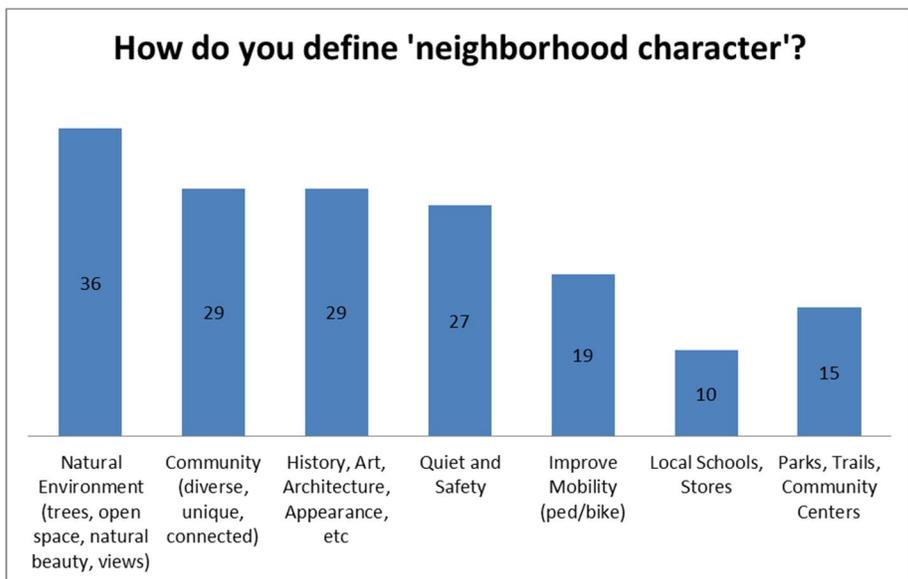# City of Bellevue

Neighborhood Leadership Gathering
Meeting Summary
October 7, 2014

On October 7th, 2014, the Neighborhood Outreach team hosted a Neighborhood Leadership Gathering on the topic "Neighborhood Character: What to preserve amidst change".   The meeting began with the sharing of two video presentations, "Did You Know: Shift Happens 2014 remix" and "Did You Know: Bellevue edition".   Mayor Claudia Balducci shared her perspective on the importance of neighborhood character and her experience in the neighborhood of Lake Hills. Over 92 neighborhood leaders participated in the conversation, sharing at table discussions and large group conversations their perspectives on the following questions:

- What does neighborhood character mean to you?
- What aspects of neighborhood character are important to preserve and protect?
- What do you see as the greatest threat to your neighborhood character?
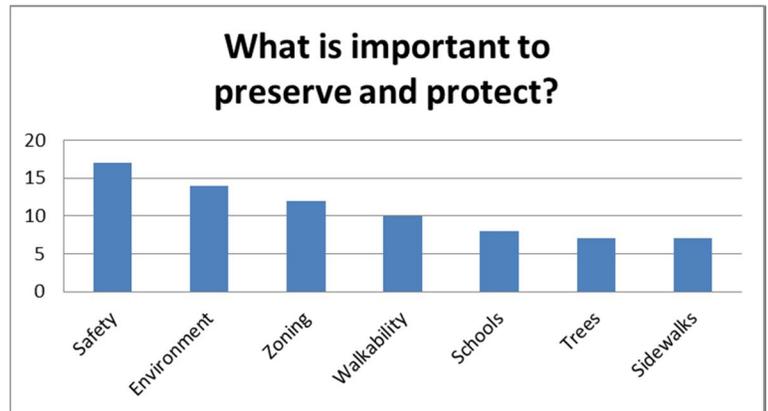- What opportunities are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing?

There was great representation from neighborhoods across Bellevue and the conversation about neighborhood character spanned across a wide number of important neighborhood issues.   Some of the dominant themes included:

Recognition of unique neighborhood identities   Neighborhood leaders recognized that each Bellevue neighborhood is distinct and unique.   They know that 'one size does not fit all' – and desire to have the unique aspects of their individual neighborhood areas protected.   They also have a broad and holistic understanding of the elements that comprise healthy neighborhoods, speaking about the importance of walkability, neighborhood safety, zoning and neighborhood appearance and the community connections that make neighborhoods strong.

How do you define 'neighborhood character'?

Natural Environment (trees, open space, natural beauty, views)	36
Community (diverse, unique, connected)	29
History, Art, Architecture, Appearance, etc	29
Quiet and Safety	27
Improve Mobility (ped/bike)	19
Local Schools, Stores	10
Parks, Trails, Community Centers	15

Neighborhood Character   Residents identified natural environment, neighborhood safety and community connectedness as the dominant elements that comprise neighborhood character.   Trees, open spaces and the beauty of Bellevue's natural environment was highlighted in its' importance to residents.   The conversation ranged from the importance of low crime and less traffic to the aesthetics of well-maintained residential and commercial spaces. The walkability of a neighborhood was frequently mentioned – as people talked about the importance of connecting to local schools and stores.

Preserve and protect When asked what was the most important to preserve or protect – the first priority was neighborhood safety. Maintaining safe, crime-free, and quiet neighborhoods was identified as the first priority. Secondly, residents also raised the importance of protecting Bellevue's natural environment, including Bellevue's tree canopy.
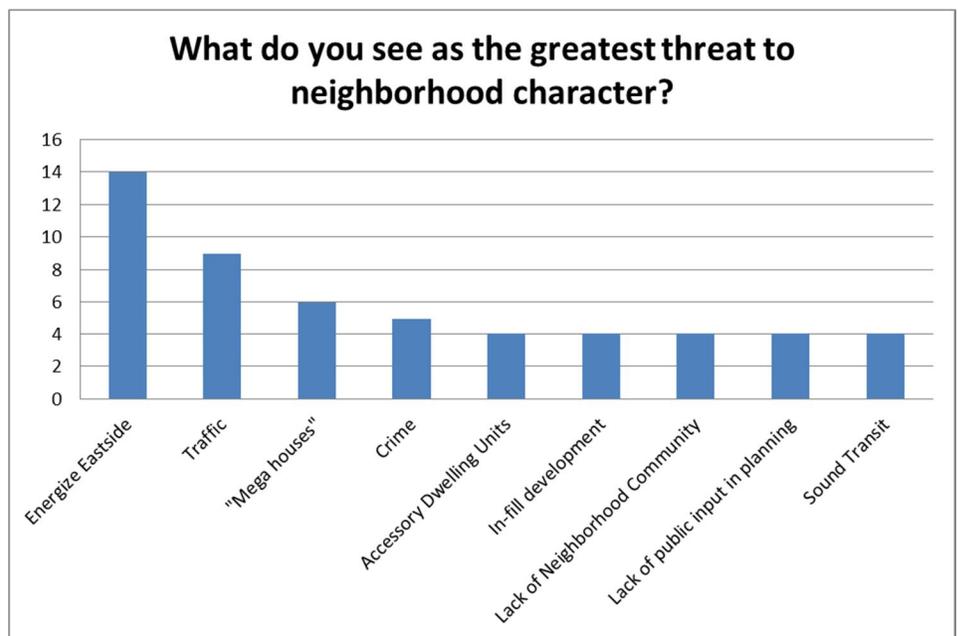
What is important to preserve and protect?

