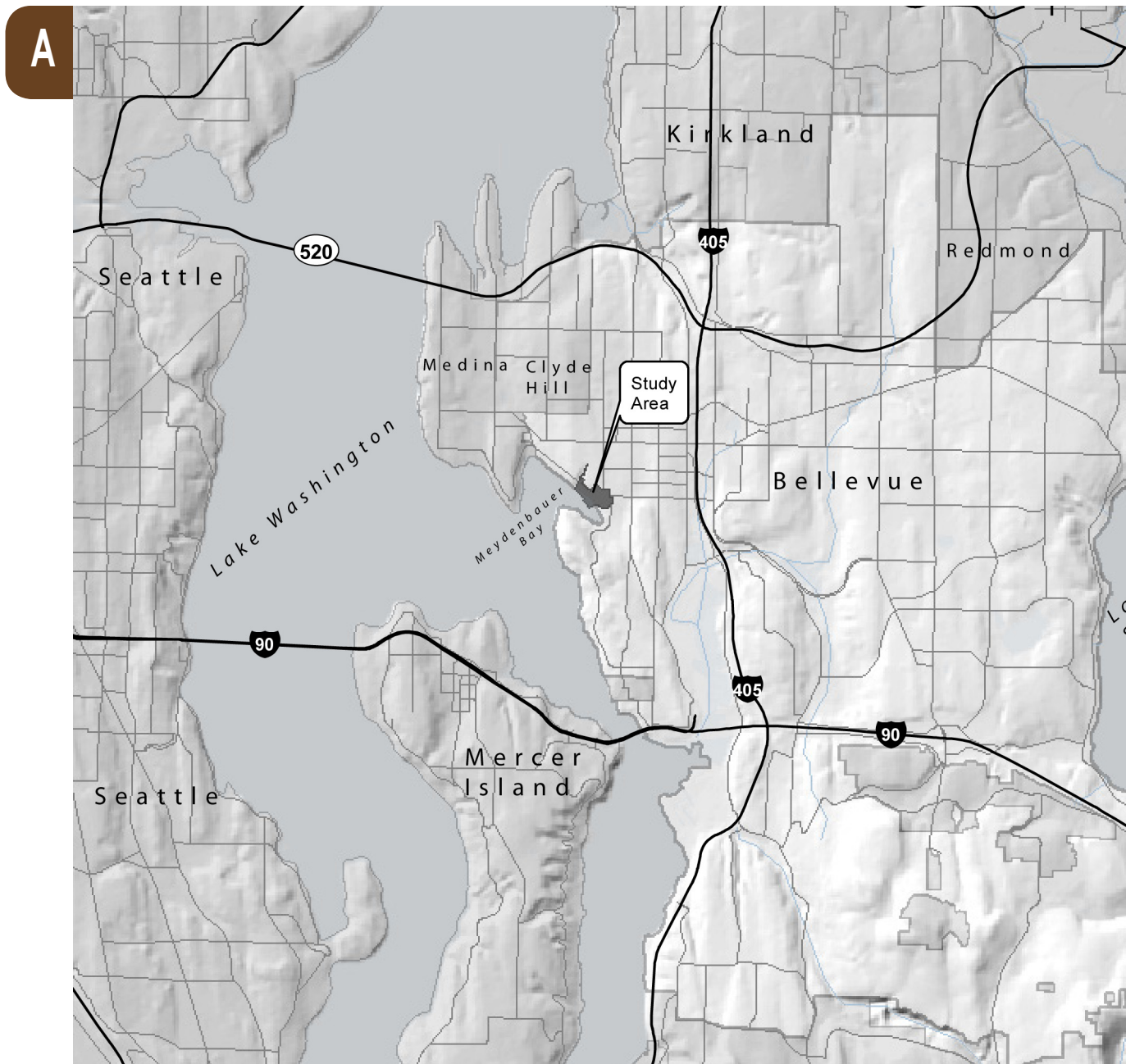




Introduction





**A** Figure 2.1-1: Vicinity Map

## CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Plan Organization

The purpose of the Plan is to describe the landscape design and redevelopment framework necessary for implementing the vision expressed by the City of Bellevue. The plan is intended to provide a solid foundation for future park design work, offering guidance on park program, physical form, and aesthetic objectives. The goal of the Plan is to communicate broad level spatial and technical aspects needed to design and build the park and encourage redevelopment of the surrounding properties within the study area. The Plan is organized in a series of chapters that begin with an expression of vision and overall Plan organization, followed by a more in-depth discussion of land use strategies, implementation phasing and funding strategies, design considerations, and finally a budget-level estimate of probable cost. The Plan was informed by numerous other studies that are not described or included here, including the concurrently developed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Opportunities and Constraints Analysis (Sasaki 2008).



