the ways cities regulate parking for new developments in an

effort to reduce housing costs, support walkable neighborhoods and make better use of land.

Under the new rules, Bellevue will reduce minimum parking requirements for many types of housing and commercial projects. The city will no longer require more than one space per two units of multi-family housing, or more than one space per single-family residence.

In many cases – like affordable housing, small apartments under 1,200 sq. ft., or ground floor retail in mixed-use developments – parking may no longer be required. Developers are still permitted to include additional parking in new projects.

The code updates also allow for increased design flexibility – now counting tandem and limited-gravel spaces and no longer requiring garages and carports. These reforms reflect a statewide shift toward more sustainable, affordable and people-centered development.

Next steps include a City Council project briefing later this month and a public comment period that will occur in summer 2026. The Planning Commission will begin to review the amendments in the early fall.

Bellevue has until Jan. 27, 2027 to adopt these updates and remain compliant with state laws.

Learn more at
BellevueWA.gov/parking-reform-luca.

Council adopts Diversity Advantage Plan 2035

By Emily Inlow-Hood

Deputy Communications Officer

The City Council recently adopted the Diversity Advantage Plan 2035 (BellevueWA.gov/sites/default/files/media/file/2025/cmo-2025-39209-diversity-advantage-plan-2035.pdf), a 10-year citywide strategic plan that identifies a vision and commits to actions aimed at creating a more equitable community in Bellevue. The plan focuses on both community-facing services and the organization's internal culture and practices.

"It's been a tremendous process...and very inclusive of the community and all the stakeholders," said Mayor Lynne Robinson ahead

of the vote to adopt. "I am very proud that our city has the capacity and the staff to do work like this."

In 2014, the City of Bellevue adopted its first Diversity Advantage Plan, which established 60 specific recommendations for creating a more diverse, inclusive and equitable community. The updated plan provides a shared roadmap for how the organization will continue to improve access to its services and expand the city's impact on all communities that live, work and play in Bellevue.

Learn more at BellevueWA.gov/DAP2035.



South Bellevue Community Center celebrates 20 years

*By Bridgette Larsen
Parks & Community Services Marketing Coordinator*

South Bellevue Community Center is celebrating its 20th anniversary by offering free fitness classes and drop-in sports, special activities and giveaways the week of Jan. 5-11. Festivities will recognize the efforts of community members who have helped create two decades of memories, while demonstrating to new visitors why the center is treasured in South Bellevue.

"From the very beginning, we wanted this to be a place where everyone felt welcome and supported," said Shelley Brittingham, assistant director of Bellevue's Parks & Community Services Department who also worked at the community center when it first opened. "Seeing how the community has made it their own over the past 20 years has been incredibly meaningful."

Located next to Eastgate Park, the center provides city programs for preschoolers, adults, seniors and families, while the Boys & Girls Club of Bellevue offers activities for children, youths and teens. Over the years, the center has grown with

the community it serves, becoming a gathering place for celebrations, meetings and special events that bring neighbors together.

"This center has always been about more than programs," said Michael Shiosaki, director of the city's Parks & Community Services Department. "It is about connection, community and creating a place people want to return to."

If you're interested in staying active or trying new activities in a supportive environment, join us in early January as we celebrate 20 years of providing accessible opportunities for recreation, fitness, education and celebrations for our community.

For more information, visit BellevueWA.gov/city-news/sbcc-20th.

Community Programming Fund returns in 2026!

*By Emily Sherman
Community Development Public Space
Management Specialist*

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Community Programming Fund's first year a success! In 2025, grant recipients brought free, community-led programming to outdoor public spaces across Bellevue—activating gathering areas with music, markets, cultural celebrations, fitness classes and creative experiences.

Building off last year's success, the Community Programming Fund will return in 2026 with expanded funding of up to \$200,000 to support even more free, outdoor community programming in Bellevue. The application period for the 2026 funding cycle opens Monday, Jan. 12, with new and returning applicants encouraged to apply.

To learn more and apply, visit BellevueWA.gov/cpf.