When added together, comments regarding neighborhood walkability and sidewalks received 17 references, elevating it to be comparable to the desire for neighborhood safety.   Sidewalks and neighborhood trails, as well as pedestrian/bike lanes, provide meaningful ways for residents to access local schools and stores and connect with each other.

Neighborhood leaders also identified the growing phenomenon of large homes, termed "mega-homes", which are built on tear-down lots and viewed as being 'out of character' with surrounding houses and neighborhood charm.   During the evening's conversation, there was concern about what is permissible under current zoning that allows for large homes to be built on smaller lots.   There was also a strong desire to maintain current zoning of SF neighborhoods to protect the density allowed in SF residential neighborhoods.

Residents also sought to protect the unique qualities of their neighborhood identities.   This includes the diversity found in their architecture, the traditions of their community events and diversity of the people who live there.   The high quality of Bellevue's schools was noted as a reason why residents can be more selective as to the 'neighborhood character' where they want to live – and why the distinct qualities of each neighborhood remain important to preserve.

Threats to neighborhood character There was a wide variety of answers to the question regarding 'threats to neighborhood character' –and identified potential threats to neighborhood character included Sound Transit, Energize Eastside, accessory dwelling units, in-fill development, lack of protection of green space, lack of public input in planning, population growth, traffic, residential crime, lack of neighborhood community, Shoreline Master Plan, the lack of affordable housing, 'mega-homes' and no parking for downtown.

What do you see as the greatest threat to neighborhood character?

In the large group conversation, neighborhood leaders want to ensure that there is mitigation for surrounding neighborhoods impacted by large development projects – such as Energize Eastside or Sound Transit Light Rail. Additionally, residents expressed concern regarding lot to house size ratios and the issue of 'mega-homes' that are inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood. There were
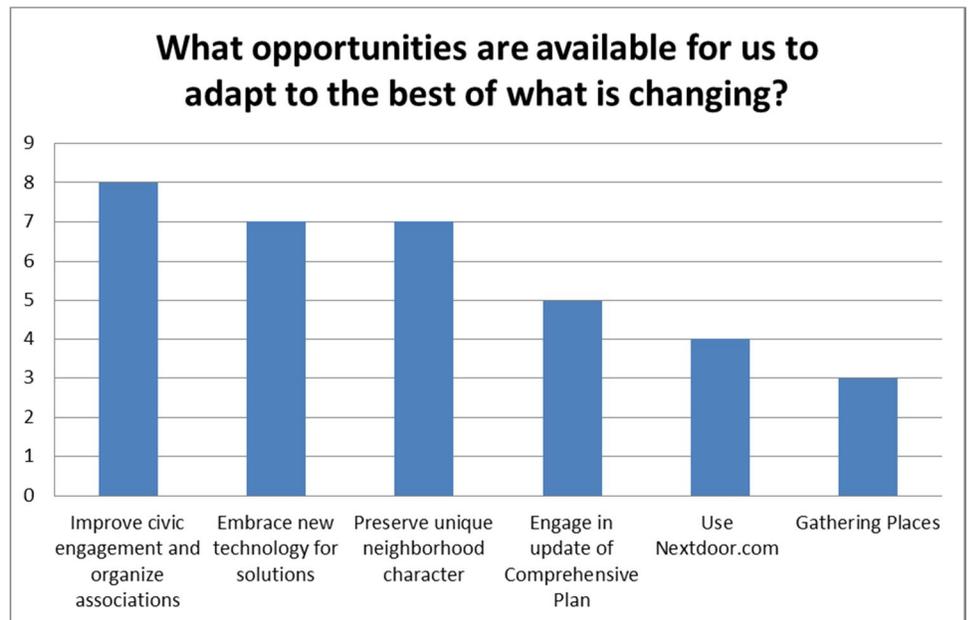
comments on the need for affordable housing – both for Bellevue's workforce and for Bellevue's elderly as they seek to 'age in place'.   Final emphasis was placed on maintaining neighborhood safety and the need to build community in neighborhoods.

The number of written comments (out of a total of 45 submissions) identified the Energize Eastside project (with 14 references), traffic (9 references) and 'mega-homes' (6 references) as the top threats to Bellevue's neighborhoods.

Opportunities to adapt

Neighborhood leaders offered a creative range of ideas on the opportunities that are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing.   On their list included ideas such as:

- Improve civic engagement and organize neighborhood associations
- Embrace new technology for solutions
- Preserve unique neighborhood character
- Engage in the update of the Comprehensive Plan
- Communicate with residents through Nextdoor social media application
- Town Hall neighborhood meetings
- Leverage CIP projects with enhancements
- Neighborhood Gardens
- Improve pedestrian access
- Bike stations

What opportunities are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing?

- Transit oriented development
- Improve services and care for shut-ins
- Underground power lines
- City Ombudsman
- Invest in more public gathering spaces

Residents agreed upon the importance of strengthening civic engagement and the ability of residents to speak into shaping the planning and future of their respective neighborhood areas.   There was a growing understanding of the importance of engaging with the Comprehensive Plan update – and the subsequent updates of the Subarea Plans.

The evening ended with a presentation by Robert Shay on his efforts to restore the World War I Veterans Memorial at Downtown Park.   It was provided as an example of neighborhood leaders working to preserve and protect the things that we care about in our neighborhoods.

The next Neighborhood Leadership Gathering is scheduled for February 26th, 2015.

Written comments are attached.

Attachment #1
Neighborhood Leadership Gathering
Neighborhood Character Written Comments
October 7, 2014

"What does neighborhood character mean to you?"

Natural features of trees, water features, open spaces, sidewalks, safe speed on streets and roads, bike lanes and sidewalks. Human made organization that serve people to grow/learn/enjoy life/ do business so people can shop in their neighborhoods; schools, parks and open spaces, community centers, pools, churches and places of worship

Retention of the Status Quo: not too much traffic, single family residence, crime rate is relatively low

Maintain the basic theme/topographical nature of each neighborhood- grow but not at all costs; Single family - but not McMansions; Shoreline preservation, large trees in Bridle Trails; Safety, walkability and open spaces; good diversity

Caring and responsible neighbors, safe and quiet, health and ecology, natural beauty, appearance of homes and commercial district, safe neighbors, good schools

Open space, trees, family-oriented schools, sense of community, physical look, quiet, people knowing neighbors, neighborhood maintenance (neat yards and appealing home exterior)

Safety is the most important. If we do not have public safety, which, in part, means a well staffed police and fire department then we will not have strong, vibrant neighborhoods. Your video about population growth is Bellevue made some good points. My question is whether the police and fire departments are keeping up with the growth. Who should I ask about staffing?