## 2.2 Program Goals and Objectives

The Plan is rooted in long-standing policies contained in the City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and Parks & Open Space System Plan (initially 1987, and most recently 2008 and 2003, respectively). These policies envision increasing Bellevue’s access to the waterfront at Meydenbauer Bay and providing waterfront opportunities for future generations. They promote a visual, physical, and graceful pedestrian connection from downtown to Meydenbauer Bay that terminates in a significant waterfront presence; provides unique recreation, retail, and tourism opportunities; and enhances the role of the park as a major pedestrian destination. The policies suggest that connections can be achieved with expanded streetscape amenities, property acquisition, and/or public amenities created by developer incentives. The policies acknowledge opportunities to facilitate water-based recreational activities, enhance shoreline amenities, and promote Meydenbauer Bay’s historical significance in the region’s development.

The Plan brings these policies together and further refines the City’s proposal to develop a public park on the north shore of Meydenbauer Bay that incorporates the existing Meydenbauer Beach Park and additional City-owned properties along the bay. The Plan also reflects the City’s proposal to encourage redevelopment of nearby upland properties to improve the visual and physical connections between downtown and a waterfront park of city-wide importance.

Consistent with these policies, the Plan examines park design and use opportunities as well as surrounding land use and development patterns. City staff summarized objectives

of the Plan in a memorandum to the City Council dated February 5, 2007 (Foran and Terry 2007):

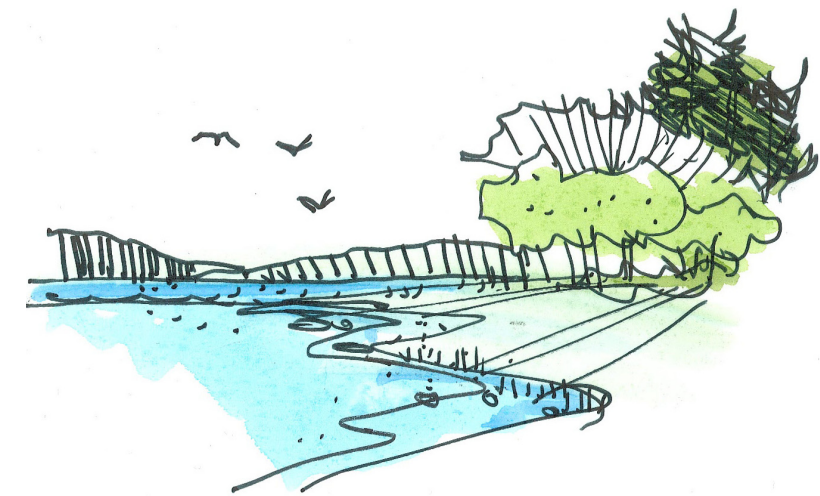
- Enhance public access to the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront.
- Help distinguish Bellevue as a waterfront city.
- Identify activities and design elements that capitalize on the area’s unique waterfront location.
- Improve the physical and visual connections between downtown and Meydenbauer Bay.
- Provide for redevelopment in the upland area between Old Bellevue and Meydenbauer Beach Park in a manner that reflects the area’s waterfront proximity and complements the new park.
- Closely integrate master planning for Meydenbauer Beach Park and planning for the adjacent neighborhood.

## 2.3 Planning Principles

Appointed by the City Council, the Steering Committee provided guidance on development of the Plan. In an open public process, the Steering Committee addressed the park and surrounding land use including the existing park and marina, public lands acquired for park development, and the use, form, and character of streets and properties adjacent to the envisioned park. Work of the Steering Committee was guided by several broad planning principles approved by the City Council. These twelve principles, on the following page, address the visitor experience and consider uses, activities, access, connections, design, stewardship, economic vitality, history, neighborhood integrity, planning process, and implementation strategies.