Neighbors helping neighbors

By Christina Faine

Parks & Community Services Public Information Officer

Bellevue recently came together in formidable fashion, donating thousands of pounds of food and personal items during the six-week Essentials for All Food and Hygiene Drive, that ended in mid-November.

Despite Bellevue's high standard of living, approximately 25% of children in the Bellevue School District qualify for free or reduced-cost meals. The community's generosity helped provide food, hygiene items and household supplies for those in need.

"It's amazing what we were able to accomplish as a community thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our neighbors," said Bellevue City Manager Diane Carlson. "Neighbors helping neighbors makes Bellevue a place where people and communities thrive."

The city's Parks and Community Services Department also purchased \$85,000 in grocery cards using funds from community donations, which were distributed to agencies participating in the Essentials drive to assistance for clients in need.

"This is such wonderful news," said Mary's Place Grant Manager Felicia Maffia. "Food insecurity has been a growing problem for our families over the last year that is only getting worse."

"It's amazing what we were able to accomplish as a community thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our neighbors," said Bellevue City Manager Diane Carlson. "Neighbors helping neighbors makes Bellevue a place where people and communities thrive."

Thanks to H-Mart, Grocery Outlet and Bellevue Towers for helping publicize the Essentials drive, and to our incredible community for the heartwarming demonstrating of generosity.

Register for the next Cultural Conversations event on Jan. 21

By Janelle Wetzstein

Community Development Public Information Officer

The City of Bellevue's Cultural Conversations program will continue in 2026 with a series of collaborative events that provide opportunities to foster and strengthen our relationships. Join us to lean into cross-cultural connections that embody the "beloved Bellevue" we all strive to build.

Our next event, Generations: A Place for Everyone to Belong, will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 6-7:30 p.m., at Crossroads Community Center. Experience an evening of connection and hope for the future that crosses generations! Share the ways you learn from those who raised you and discuss the differences and similarities that impact how we all each approach culture, language and belonging.

Light refreshments will be provided.

Registration at generationscc.eventbrite.com is encouraged. You can also register via email to ciwasaki@bellevuewa.gov.



STARTUP425

Apply for Startup425 Accelerator program by Jan. 23!

Gain the necessary support to rapidly develop your business ideas

By Janelle Wetzstein

Community Development Public Information Officer

If you are thinking of opening your own business, apply for Startup425's Accelerator program. The 15-week intensive program provides much-needed support to burgeoning entrepreneurs navigating the venture-scale and small business startup processes.

Startup425 Accelerator dates

Applications due by noon on Tuesday, Jan 23

Course orientation: Monday, Jan. 26

First session: Tuesday, Jan. 27

Final session: Tuesday, May 5

Apply at [Startup425.org/accelerator](https://startup425.org/accelerator)

With multiple tracks for future business owners, the program is offered in partnership with the Founder Institute and designed specifically to help new entrepreneurs rapidly develop business ideas, build essential skills and prepare to raise capital.

Applications for the upcoming cohort are due by Tuesday, Jan. 23 at noon. Although preference for the highly competitive program is given to founders living or building a business in one of Startup425's six partner cities (Bothell, Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton), all founders in Western Washington are encouraged to apply.

The accelerator runs from January to May, culminating with a graduation ceremony and "Demo Day" event that showcases select course founders pitching their business ideas.

To learn more and submit an application, visit startup425.org/accelerator.



Neighborhood Enhancement Program comes to Downtown!

Program kicks off in Downtown area with \$975,000 for improvements

By Theresa Cuthill

Neighborhood Enhancement Coordinator

Bellevue's Neighborhood Enhancement Program allows residents to propose and select projects that improve and enhance their neighborhood's character and quality of life. It rotates through the city's 14 neighborhoods, serving two each year. This month, the process will launch in the Downtown area, with \$975,000 allocated for enhancements.

A virtual kickoff meeting will be held Wednesday, Jan. 28, 6:30-8 p.m., via Zoom. City staff will provide a brief program overview that covers guidelines and schedule, answer questions and invite folks to share, discuss and submit project ideas.