Bridle Trails; tree ordinance, schools, participation in schools, PTAs, flavor of small town, Neighborhood character for my neighborhood is defined in part by high rise, multiuse buildings which are new and each should be different, creating diversity of architecture. Also defined by natural aspects (trees, space, water, etc.); the people who live there, certain places/spaces which are considered landmarks - aspects unique to the area.

Walkability; Trees; accountability of neighbors; Safety

Beauty - landscapes - green spaces; aesthetics; planning; historical perspective - parks, sidewalks, community center; people; public events; public-private meeting places; traditions; streams and trails

Everyone knows each other; communication; kids are the invisible glue; potlucks/social activities; reasons to gather; house styles; trees; sites of the area; recognize people; physical aspects
Single Family; shorelines; architectural design; young urban population; open spaces; walkability; trees; large lots; history; aging in place

Heritage, History, Art, Mediation and the Lake Hills Shopping Center
Walkable, safety; meet neighbors, parks, stay true to what your neighborhood wants, how it sees itself

"What does neighborhood character mean to you?"

A distinct look and feel of an area that makes it welcoming to visitors and a great place to live for residents. That children have space to play and it is safe to walk around at night. In our neighborhood generations of folks live here and some return after growing up here (like me). What made me come back? Nice neighbors, a feel of being in the country but still close to the city. A view of the mountains and water and trees all around me. Wildlife! Very close to Bellevue and Seattle. A City government that really thought about the future of the place. In our neighborhood there was talk of trails so we could get around easier. It lured me back.

Neighborhood character has multiple definitions. Physically, neighborhood character is defined by lot dimensions specified by the zone it is in. Bellevue has 7 single-family residential zones specifying lot area and lot width. Those zones which have wider lots (R-1 - R-3.5) give a more spacious look and feel to a neighborhood, with sizable separation between homes. Neighborhoods with narrower lots (R-4 - R-7.5) have a more condensed look and feel. Neighborhood character and appearance are also affected by quality of construction, size, scale, and mass of architectural design within the neighborhood. Bellevue has numerous neighborhoods with identifying names, and there are unique differences among them (e.g., some are more rural, some are water-oriented along shorelines, others are view-oriented, while many are located on interior plats). In addition to lot size and width, neighborhood character also is impacted by the customs and sense of community within the neighborhood. Are the homes well maintained? Is there a social and cultural neighborhood identity that is shared by residents? Are there neighborhood activities? Do neighbors look out for each other? Are there shared traditions and history? Are there particular concerns specific to that neighborhood?

Multi-generational, multi-cultural, lively and peaceful

Lake Lanes; safety and security Natural resources; Safety and Security; Representation; Community and Privacy Serenity, Safety, Aesthetic Setting, An urban escape in the city

Lakemont Heights; new development, quiet and small (17 homes),
Views, greenery, schools, safety, serenity, parks and traffic

Living on the water without unreasonable shoreline interference - like a 50' or even 25' control (setback)

Safety - police, fire, physical walkways, care not speeding through; restive look - trees, shrubs, grass areas, keep residential feel, peace and quiet

Newport Hills; generously sized properties; wooded and natural resources; styles of homes of late 1950's; Size of lots, type, style and size of homes; trees; activities and events that bring residents together; walkability - encourage residents to get out and meet each other; safety

Northtowne; community club - need meetings when there is an issue like in Lake Hills; it's people and families, older folk and young families which keep the neighborhood alive - with dog walking and block parties - people watching out, ladder trucks, landscaping. Physical housing; trees; open spaces, parks

It's what separates or makes your neighborhood different than others

Safety, Aesthetics, Function, Sidewalks and Stores, Trails, Gathering Places that enhance the ability to communicate with our neighbors. A great sense of place

"What does neighborhood character mean to you?"

Working together to form a unified vision of how we want to view ourselves and project our own images as persons and as a group

Historical, sense of community, could be a United Nations; physical attributes - country, city, parks, horses, suburban, safety!! We do block watches, Bellevue PD and Fire protection

Old Bellevue; romantic example of Main Street USA, all restaurants are sole proprietors, not chains with owners on site; New developments with mixed use to continue retail atmosphere,

In the case of Old Bellevue, it is the romantic feel of "Main Street USA" that is present and is unique to Bellevue. Old Bellevue is refreshingly franchise free with sole proprietorships' who take pride in their business.

Green spaces, healthy riparian zones, fish that come up streams, trails; aesthetics - architectural design, maintained, green, trees; breathability - open spaces allow breathing; distinct neighborhoods - not all neighborhoods are the same; downtown has vibrant high rises; health concerns due to PSE power lines and the noise threat; these all mean livability

Neighborhood character is influenced both by geographic features/locations and the residents. The best neighborhoods have good neighbors - people who care about their community and have shared interests and priorities. People need safety and good access to facilities.

A combination of the strengths and values of those who live in a neighborhood

Walkability - sidewalks and pleasant walkways improve health, community relationships and safety - both discouraging criminals and providing a safe means of getting from point A to B; cultural and ethnic diversity; landmarks - parks, shops; views and healthy environment

Single-Family; Sidewalks; Trees and Greenery; Trails; Yards; Quiet; Safety; Low Crime
Trees, Trails, Views, Parks for Kids, Sidewalks, Family-oriented, aging in place, multi-generational, access to grocery stores, transit and highways

Single Family, multi-generational, trees and trails, not much traffic, easy access to transit, able to walk, website

Surrey Downs is a strong example of a single-family neighborhood conveniently nestled next to a vibrant urban downtown. This history of the filbert farm and development of the neighborhood are an important aspect of the character here.

Long and narrow - 5+ miles, I90 to Redmond, one street wide plus side streets in places; Shorelines important; Safety's important traffic or parking a part that is used as a commuter route and a regional bike route impacts driveways and access along the lake.

West Lake Sammamish Parkway; Long, Linear, and Narrow, beautiful drive, sensitive to more traffic and higher speeds; 50% shoreline owners with concerns about SMP

Type of neighborhoods ie, Wilburton, Beau Arts, Bridle Trails, Woodridge, etc. Each was built differently at different times in the City's growth. Maintaining distinct character is critical to the livability of the City.

"What does neighborhood character mean to you?"

Land, views; preserve what we have left in our communities; Healthy environment - not so many wires - preserve trees, parks, schools; don't change just to change
Family - single family dwellings or stability; Schools - enrollments changing their neighborhoods; good walking areas with safety

Friendly and inclusive to all families, access to schools and bus service, safe and secure with low crime, sense of community and keeping homes maintained.