While each principle provided guidance as the Plan was developed, the discussions between the community and the Steering Committee often focused on environmental stewardship, accessibility, appropriate uses and activities, a remarkable and memorable shoreline experience, and neighborhood integrity. The planning process and resulting Plan balance the multiple and sometimes competing objectives of resource management, development, enhancement, preservation, and restoration. The Plan is a flexible document, focused on delivering, over time, an attractive, distinct, and environmentally appropriate waterfront park and compatible land uses. The Plan illustrates a compelling and collective vision and illuminates opportunities to achieve many of the community’s goals and objectives including:

- Improving waterfront access and recreational activities for the entire community.
- Celebrating history, preserving historic uses, and adapting waterfront buildings for new uses.
- Restoring ecological functions and improving water quality.
- Strengthening the visual, cultural, and physical connections of the City to Lake Washington’s Meydenbauer Bay.
- Encouraging best practices for sustainable building and land management.



# planning principles

## 1 Remarkable and Memorable Shoreline Experience

The park will be an extraordinary community-wide public asset. The new park will greatly increase waterfront access, recreational opportunities for all Bellevue residents, and in conjunction with its proximity to the Downtown Park and neighborhood, establish Bellevue as a waterfront city. The surrounding area should complement and take advantage of the unique shoreline location.

## 2 Spectrum of Activities

The new park should provide visitors with a wide range of activities and experiences, from active recreation such as swimming and sailing to passive enjoyment of intimate, green, natural areas. The park plan should artfully blend traditional park uses with a new urban experience, allowing individuals to enjoy different or multiple experiences with each visit or over time.

## 3 Complementary Land Uses

Urban design and land uses in the upland area adjacent to the park should be pedestrian-oriented and serve the broader community to make the transition from the upland to the shoreline seamless, enjoyable, inviting, and compelling. They should draw the pedestrian toward the water, convey a sense of excitement, and provide an interactive experience between the waterfront and upland areas.

## 4 Increased Physical and Visual Access

Corridors that visually open up the waterfront from upland areas and that facilitate pedestrian movement from Downtown Park to the waterfront should be maximized. It is critical that corridors and public spaces overcome real or perceived physical obstacles to reaching the shoreline.

## 5 Pedestrian Priority

The park and its connections should be places that can be enjoyed by pedestrians without fear of conflicts with automobiles. Where vehicle drives or parking areas are necessary, they should be designed and located to promote a “pedestrian first” message.

## 6 Economic Vitality

The park and its connections should support the nearby business community, providing an interactive and welcoming environment for downtown employees, residents, and visitors. Land uses and urban design elements should contribute to the economic vitality of the area as a whole.

## 7 Superior Design

The park should be reinforced, communicated, and celebrated through high quality urban design, landscape architecture, building design, and streetscape treatment, not only within the park itself but also throughout nearby public spaces and park connections. The plan should reflect a high standard of excellence.

## 8 Environmental Stewardship

The park design should respect and reflect its unique and sensitive waterfront setting. The plan should explore opportunities to incorporate measures that improve the shoreline characteristics and water quality in the bay. Best practices for sustainable building and land management should be incorporated.

## 9 History

The park design should recognize the heritage of Meydenbauer Bay, from the time of Native Americans, explorers, and early settlers to the industries of whaling, ferrying, and today’s residential and pleasure boat moorage. The plan should assess opportunities to preserve and reuse structures of historical note and incorporate means to animate the Bay’s rich heritage through public art and interpretive programs.

## 10 Neighborhood Enhancement and Protection

The land use component should be a catalyst for revitalization of older uses while minimizing impacts on neighboring residential areas. Redevelopment of properties in the study area or conversion of apartment buildings to condominiums is expected in the foreseeable future. The land use plan should ensure through rules or incentives that these actions occur in a manner that is both consistent with the area’s land use vision and sensitive to adjacent residential uses.

## 11 Coordinated Planning Process

The park master plan and the land use plan will impact and influence one another. The planning schedule needs to be flexible and expedient, necessitating close coordination.

## 12 Commitment to Implement

The Waterfront Plan should include an implementation strategy that leads to the fulfillment of the vision.

*Approved by the City Council March 19, 2007*

## 2.4 Planning Process

The City of Bellevue has long had a vision of connecting the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront to Downtown Park to create a signature park and waterfront destination. With the acquisition of its first properties for this purpose in the 1950s, the City improved the existing Meydenbauer Beach Park. In 1987, the City's Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan identified acquisition of the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront as a major focus to provide unequaled waterfront amenities and connect the waterfront to Downtown Park and the downtown. Since the late 1990s, Bellevue has acquired land along Meydenbauer Bay as it became available, to expand Meydenbauer Beach Park and provide an important recreational opportunity for its citizens. The City Council recognized the need to plan for the ultimate goal of achieving a connection of this key waterfront area to the downtown area and enhancing the surrounding area. To maintain the status quo in the area while allowing the City to conduct the necessary planning efforts to implement this long range vision, the City Council enacted a moratorium in January 2007 that prohibited the City from accepting development permit applications on 13 properties within the study area. The City imposed the moratorium to avoid premature redevelopment in the study area while it refined its vision for the waterfront and its understanding of the possibilities and constraints of enhancing the land uses and livability of the area between Meydenbauer Bay and Downtown Park. The moratorium affected 13 properties totaling approximately 7 acres; it allowed the City's planning work to proceed, while preventing redevelopment that could have otherwise hampered the civic vision and planning effort. The City launched a community involve-