Following the kickoff meeting, households in the Downtown neighborhood will be mailed a Project Request Form to submit ideas. Residents can also propose projects online at BellevueWA.gov/nep. Proposals must be submitted online or postmarked no later than March 3.

To discover your neighborhood area and learn more about the program visit BellevueWA.gov/nep. For more information, contact Theresa Cuthill at tcuthill@bellevuewa.gov.

Neighborhood Enhancement Program

Downtown Virtual Kickoff Meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 28, 6:30-8 p.m.

Register by emailing

Neighborhoodoutreach@bellevuewa.gov

Save the Date

Expanding Neighborhood Connections Roundtable

By Ivonne Rivera Martinez
Community Engagement Manager

Do you live in one of the city's vibrant neighborhoods? Are you interested in learning more about ways to create community and engage your neighbors on issues of local government?

If so, Bellevue's Community Development Department invites you to meet the newly formed Community Engagement Team and the newest member of the Neighborhood Outreach Team.

Expanding Neighborhood Connections Roundtable

**Thursday, Jan. 29, 6:30-8 p.m.,
Bellevue City Hall**

- Learn about our neighborhood programs (we can list them out)
- Meet with your neighborhood liaisons
- How to organize resilient and active neighborhood participation
- Build connection with our teams for future participation opportunities

Train to become a conflict resolution conciliator!

Apply by Jan. 30 for Feb. 10-13 training

By Santiago Naranjo
Conflict Resolution Mediator, Volunteer and Case Manager

Are you a natural listener and strong communicator interested in helping to create peace in our community? Are you culturally sensitive? Most importantly, do you have free time to spare? If so, apply to become a conciliator with the Conflict Resolution Center and help the Bellevue and Kirkland communities resolve conflicts.

Coaching and Conciliator training will be held at the Bellevue Botanical Garden Feb. 10-12, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, with a final virtual training on Friday, Feb. 13 during the same hours. You'll learn conflict theory,



advanced communication skills, negotiation, coaching, database usage and procedural tools. There is no charge for the training; however, attendance at all sessions is required.

Conciliators assist callers in understanding their issues, exploring available options and developing problem-solving strategies. Common areas of conflict include landlord-tenant issues, property line and fence disputes, trees, noise and cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Applications for training are due by Friday, Jan 30 at 5 p.m. Class size is limited. Email bcrc@bellevuewa.gov to express interest in attending the training.

For questions, contact Santiago Naranjo at snaranjo@bellevuewa.gov

Affordable Housing Strategy update nears completion

City Council to review latest draft on Feb. 3

By Hannah Bahnmitter
Senior Affordable Housing Planner

The City Council will consider adopting the 2026-2032 Affordable Housing Strategy update during its Feb. 3 council meeting. The strategy was first adopted in 2017. Since the current update launched in November 2024, city staff have engaged with 60 organizations, 325 residents and more than 150 people at listening sessions to refine and prioritize strategies and actions within the draft plan, which will guide city actions over the next seven years.

In addition to creating and preserving affordable housing, the updated strategy focuses on addressing housing affordability issues in Bellevue by increasing housing access, stability and supply and more. The update also emphasizes equity and removing systemic barriers that reinforce disparate housing outcomes and discriminatory practices.

The updated strategy will also help the city remain on target to meet its affordable housing goal of building or preserving 5,700 affordable units over the next decade. It includes goals, strategies and actions across five areas: Affordable Housing; Housing Equity; Housing Stability; Housing for Unique Needs; and Supply & Diversity.

For more information, contact Hannah Bahnmler at hbahnmler@bellevuewa.gov.



Working together on hazardous trees

By Amanda Anderson
Development Services Public Information Officer

With winter weather bringing rain and wind, hazardous trees – those that pose a threat to people or property – can quickly become a priority. They can also be a sensitive topic between neighbors. The city encourages open, respectful conversations when concerns arise. If needed, the Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center has experts for support.