Safe, friendly, community

"What aspects of neighborhood character are important to preserve or protect?"

Open spaces/Green spaces/Life Spaces; protect people from the negative impacts of noise pollution, sights and sounds of traffic/trains; air pollution and illegal burning

Environment which is associated with Mercer Slough and its total preservation.

Above and great neighborhood schools

Unique character of Bridle Trails, natural beauty, stable ownership and sense of belonging, good schools

Trees, Open space, maintain current density of housing, protect intrusion from infrastructure that doesn't serve the neighborhood

Neighborhood Character. We have many different neighborhoods in Bellevue. When we decide which neighborhood in which to live we have the expectation that the particular neighborhood character will not be greatly altered. The City should be careful and not increase density in current single family zones.

Diversity of architecture; open space - small and large green spaces (no cement landscape); cleanliness, walkability (or bike-ability); safety - keep it vibrant

Trees, Open Spaces, Safety

Traditions - family and social; Christmas ships; keep old and embrace the new; Open spaces and natural resources; clean air and clean water; local stores - family owned

"Change happens" - well yes, but, you can influence how much and what kind....

Unique personality of neighborhoods; diversity; neighborhood schools and public education opportunities; pedestrian/bike friendly

Aesthetics, history, views, parks/greenbelts, green space for children to play in and for adults to walk in, wildlife corridor; the railroad offers a corridor for wildlife (bear, deer, coyote, raccoon, bobcat), our trees on the hill are the focal point for numerous birds of prey (eagles, hawks, heron, owls);they use our trees for hunting because it offers a vantage point to see but not be seen by other predators. Trees need protecting because our hillside needs protection from slides. And that helps protect our wetlands along the rail corridor and further downstream. Along with the wildlife and aquatic culture. And protects our lungs from breathing in the bad air as our neighborhood is surrounded by 405 and I-90. It is surrounded by freeways except for Lake Washington Blvd on the west. Our physical safety is very important and needs to be protected by maintaining sidewalks, neighborhood block watches, monitoring and controlling speed on the street.

It is vital to uphold the underlying zoning laws governing that neighborhood, to mitigate well the traffic impacts from increased development, and to provide for sufficient police coverage to stem increased residential burglaries. PUDs and conservation subdivisions (which fundamentally increase density) should be separate entities, not an infill development within an existing neighborhood. PUDs, conservation subdivisions and short plats should have their own access to an arterial and not burden...

...an existing neighborhood's traffic. Within single-family zones, homes must not turn into de facto boarding houses or unrelated multi-family residences. If a property has become neglected to a point of dereliction, the neighborhood should be able to ask the City for redress help with the owner. Bellevue's neighborhood grants program should be reinstated, as it serves as an incentive for neighborhood improvement.

Trails, sidewalks, parks, quiet, walkability, easy to access transit, Greenbelt (Lake Hills), good schools, multi-generational, multi-cultural, Inviting to be outside

Natural resources of trees, lake and eagle habitat; privacy and security
traffic and access control, maintain connectivity, artistic quality and experience

Safety, privacy, shoreline, parks, traffic, schools

Main street being overbuilt with high rises, creating too much traffic and crowding out character of small shops

All of the above plus: traffic safety and adequate parking

Lot size - one home per lot, not 2-5 homes "rammed and crammed"; trees/wooded environment; walkability - NH is very pedestrian but increased traffic due to development cam impact walkability and traffic safety; character of home styles: McMansions are out of character for this neighborhood (different than remodels); Gathering spaces - our parks, our swim club, our shopping center;

Connectedness - neighbors communicating and interacting with each other in person and online

Safety, education, trees, single-family, recreate their own unique personality; police and fire, ecology

Safety (traffic especially), community, zoning

Northtowne needs to accept changing character by creating gathering spaces. By redesigning and rebuilding certain streets. For example, 108th from 12th to 24th as a local service street with safe pedestrian and cyclists ways, landscaping, water absorbent materials (both hard and soft scape) as a pilot project for the entire city.

Safety; Education, Trees and green areas of recreation and inspiration; places for all ages to get together and share and meaning and caring

Health - PSE power lines/trains; beauty; views; historical sites

Yes, neighborhoods change. But preserve where the alternative is present. Within the context of "change" we can embrace new technology and not be left with the relics of old technology. This relates to my concern of the Energize the Eastside project which proposes to take the existing 50' high lines to 130' lines. According to some engineering experts this solution to growth is not needed.

The beautiful natural setting and high quality of life. Let's keep our #2 rating in the nation with respect to livability.

"What aspects of neighborhood character are important to preserve or protect?"

The people who dwell in a given neighborhood can outline what it is about their specific area that is core to its identity.   For Somerset it is our magnificent views and an amazingly diverse and supportive population, protected by our covenants.

Healthy environment; Safety; Pleasant Walkable communities; Focus on Schools

Sidewalks, Trails, Parks, Single Family, Lot Sizes to House ratio, Safety

Sidewalks (walkability and bike-ability); appropriate lot size to house mass; trees, views, neighborhood affordability, family services, ie. Transit for elderly

Sidewalks, parks, trails, tree preservation, lot sizes, groups - special safety - emergency preparedness, green belt   preserve single family dwelling

This neighborhood was built without sidewalks; keeping the zoning density at single-family 3.5-4.5 ensures that the traffic does not increase. Safe streets is very important to most neighbors.
Zoning - don't change; property rights regarding shoreline (SMP)

We know that growth happens and will happen - managing the growth is key.   We want to manage not constrict or restrain growth, because we want our city to remain economically viable

Safety - police, fire, sidewalks, lighting; traffic; housing affordability; controlled growth of the City Greenbelts - retain; Crime-free - police alertness; Codes preventing overly large new structures that do not match character already there.

Keep our CCRs current to maintain high quality value of our homes, safe and secure with Neighborhood Watch

High quality living

"What do you see as the greatest threat to your neighborhood character?"

Automobile traffic; sound transit train (above ground) at grade. We need this train in a tunnel or cut and cover trench. Put Sound Transit in a tunnel.

Sound Transit ST2 and the 5 years of construction associated with it. The traffic is near at gridlock right now. With another 25% of office space with the additional traffic impact is hard to contemplate. Reducing Bellevue Way to 3 lanes cannot function morning and evening rush hour.

Put ST2 in a tunnel from I90 to 106th (transit center)

Energize Eastside; Sound Transit

PSE power lines, Light Rail, Losing the natural beauty and unique character, mega mansions, gated homes. Above ground power lines on metal poles are not a sign of progress in a modern city. I don't want to see high voltage power lines running above ground through our neighborhoods.
Poles and wires, new out of scale transmission lines to serve new residents and residents increased density if detached dwelling are allowed on existing lots. Abandoned gas station at entrance to neighborhood, intrusion of transportation and utilities - ie. new 135' poles for transmission lines

Detached Accessory Dwelling Units. The City should not allow Detached Accessory Dwelling Units in single family residential zones. An Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit meets the needs of allowing a family member or friend to live in a home without the issues which are caused by Detached Accessory Dwelling Units.