ment process for waterfront planning that resulted in the concepts being evaluated concurrently in an EIS. The moratorium ended in January 2008.

The City initiated its planning process in early 2007, which resulted in a Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan (PPLUP) for land uses and development intensity in the upper block and south of Main Street portions of the study area (Sasaki 2008). Land use alternatives considered as part of this earlier process assessed the economic feasibility of redevelopment through market-based incentives of upland areas (within the study area), identified as the upper block and the area south of Main Street. The market analysis concluded that considerable additional development capacity would be required on the upper block to provide sufficient economic incentive that would guarantee redevelopment of the property rather than converting it to condominiums (EPS 2008). As a result of this analysis, 100 percent market-based incentives to ensure redevelopment in the upper block were not pursued further.

When the City continued its planning process with a focus on the new waterfront park in May 2008, it also focused on reintegrating the new park and uplands, with greater attention to the edge condition and relationship of these two important components of the Plan. The Steering Committee continued to meet, and two additional public workshops were held to develop and refine the park proposal and alternatives.

In late 2008, the City decided to prepare an EIS and subsequently published a Determination of Significance (DS) on October 9, 2008. An EIS scoping meeting was held on October 29, 2008. After receiving comments on the Draft EIS

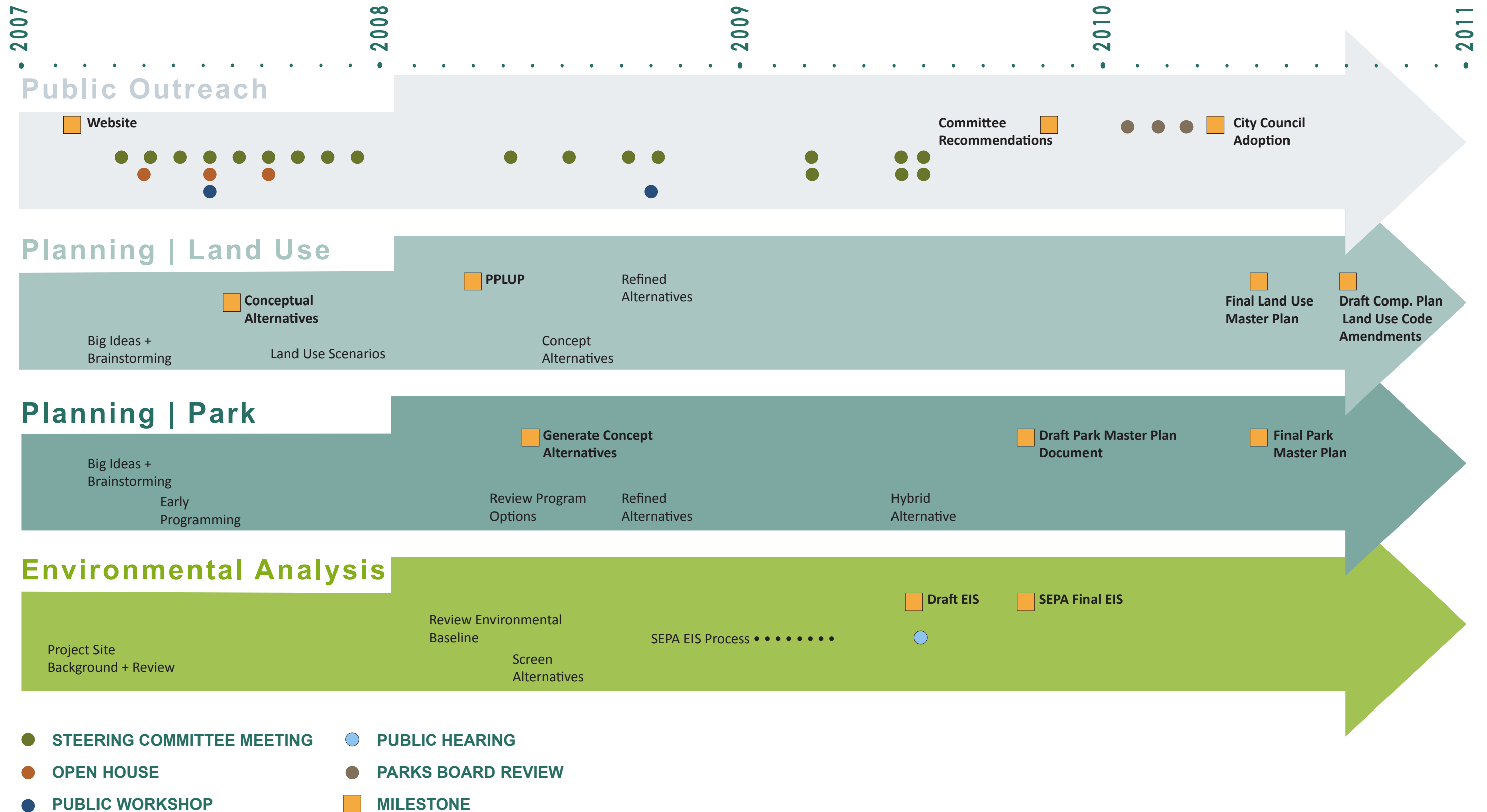
(issued June 4, 2009), the Steering Committee selected a draft hybrid plan and prepared a set of preliminary recommendations.