BellevueWA.gov/conflict-resolution-center

There are often permitting requirements as well as a process for hazardous tree removal. Hazardous determination also requires review by a qualified arborist. For community members with concerns about trees that may be a hazard, visit the city's website at BellevueWA.gov/tree-removal to learn more about next steps and how to ensure safe and responsible removal.

Why this matters?

Skipping steps in the process can lead to delays, confusion or even penalties. It may also harm Bellevue's urban forest if trees are trimmed or removed by someone who isn't a qualified professional. Taking the time to follow the permitting and inspection process helps protect your investment—and our shared environment.

Keep Bellevue Beautiful celebrates nearly 50 miles of cleaned streets in 2025

By Evan Reed
Keep Bellevue Beautiful Coordinator

In 2025, Keep Bellevue Beautiful volunteers and partners rolled up their sleeves to make a visible difference across the city. Through neighborhood cleanups, Adopt-A-Street groups and abandoned shopping cart removal, the program helped keep public spaces cleaner, safer and more welcoming.

Last year, volunteers at more than **330 cleanups** collected over **700 bags of litter** along **48 miles** of streets. Local groups, families and businesses cared for places they call home through the Adopt-A-Street program. And the Abandoned Shopping Cart Retrieval Program removed **more than 2,600 carts** from public spaces.

Last year the program also partnered with Amazon for its biggest cleanup yet – **150 employees** filled bags across Downtown Bellevue – while dozens of smaller volunteer events helped create big results.

This year, Keep Bellevue Beautiful is planning "26 for '26," a yearlong Signature Streets cleanup series that will visit each Bellevue neighborhood at least once and target areas that are most in need.

Learn more or find your next cleanup opportunity at BellevueWA.gov/keepbellevuebeautiful.



Boards and Commissions Meetings

Stay updated on meetings and cancellations: BellevueWA.gov

All meetings are conducted at City Hall unless otherwise noted. Agendas are subject to change. If a holiday occurs on a Monday, please check the updated calendar. Agendas can be downloaded from the city's web pages listed below. Meeting alerts are available through subscribing to the City's Special Meeting Notices page. BellevueWA.gov/special-meetings

Arts Commission (4:30 p.m., 1E-113)

First Wednesday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/arts-commission

Environmental Services Commission

(6:30 p.m., 1E-113) First Thursday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/environmental-commission

Planning Commission (6:30 p.m., 1E-113)

Second and fourth Wednesday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/planning-commission

Transportation Commission

(6:30 p.m., 1E-113) Second Thursday of each month with fourth Thursday as needed.

BellevueWA.gov/transportation-commission

Human Services Commission (6 p.m., 1E-113)

First and third Monday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/human-services-commission

LEOFF 1 Disability Board

(6 p.m., Room 1E-118) First Wednesday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/leoff-1-disability-board

Parks & Community Services Board

(6 p.m., 1E-113) Third Wednesday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/park-board

The Bellevue Network on Aging (BNOA)

8:30 a.m., North Bellevue Community Center
4063 148th Ave NE, Bellevue) First Thursday of each month BellevueWA.gov/bnoa

Special Events Committee (8:30 a.m., 1E-112)

Second Thursday of each month

BellevueWA.gov/events

Bellevue's Neighborhood Services Division offers a variety of programs and partnerships for residents and community members.

To learn more about involvement opportunities and programs to enhance neighborhoods, please visit our website at: BellevueWA.gov/neighborhoods or call 425-452-6836 or email: neighborhoodoutreach@bellevuewa.gov.

City Council bellevue.legistar.com/calendar.aspx

Day	Scheduled Meeting(s)	Location	Public Comment Opportunity
First four Tuesdays of each Month, except August and December	6 p.m. Regular Meeting	Council Chamber Bellevue TV channel 21 and BTV YouTube channel YouTube.com/bellevuewashington	Emails to Council are accepted at council@bellevuewa.gov at any time. Further opportunities for public comment are published on each Council agenda and can be found at bellevue.legistar.com/calendar.aspx
August – first Tuesday only			
December – first and second Tuesday only			