Polarization over livability and development; over eager to develop and grow without considering open and green small parks/areas; managing forward thinking design for architecture, need for growth and transportation with: safety, pedestrian ability to enjoy our city and its aspects/feature, feel of openness/air/light as buildings get taller, integration for kids and pets in the midst of streets and high rise. Small memorials such as Memorial for Vets, Chase Pancake Corral (landmark!)

Unmanaged growth

Foreign investors; tear down neighborhoods - with no involvement; population growth; traffic and noise; exponential plans;

detached buildings on large lots;

Energize Eastside; No path forward without significant tree loss

Up-building, detached dwellings;

The greatest threat to Greenwich Crest is any development along the old BNSF rail line that would harm the integrity of the sensitive slope that runs along the entire west side of the neighborhood. The vegetation that soaks up the water flowing through the hill and down the slope it vital to the integrity of the hillside, and the hillside is the main trait of the neighborhood because it provides a beautiful vista over Lake Washington, Mercer Island, downtown Seattle, and the Olympic Mts for all who live up here...

...to enjoy. If parents don't want to live here because of threats to health and ecology for their children; the neighborhood character will change. Right now, children can play outside amongst green belts and wildlife and yes with beautiful views of the lake and mountains. Traffic of course is a huge issue. Getting into and out of Bellevue and our side streets during rush hour is frustrating to say the least. The easy access on and off freeways makes us perhaps an easy target for burglary. We are trying to make our homes safer now and taking steps to thwart the thief's.

The City of Bellevue does many things very, very well. However, insofar as neighborhood character is concerned, the greatest threats are by the City of Bellevue's development services department, greedy and indifferent developers, and some on the Bellevue City Council who have partisan interests when development hearings come before Council. All too often in land use cases, it appears the City is solidly advocating for the developer and giving lip service (but in reality, no consideration at all) to neighborhoods impacted by the proposed development. This produces a conclusion of neighborhood betrayal. There is a balance point between a property owner's rights and the impacts of problematic development upon the neighbors. With limited vacant land and with housing targets of the Growth Management Act, it is tempting to squeeze as many new homes as possible in infill development regardless of the zone of that area. However, the City, its planners and permitting process must be mindful of not betraying its neighborhoods in the City's headlong campaign to meet GMA goals. According to Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code, infill development is to be "compatible" with the surrounding area, but that requirement has been rendered almost meaningless in recent years through vague and dismissive justifications for incompatible developments. Population growth and a need for affordable housing are additional major concerns suggesting change in neighborhoods, but these are best addressed by new solutions, not by compromising neighborhood character. The tall transmission towers proposed by Puget Sound Energy's "Energize Eastside" program also are of great concern to many neighborhoods and surrounding cities.

Traffic - pedestrian safety; no affordable housing - limited; housing is too expensive; house to lot size ratio; commercial space degradation (ex. 140th and 16th near cemetery)

Impacts of many projects PSE/405 expansion/Eastside Rail Corridor/Sound Transit/Shoreline master Plan - biggest threat are all of these combined.

PSE project to cut across many Bellevue communities, dividing neighborhoods with new transportation corridors; City of Bellevue focus on growth and economic development and a lack of a comprehensive neighborhood plan/rules of engagement (eg. Ensure construction of infrastructure in a way that minimizes neighborhood impacts als Mercer Island Lid verses Bulldozing Surrey Downs)

Infrastructure and lack of mitigations to maintain quality, aesthetics, safety, etc.

Harder to connect to other neighbors, shared park not used,

The new Meydenbauer Park being planned when it's totally unnecessary - but only a few people's egotistical insistence! The worst part of it is the horrid "bridge" sticking out in the Bay. Ugly! Pointless!

Expansion of businesses (including restaurants) when there are no additional parking lots to absorb the cars driving to them.

"What do you see as the greatest threat to your neighborhood character?"

Issue with "Ram and Cram" developments (5 homes on 1 acre not in common with neighborhood); worried that developers perceive as a tear down neighborhood; tired shopping center controlled by owners; decline of use and membership at Swim Club

Zoning: R5 (allows up to 5 homes per acre); Developers: buying empty lots and building inappropriately sized homes, tearing down homes and exploiting zoning; Investors: buying homes to rent out, creating revolving door of tenants - no investment in neighborhood; Shopping Center owner apathy, their apathy (read refusal to sell, partner with developers, or just improve the property) creates commercial flight in our neighborhood; New residents not recognizing the value of connecting with neighbors and greater community, whether its foreign born folks or people from other parts of the state or country, it's like pulling teeth to get them to participate

home invasions, huge homes, growth of population on only so much land; transient nature of residents in neighborhoods

Change without any consensus

Unreasonable resistance to large homes that borders on ugly "anti" feelings being targeted to new comers.

1) The ability of the elderly to be minified and to be overlooked - it is a racism of age 2) home invasion 3) populations not understanding concepts of the individual human rights, and this lack of education based knowledge of legal issues being clearly shared - hard to explain this - "How to help "new to democratic" life to understand democracy doesn't give the right to bully by mass weight - might does not make right.

Foreign investors; health PSE power lines; traffic!! Expansion of commercial venues into residential areas; lack of parking; We need earthquake training and disaster training in EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD! (Preparedness for disaster)

Concerns over lack of parking and impacts of final development of downtown park; parking meters is an offensive concept;

There has been some discussion of parking meters on Main Street. This is a device that is never viewed as welcoming and is in fact repellent to many. Kirkland's parking meters are an encumbrance to going to Kirkland.

PSE is to put in oversize lines marring the landscape; not planning well through the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and the implementing ordinances' - Bellevue needs to get out ahead of planning, not react to it.

Uncontrolled growth and infrastructure driven by cooperate profits. PSE is one example. Is our growth being driven for the benefit of residents or corporations?

PSE's Energize Eastside project - not just a threat to my neighborhood, but a threat to the whole Eastside. This project would re-define Bellevue's (and Kirklands and Redmonds and Newcastles and Rentons) skyline.   The proposed towers would become the dominant geographic marker - visible from every approach to our cities

"What do you see as the greatest threat to your neighborhood character?"

PSE Energize Eastside - the need for PSE Energize Eastside isn't at all clear - electricity usage on the Eastside has actually declined over the last five years as population has grown - but the impact is terribly clear. The power poles proposed are horribly out of scale, expensive, and a blight on our community. Views, health and property values would all be impacted negatively.

Encroachment of multi-family housing; the proposed PSE transmission towers; houses that take up the whole lot, infill development, traffic, development like the Lake Hills Shopping Center mixed use development; efforts to create "affordable" housing and low income housing; transit oriented development

PSE's Energize Eastside, a great threat to All fo Bellevue. Not just the 230 kv lines, but the very tall poles that will link various substations throughout the City. New development out of scale with neighborhood.