The planning process and the associated public involvement process will continue into 2010. The Steering Committee completed its work in 2009, culminating in a recommended plan that incorporates a vision for both the land use and park components. A Final EIS was prepared that reflects the Steering Committee recommendation. Ultimately, the City Council will make the final decision on the recommended plan. The City could begin to implement some components of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan following Master Plan adoption by Council resolution. Implementation of other components (i.e., land use changes in nearby upland areas) will first require the adoption of associated amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, or other City policy or regulatory documents in 2010. The timing of physical development of the new waterfront park or redevelopment of nearby upland properties will depend on a number of factors, including final design, permitting, and financing considerations, as well as (in the case of redevelopment of private properties) real estate market conditions.



Figure 2.4-1: June 2008 Park Alternatives Public Workshop

# PLANNING PROCESS DIAGRAM



## 2.5 Steering Committee Recommendations

The Steering Committee was appointed by the Mayor, and approved by the City Council to serve in an advisory capacity to the Council, the Parks Board, and the Planning Commission. Their work over a two and one half year period consisted of guiding the development of draft alternatives for both the Park Master Plan and the neighboring upland area, evaluating those alternatives, and ultimately selecting final land use and park master plan alternatives and identifying actions to implement the vision. Their work was to culminate with final reports summarizing the recommendations of the committee on both the land use and park master plan project components.

The Steering Committee's recommendations follow in a letter to the Council that records and embodies concepts, concerns, and caveats related to their vision and to specific Plan elements. Their recommendation also summarizes the more challenging issues addressed by the committee and their conclusions on those issues, and acknowledges public concerns regarding several existing conditions in the vicinity of the proposal. Finally, the Steering Committee Recommendations section summarizes the concepts embedded in the Plan. Some of these concepts originate in the Planning Principles, while others evolved throughout the process. Together with the Plan-specific recommendations, the summary of Plan concepts is intended to memorialize the features and nuances of the Plan that were important to the committee.



### Meydenbauer Bay PARK AND LAND USE PLAN

November 19, 2009

The Honorable Mayor Grant Degginger  
Members of the Bellevue City Council  
450 110th Avenue NE  
Bellevue, WA 98004

#### **RE: Steering Committee Recommendation – Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan**

Dear Mayor Degginger and City Council members:

On behalf of the Meydenbauer Bay Steering Committee, consisting of co-chairs Doug Leigh and Iris Tocher, and members Stefanie Beighle, Hal Ferris, Betina Finley, Merle Keeney, Marcelle Lynde, Bob MacMillan, David Schooler, Tom Tanaka, Stu Vander Hoek, and Rich Wagner, we are pleased to transmit to the City Council the committee's recommendation for the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan (Plan). The Council is presented with an extraordinary opportunity to create a unique and memorable experience for future generations of Bellevue residents. We believe the Plan recommended by the committee fulfills the vision embodied in the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and Parks & Open Space System Plan, and provides a strategy for the delivery of a spectacular public asset that capitalizes on the community's patient and steadfast pursuit of this vision. The committee thanks the Council for the clear and comprehensive guidance provided in our Steering Committee Charge and the project's Planning Principles, which enabled us to develop a Plan that is both visionary and respectful of its unique setting.