Group homes, multi-family, PSE-power modification; house to lot; affordable housing, need; traffic; poor road crossings for kids

Up-zoning and TOD possibilities will ruin the character of this community.

City regulations on shorelines; traffic growth on the parkway (improvement of I 405 is "the Neighborhood Protection Act"), traffic wants to be on I405, IT is broken, therefore traffic floods to local streets. And some of it comes to the Parkway.
traffic growth

Traffic and Crime. Mitigating the first is very important and has happened when neighborhoods work with the City as ours has. Complaints are easy - answers take thought, understanding and working together, government and citizens

Influx of foreign money interests. Participation in community - events, schools, it's a responsibility! A) Learn English B) Power Lines and the health consequences and destroying views! C) Land of parking downtown d) Traffic! People use Woodridge to get to I90 who don't live on the hill; Richards Rd and Factoria and downtown are always clogged!

No feedback between residents and local government

Traffic and lack of Metro bus

Traffic, Poor bus service

Neighborhood Leadership Gathering
Neighborhood Character Written Comments
October 7, 2014

"What opportunities are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing?"

Move outside of Bellevue. Hide man-made things from views: PSE Power lines, ST Trains, etc.   Organize people in your area.

Precious little leeway with the impending significant construction project

Your slide program shows the phenomenal change...technology; then growth is upon us.   The City needs to truly look at technology to solve electrical utility needs - what is PSE's and (more so) the City's incentives plans for new technology in the electrical field - solar, batteries, wind.   The Comprehensive plan is a great opportunity to help with our planning and neighborhood character.

Regulated growth, code compliant residential and commercial development, modifications to building codes to accommodate and preserve the unique character of the neighborhood.

Upgrade old neighborhoods to new housing amenities and standards. Remove all poles and wires so Bellevue may become "One City" Maybe Bellevue could be #1 if they mitigate growth for the existing residents.

Major projects which disrupt/damage neighborhoods. As I stated at the meeting, we need help from the City in addressing major projects such as the plan proposed by PSE. The PSE project, if allowed, has the potential to damage many neighborhoods throughout the City. Once that damage begins, the neighborhoods will start to deteriorate. And without strong, desirable neighborhoods businesses will not be as interested in locating or staying in Bellevue.

More in Bellevue Reporter and Nextdoor.com - and share what's happening with everyone

Too much is going too fast. Bellevue downtown is still dominated/"run" by the merchant and $$ and leaving the residences (or residential) out of the equation, while the residential population is relatively new it is the largest sector of the pending growth. Neighborhood area (mini town halls) for input ongoing and not just Livability. (Downtown Resident Council?)

I think the most important is to form a neighborhood association to establish CCRs of conduct, appearance, as guidelines to new neighbors. As existing neighbors, we can protect what we like by publishing codes.

Owner-paid improvements; appropriate technology; foresight for planning; community involvement; use technology wisely in Energize Eastside

Nextdoor web site; neighborhood associations

Take a small idea and make it large - ie. Trails, but added sidewalks; be reasonable in change

Embracing technology that provides minimum impact of infrastructure on the character of neighborhoods. Introduce more green technology even if as simple as planting more trees along our freeways and side streets. They don't have to be tall but they need to be green. More garden spaces available would be awesome so folks can grow their own food and again it is good for the air we...

"What opportunities are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing?"
Cont.

...breathe. Enhancing trails and parks. Better pedestrian access. Consider electric bikes stations for use between the parks especially on the waterfront.   Or perhaps a tram.   Our beautiful Bellevue is being stripped of its very foundation...the greenery embedded in the beautiful views, that attracted us all to this beautiful place. The greenery is the foundation of all of our beauty, it enhances our views and removes the bad air naturally.

With increased transit links and redevelopment of large areas of land (e.g., Spring District), new opportunities are on the near horizon to increase housing stock, reduce traffic despite projected population growth, and make it easier for residents to commute from more distant locations to employment centers and the retail core.

Form neighborhood associations. Be proactive with planning and zoning. Resources for shut-ins.

Build a plan in Bellevue that establishes rules, guidelines and zoning that is consistent with the neighborhoods individual characteristics - example, the one-size-fits-all approach to the Shoreline Master Plan is a failure because the characteristics of Lake Sammamish is completely different than Lake Washington.   An alternative may have been to establish specifics that take into consideration the individual characteristics of these natural waterways. Another example - neighborhoods with 1/2 acre lots are changing because the COB is allowing high density developments that put 5 similarly priced houses on one lot - this does nothing to provide for lower cost housing.

Tech savvy solutions to change/adapt community infrastructure; government process to preserve character assets of parks nearby

I don't know! Perhaps try to alter the arrogant attitude of staff!

I don't know - but I would like to know more about the City's program for mediation with neighborhoods that don't agree with the changes the City makes

Comp Plan update: address codes that need to be changed, update the sub area plans; Create gathering places and programs within the neighborhoods that will embrace neighbors of all ages, races, sexes, countries of origin and encourage them to meet and interact THIRD PLACES; create codes that will prevent commercial blight - Bellevue currently does not have codes that address this, especially not in neighborhoods. Business zones like Newport Hills, Lake Hills and Northtowne.

Having new buildings help carry the load of the new building. New people are paying taxes. CC&R's should set codes for what is allowed for that individuality is kept.   Community meetings where people can meet and get involved; Neighborhood community - develop restrictions that help develop common ground and consensus and creates the integrity of the neighborhood.

Communication/Meetings/Newsletters

More emphasis improving physical spaces and connections.

Speak to and with people everywhere - grocery stores, home depot, gas stations, bars, restaurants, not coming to you - but you coming to us.

"What opportunities are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing?"

Reach out to immigrants and teach how to participate in the community. Everyone who is a resident in this City has a responsibility to participate in the community.   This is America and we want to keep it as America*

Opportunity with park to bridge to old downtown with Farmers Market, Civic events, and ties to other areas of City; continuation of Old Main to the East;

It is finally time to address the parking issue in Old Bellevue with a parking garage of some significant size - ideally on the SE corner of the park (possibly underground) Such a structure would bridge the Park with Old Bellevue and make possible such events as Farmer's Markets, Music Festivals, Political Rallies, Craft Fairs and all other things that make Bellevue a great place to live.

We can adapt to new technology; we can conserve, use less energy, choose greener alternatives that have less impact! In the case of PSE when alternative technology is available such as battery and other technology.   We have to have smart growth, dense downtown, good mass transportation, low impact development, maintain a balance.