The steering committee's recommendation for the proposed Plan, and for specific aspects of the Plan, is presented below. In addition, the committee identifies several concerns for you to consider regarding existing conditions that were raised repeatedly in public comment. While it was not the committee's charge to address these concerns which exist with or without the proposed Plan, the concerns provide context for the Plan. Recognizing and addressing these concerns may help to narrow focus to the Plan itself. The committee discusses these concerns in the "Broader Issues" section that follows the steering committee recommendation.





## Recommendation

**A. The steering committee recommends adoption of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan, as identified and evaluated by the Final EIS as the “preferred alternative”, as summarized below, and as presented in the Draft Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan dated November, 2009.**

The Plan envisions an extraordinary community-wide public asset. The new waterfront park will be a pedestrian place that encourages contemplation, socializing, and recreation; welcoming visitors who arrive by boats, car, bus and bicycle or on foot. People will be attracted year around by the variety of uses and thoughtfully designed places that respect the setting, express the community’s environmental values, and support a range of both active and passive activities. Public access to the waterfront will be greatly increased for viewing, swimming, wading, boating, and walking on fixed and floating piers. The Plan provides a variety of opportunities upland of the shoreline as well, including picnicking, informal play, walking, and viewing. Two public gathering spaces are included to ensure that the park enjoys year-round use. The park moves from its most natural at the west end, maintaining and improving the ecology of the ravine in the existing Meydenbauer Beach Park, and culminates in an urban connection in the entry plaza at 100th Ave SE and Main Street.

The Plan improves the ecology of the site. Daylighting a native creek and enhancing the native vegetation will facilitate improved habitat and water quality. Removing and relocat-

ing the recreation pier will maximize tranquil enjoyment and interpretive opportunities in the ravine, the most natural zone of the park. Much of the existing shoreline, 800 lineal feet of the park’s 1250 foot shoreline, will be softened and restored. Along with shoreline restoration, natural and engineered storm water treatment facilities, and significant reduction in impervious surface will improve water quality. Reduction of over-water coverage by nearly 35%, and use of current standards and best management practices for new over water piers and floats, will improve fish habitat.

The Plan concentrates active recreation such as swimming, play areas, picnicking, and the activity building in the central portion of the new park. The activity building will provide year-round opportunities for recreation and viewing regardless of weather. The marina is adjacent to the central recreation area, but is across 99th Ave NE. Short term parking for marina users and accessible parking stalls are located at the marina. The promenade, which parallels the shoreline, provides a pedestrian connection at the foot of the slope that avoids conflicts with cars.

Through reconfiguration of the piers, the Plan balances the desire to continue long term moorage with the goals of providing public access and restoring the shoreline, as well as with the funding requirement to provide at least 14 slips of transient moorage. The marina maintains opportunities for long term moorage on an expanded Pier 1 and removes Piers 2 and 3. The boating community is broadened with the addition of the transient moorage slips and canoe and kayak rental, launch, and tie up. Additionally, flexible pro-

**A** Figure 2.5-1: Example of Park Activities

**B** Figure 2.5-2: Example of Park Activities



programming proposed for the historic Whaling Building on Pier 1 will include maritime, historic, and cultural activities that augment boating activities. Over-water structures connect the marina with the adjacent uses on both sides. On the west, the curved pedestrian pier separates the swim beach from boats and on its east side, accommodates canoe and kayak tie ups. A floating boardwalk connects Pier 1 near the Whaling Building to a pedestrian pier at the foot of the entry plaza where Pier 3 is currently located. The south side of the floating boardwalk provides moorage for transient boaters, and the east side of the pedestrian pier is kept free of boaters in consideration of the Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club’s youth sailing program which operates from their westernmost pier. The area between the promenade and the floating boardwalk will provide an excellent opportunity for contiguous shoreline restoration and shallow water habitat.

from the garage will facilitate ADA access to the gathering space, and an elevated pier will stretch from the gathering space to the shoreline, ultimately ending with access to the pedestrian pier and floating boardwalk.

The Plan suggests modest changes to land use in the adjacent upland areas, providing the opportunity for corridors that visually open up the waterfront from Downtown Park and facilitate pedestrian movement to the waterfront, Old Bellevue, and Wildwood Park. The land use concepts pertain to two geographic subareas within the study area, lying upland of the waterfront area. The two subareas are identified as “Upper Block” and “South of Main”.

In the Upper Block, redevelopment of aging property incentivized by increasing allowable density is intended to provide improved streetscapes and pedestrian amenities, and recognize existing densities that commonly exceed current zoning allowances. In the area South of Main, coordinated redevelopment of several parcels is intended to result in public spaces and pedestrian connections through the block, helping connect the new waterfront park with Old Bellevue and also with Wildwood Park. It also envisions shared underground parking accessed both from Main Street and 101st Avenue SE.



At the new park’s east end, the Plan calls for an entry plaza that connects the park and Meydenbauer Bay to Wildwood Park, Old Bellevue, Downtown Park, and adjacent neighborhoods. The Plan calls for closing 100th Ave SE/SE Bellevue Place to vehicle traffic and using the steep grade of the right-of-way to develop a series of plazas, walkways, grand stairways, and public spaces with water features and public art. The street level plaza at 100th Ave and Main St provides pedestrians and visitors with wide open views of the Bay, the boats, Pickle and Groat Points, Lake Washington, and Seattle. Below the plaza is space for structured parking. Midway down the slope a gathering space which will invite viewing and visiting during inclement weather. An elevator

**A** *Figure 2.5-3: Example of Restored Shoreline (EDAW AECOM)*

**B** *Figure 2.5-4: Improved Streetscape along Main Street/Lake Washington Boulevard Connects to New Entry Plaza.*

**B. The committee recommends the closure of 100th Avenue SE/SE Bellevue Place to vehicles, to provide a gateway to the new park and connections to Old Bellevue, Downtown Park, Wildwood Park, and adjacent neighborhoods. Recognizing that the EIS transportation analysis and conclusions were based in part on the assumption that it would be completed within the analysis time horizon (year 2020), and that it could have positive effects in terms of relieving traffic congestion on Main Street, the committee also recommends that the NE 2nd Street improvement project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-150) be completed prior to the closure.**

The Plan recommends 100th Avenue SE/SE Bellevue Place be closed to vehicle traffic and the right-of-way incorporated into the primary pedestrian access which begins at the entry plaza, and through a series of terraces, walkways, stairways, and public spaces with water features and public art connects the waterfront and the new park to Main Street and Downtown Park. This aspect of the plan has been very controversial among area residents. The committee evaluated options that would keep the road open for general vehicle use, but concluded that the closure greatly benefits the park user's experience and the park's connectivity, and advances the pedestrian priority promoted by Planning Principle No. 5:

*“The park and its connections should be places that can be enjoyed by pedestrians without fear of conflicts with automobiles. Where vehicle drives or parking areas are necessary, they should be designed and located to promote a “pedestrian first” message.”*

Before reaching consensus on this aspect of the plan, the committee insisted on and received detailed transportation analysis. A preliminary analysis of the effects of road closure was provided to the committee by the project consultants in October 2008. That analysis indicated that the road closure would not lead to any unmitigatable adverse impacts. More detailed quantitative analysis was provided in the Environmental Impact Statement which confirmed that no significant adverse impacts would result from road closure. Even so, the committee feels that addressing overall traffic management in the area is important. Specifically, the committee believes that completion of the NE 2nd Street improvement project is vital to accommodate the closure of 100th Ave SE/SE Bellevue Place, as that project will help relieve congestion on Main Street. The committee made sure that the Plan includes options for all properties in the immediate vicinity, particularly the Ten Thousand Meydenbauer Condominium, to have continued adequate access for residents, guests, and services (including emergency services).



**A** Figure 2.5-5: View of 100th Avenue SE

**B** Figure 2.5-6: Simulation of Improved Pedestrian Access to Waterfront along 100th Avenue Corridor



**A** Figure 2.5-7: Reconfigured Marina - Expanded Pier 1

**C. The committee recommends reconfiguration of the marina, removing Piers 2 and 3, and expanding Pier 1 (alternatively Pier 2 could be shortened to remove its connection to the shoreline and connected to Pier 1 as a finger pier).**

The committee recognizes that this will reduce long term moorage from 87 slips to a range of 38 to 48 slips, but it will allow a balance of several interests, including:

- Provide at least 14 transient moorage slips required by a funding source obligation (in addition to the 38 to 48 leasable slips);
- Increase the spectrum of Bellevue boaters served by the park, by providing opportunities for transient moorage and people powered vessels such as canoes and kayaks;
- Allow for removal of the hardened shoreline and restoration to improve fish habitat and water quality;
- Improve overwater experiences for non-boaters; and
- New overwater structures to be designed and constructed with be more compatible with the bay and fish populations.