My involvement with residents opposing PSE Energize Eastside project gives me cause for optimism, but also reasons for concern. I see tremendous participation and passion from residents, and receptivity from City Council - great! But we're fighting a private corporation that controls all the data. The questions are very arcane and technical. Because of this, we don't feel we have a level playing field. We want better checks and balances so neighborhoods can question a project that seems ill advised or detrimental to our interests.

We will continue to access the city's resources. We will need Mandarin/English earthquake preparedness.

1. New technologies in energy production and distribution are in the headlines globally every day. Bellevue should be a leader in both solar and distributed energy implementation.
2. Mayor Balducci mentioned a possible revival of the NEP program.   This program really involves neighborhoods and puts them in control of their own areas.

The demographics of our city are changing, which represents an opportunity to connect and communicate and as a result, benefit from everyone's background and insights.

Could we use the Sound Transit rail yard as a solution to some of our energy challenges.   Let's put in place grid batteries and solar panels - a high tech solution for an innovative high tech city.

Make sure zoning protects single family neighborhoods. Neighborhood Associations.
   1) Organize neighborhood Associations
   2) 2) Smart planning to recognize what we love about Bellevue (Parks, Trees, Homes in Scale to their Environment, a mix of housing offerings, views, job opportunities, transit and highway accessibility, etc) with a careful view to preserving these treasures while accommodating growth and technology

Form community associations (be involved); pro-active with code compliance; have a web site; light rail and bus service -understand how to use - use Nextdoor.com

"What opportunities are available for us to adapt to the best of what is changing?"

This neighborhood is full of residents who are very involved with the development aspects of the City. Continuing the neighborhood outreach on different issues - park, light rail, TOD is essential.

Continue the parkway rebuilt project beyond Phase 1 - bike/ped safety to: landscaping separation on west side, 4' shoulder on east side; expanded pavement - narrower lanes slow traffic - good! Smooth and less noise; storm water quality upgrade - helps street storm water from polluting lake; upgrade utilities - water, sewer, power, communication, gas; parkway pavement was constructed in 1930's.

Our form of government is the primary way for us to be involved in change. We have the best for of representative government. I have traveled and seen the best and worst.

Reaching out to immigrants to show them how to participate! Work with the City to manage the growth

Enhance our Amherst entry area on 138th Ave SE and 144th Ave SE with a Gazebo/Bench shelters
Look at low maintenance bark for our greenbelt area on Forest Drive.

Reduced maintenance, reduced resource usage; water, electricity

Safety – bench near where parents and children wait for bus

Subject: Senior - E Bellevue Neighborhood

Good Morning, Lynne

Would you advise my husband and I on neighborhood concerns that I will list below. We have been residents in our SE Bellevue home for 25 years. The past 5 years or so we have experienced swift and destabilizing changes to our neighborhood community.

There are a high percent of homes being sold to buyers from off shore, some of whom are leasing for a few years before taking residence. Property care is declining affecting neighborhood appearance. And, with an adjacent neighbor...a two year email attempt to resolve landscaping and large fir trees overhanging our property. Off shore or temporary residents have not shown an interest in building a neighborhood community contacts/watch group that will impact emergency response that comes from these relationships. Let me say, this has not limited our reaching out to these neighbors by email, or at their front doors.

Our neighborhood school resources (Somerset) are being dedicated to a 60 percent Chinese population (Bellevue School District data). Cultural differences enhance a community if off shore residents embrace their new culture, attempt to engage, and intend to stay in the community rather than live here as temporary residents who intend to educate their children and return to their homelands. We have watched this trend with 3 families who left with a child graduating from Newport High. The home, without being listed for sale, is then reoccupied by another family of the same country origin, who repeat the pattern. Non of these families have been open to being part of this neighborhood or caring for their property.

This diminishes the security we feel as seniors to continue "ageing in place" in a home where we have created a multi-generational "sacred" space, and continue to offer, as 70 year olds, to a fifth grandchild still being care for several days a week.

All these concerns are amplified by our recent property tax assessment which the King County Ombudsman tells us reflects off shore buyers home demands for this school district and this neighborhood.

We look forward to your response,

Respectfully, Ann and Craig Jackson

#4. In addition to the attached I will add to this section with the following:

We will continue to access the city's resources.

We will need Mandarin/English earthquake preparedness.

Over a 2-year period we respectfully communicated our concerns and needs to an off shore neighbor, via email, until the family recently took residence. Our years of asking for consideration in tending to trees that were interfering with maintaining our roof and causing us real concern with wind storm and large trees falling on our home, left us taking on an unfair proportion of care of their property.

With many years of calls for assistance from the city with the tree concerns, deteriorating yard care and clarifying city dwelling regulations, we believe there are city regulations and oversight needed to help citizens with these new challenges to our neighborhood character.

In addition, we believe the city manager and city council are responsible for leadership in protecting our community resources and representing the interests of Bellevue citizens. May I be confident in assuming that you are aware of the research being published about off shore buyers targeting Bellevue to access our excellent schools? We have been living this reported pressure. These schools are a very valuable resource. When the school data reports (60 percent and 51 percent from one ethnic group) we no longer have diversity. In addition, does the city have data that breaks these numbers down between permanent residents and guests of the US who may or may not choose citizenship and the duties of citizenship? How does this affect our tax burden? Again, I ask does the city, and therefore we citizens, take on a disproportion share of the responsibility.

All this data can be debated. However, we are living the effects. We have lived in Bellevue for 25 years where we chose to give our son quality education at Newport High School. It is a disturbing bit of "change" to accept that his daughter will not have the opportunity to access this great education. The inflated, high demand/cost of housing has excluded the next generation from the quality of life we moved into Bellevue 25 years ago to give them.

It is not responsible to frame these resulting disruptions to families as resolvable with neighborhood mediation or, discounted with "change is inevitable", as we heard at last evening's presentation.

This is a management, city governance challenge.

Fire departments typically run an engine company (pumper with hose and water on board) out of every fire station. They also run a ladder company (ground and aerial ladders, plus rescue tools) at a ratio of 3 engines to 1 ladder. In Bellevue, staffing has been historically short, 1 ladder to 9 stations. In the early '90s, staffing was cut with the addition of the station in Newport Hills. The ladder company was moved from the downtown station, to station 7. The engine crew was moved from station 7 to station 9. When the ladder company was moved to station 7, one person was added to the crew to drive an engine, giving the ladder company the ability to extinguish fires in Woodridge.

When the city cut the fire budget in 2010, staffing was reduced and that person was removed, leaving Woodridge (and the surrounding area) without a quick responding engine (water source). If the ladder was in quarters when they received a fire call in their surrounding area, they could take the engine depending on the information given from the dispatcher. This info is often sketchy at first, and the situation only becomes clear when fire units get on scene. A good example is the car fire on 405 last summer. That was initially dispatched as a vehicle extrication/rescue, when in fact, the initial calls to dispatch reported a vehicle fire. That left the ladder company sitting on scene of a burning vehicle with an occupant still inside, until another engine company could be dispatched and then respond...a delay of over 5 minutes.

So, basically, your nearest water source for a fire response is at SE 8th and Bellevue Way, or the station at SE 36th on Factorial Blvd. If the ladder company at station 7 is on another response, and they are the first resource to be pulled out of the city, then you have nothing. Essentially, the city is gambling that nothing will happen in your area, and it's already burned them twice. To the city manager's defense, the fire chief never told anyone, or wasn't allowed to by the old city manager. So they had political cover.

By all standards, the BFD is hugely under-staffed and has had many firefighter close calls. But unfortunately, they may have to lose a firefighter before things are corrected and the city protects the folks that protect the citizens.

(/)

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GREAT PLACES IN AMERICA

NEIGHBORHOODS

Characteristics and Guidelines of Great Neighborhoods

A neighborhood can be based on a specific plan or the result of a more organic process.

Neighborhoods of different kinds are eligible — downtown, urban, suburban, exurban, town, small village — but should have a definable sense of boundary.

Neighborhoods selected for a Great Neighborhood designation must be at least 10 years old.

Great Neighborhoods

2014 Great Neighborhoods (/greatplaces/neighborhoods/2014/)

Previous Designees (/greatplaces/index.htm#Previous)

Description of the Neighborhood

It is important to identify the geographic, demographic, and social characteristics of the neighborhood. Tell us about its location (i.e. urban, suburban, rural, etc.), density (i.e. dwelling units per acre), or street layout and connectivity; economic, social, and ethnic diversity; and functionality (i.e. residential, commercial, retail, etc.). We also want to know whether a plan or specific planning efforts contributed to or sustained the character of the neighborhood, or if the neighborhood formed more organically and not through a formal planning process.

Neighborhood Form and Composition

How does the neighborhood ...

- Capitalize on building design, scale, architecture, and proportionality to create interesting visual experiences, vistas, or other qualities?
- Accommodate multiple users and provide access (via walking, bicycling, or public transit) to multiple destinations that serve its residents?
- Foster social interaction and create a sense of community and neighborliness?
- Promote security from crime is made safe for children and other users (i.e. traffic calming, other measures)?
- Use, protect, and enhance the environment and natural features?

Neighborhood Character and Personality

How does the neighborhood ...

- Reflect the community's local character and set itself apart from other neighborhoods?
- Retain, interpret, and use local history to help create a sense of place?

Neighborhood Environment and Sustainable Practices

How does the neighborhood ...

- Promote or protect air and water quality, protect groundwater resources, and respond to the growing threat of climate change? What forms of "green infrastructure" are used (e.g., local tree cover mitigating heat gain)?
- Utilize measures or practices to protect or enhance local biodiversity or the local environment?

Great Neighborhoods – Characteristics and Guidelines for Designation

A neighborhood can be based on a specific plan or the result of a more organic process. Neighborhoods of different kinds are eligible — downtown, urban, suburban, exurban, town, small village — but should have a definable sense of boundary. Neighborhoods selected for a Great

Neighborhood designation must be at least 10 years old.

Characteristics of a **Great Neighborhood** include:

1. Has a variety of functional attributes that contribute to a resident's day-to-day living (i.e. residential, commercial, or mixed-uses).

2. Accommodates multi-modal transportation (i.e. pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers).

3. Has design and architectural features that are visually interesting.

4. Encourages human contact and social activities.

5. Promotes community involvement and maintains a secure environment.

6. Promotes sustainability and responds to climatic demands.

7. Has a memorable character.

Description of the Neighborhood

1. When was the neighborhood first settled?

2. Where is the neighborhood located: in a downtown, urban area, suburb, exurban area (i.e., on the fringes of a metropolitan area), village, or small town? What is the neighborhood's approximate density (e.g., in dwelling units per acre, or other)?

3. What is the neighborhood's location, its physical extent, and layout? What are the boundaries of the neighborhood? Are these boundaries formal, defined by an institution or jurisdiction (i.e., wards or other political boundaries, neighborhood associations, other entities) or is the neighborhood defined informally?

4. How large a geographic area does the neighborhood encompass (number of blocks, acres, or other measurement)?

5. What is the layout (e.g., grid, curvilinear) of the streets? Is there street connectivity; is it easy to get from one place to another by car, foot, or bike within or beyond the neighborhood without going far out of one's way?

6. What is the mix of residential, commercial, retail and other uses?

7. What activities and facilities support everyday life (e.g., housing, schools, stores, parks, green space, businesses, churches, public or private facilities, common streets, transit, etc.)?

8. Is there diversity amongst the residents, including economic, social, ethnic, and demographic? Describe the neighborhood's homogeneity or heterogeneity in those terms.

9. How has a plan or planning contributed to or sustained the character of the neighborhood? Or did the neighborhood form more organically and not through a formal planning process?

Guidelines for Great Neighborhoods
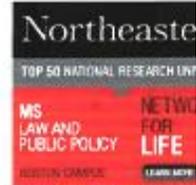
1.0 Neighborhood Form and Composition

1.1 Does the neighborhood have an easily discernable locale? What are its borders?

1.2 How is the neighborhood fitted to its natural setting and the surrounding environs?

1.3 What is the proximity between different places in the neighborhood? Are these places within walking or biking distances? Does walking or bicycling within the neighborhood serve multiple purposes? Describe (access to transit, parks, public spaces, shopping, schools, etc.). How are pedestrians and bicyclists accommodated (sidewalks, paths or trails, designated bike lanes, share-the-road signage, etc.).

1.4 How does the neighborhood foster social interaction and promote human contact? How is a sense of community and neighborliness created?

1.5 Does the neighborhood promote security from crime, and is it perceived as safe? How are streets made safe for children and other users (e.g., traffic calming, other measures)?

1.6 Is there consistency of scale between buildings (i.e., are buildings proportional to one another)?

2.0 Neighborhood Character and Personality

2.1 What makes the neighborhood stand out? What makes it extraordinary or memorable? What elements, features, and details reflect the community's local character and set the neighborhood apart from other neighborhoods?

2.2 Does the neighborhood provide interesting visual experiences, vistas, natural features, or other qualities?

2.3 How does the architecture of houses and other buildings create visual interest? Are the houses and buildings designed and scaled for pedestrians?

2.4 How is local history retained, interpreted, and used to help create a sense of place?

2.5 How has the neighborhood adapted to change? Include specific examples.

3.0 Neighborhood Environment and Sustainable Practices

3.1 How does the neighborhood respond to the growing threat of climate change? (e.g., local tree cover mitigating heat gain)?

3.2 How does the neighborhood promote or protect air and water quality, protect groundwater resources if present, and minimize or manage stormwater runoff? Is there any form of "green infrastructure"?

3.3 What measures or practices exist to protect or enhance local biodiversity or the local environment?