Several concerns were raised by the public with respect to transient moorage. While there was some objection to the provision of any transient moorage, most people understood that provision of at least 14 moorage slips is a requirement of a funding source used to purchase the marina. Also, some public comments suggested locating the transient moorage northwest of Pier 1. However, the transient moorage requirement must be met on the properties which the funds helped purchase, i.e., the Yacht Basin and/or Meydenbauer Marina, now collectively known as the Bellevue Marina at Meydenbauer Bay. Therefore, suggestions to locate the transient moorage northwest of Pier 1 would not meet this requirement. The floating boardwalk provides a logical location for transient moorage, with convenient access to both park facilities and downtown amenities, while providing separation of transient moorage from long-term moorage.



**A** *Figure 2.5-8: Example of Public Pedestrian Pier (EDAW AECOM)*

**D. The committee recommends multiple and varied opportunities for the public to access the shoreline and provide connectivity within the project area.**

Several means of providing public access to and through the park, and to and over the water were evaluated by the EIS and the steering committee. In the Upper Block, redevelopment of aging property incentivized by increasing allowed density is intended to provide improved streetscapes and pedestrian amenities. This can help improve not only the immediate pedestrian environment, but also strengthen the connection from adjacent neighborhoods to the waterfront. A water feature extending from Downtown Park to the waterfront will provide a powerful visual connection and invitation to explore both parks. In the area South of Main, coordinated redevelopment of several parcels is intended to result in public spaces and pedestrian connections through the block, helping connect the new waterfront park with Wildwood Park.

In the new park itself, the committee’s recommendation provides a range of opportunities for pedestrian movement. Key public access elements include:

- An elevated viewing platform, extending from the entry plaza at Main St and 100th Ave to the shoreline edge, provides visitors with spectacular views of the bay. It passes over both the Vue Condominium driveway entrance and a new shoreline promenade, at an elevation that ensures proper clearance for emergency service vehicles below. Visitors could use an elevator to de-

scend from the platform to the shoreline. This provides an accessible route that responds to the site’s steep topography.

- A public pedestrian pier located at the base of the elevated viewing platform connects with a meandering floating boardwalk that runs roughly parallel to the shoreline, connecting at its western terminus to Pier 1. The floating boardwalk serves several purposes: It provides required moorage for transient boaters, offers the non-boating public an opportunity to get out over the water, expands the “real estate” of this narrow part of the park, and moves some of the pedestrian and boating activity farther from adjacent condominium residents.
- A curved pedestrian pier located west of the marina arcs out toward the lake and provides added opportunity for pedestrians to walkout over the water and enjoy striking views of the bay and the mountains beyond, the Bellevue skyline, and the new park itself. This pier also provides tie-up space for canoes and kayaks, and physically separates the swim beach from boating areas.
- A hand launch path is provided for canoes and kayaks, located between the curved pedestrian pier and Pier 1.
- A shoreline promenade provides a continuous walkway along most of the shoreline. It will be designed to accommodate emergency service vehicles for access to and through the park, and for providing emergency services to adjacent residences.



**E. The committee recommends that the elevated walkway beginning mid-slope below the entry plaza and terminating in an elevated viewing platform be designed to maximize and enhance views of the water and distant vistas; be of an appropriate scale that is compatible with its surroundings; extend to the shoreline edge and connect to the floating boardwalk; and be as light and transparent as possible.**

The committee feels this platform is an important park feature, and one which will contribute to a remarkable and memorable shoreline experience capitalizing on the spectacular view opportunities offered by the bay. The committee recognizes that members of the public have concerns regarding the visual mass of the elevated viewing platform. The success of this feature will depend in part on its final design which will be determined at the project level. It is important that this feature be of a very high quality of design, consistent with Planning Principle 7, Superior Design, which states:

*“The park should be reinforced, communicated, and celebrated through high quality urban design, landscape architecture, building design, and streetscape treatment, not only within the park itself but also throughout nearby public spaces and park connections. The plan should reflect a high standard of excellence.”*

Design elements to consider for this element might include:

- A “step-down” prior to reaching the shoreline edge (while still providing necessary clearance for emergency vehicles and driveway access to the Vue Condominiums);
- A staircase in place of an elevator;
- Relocating the elevator structure northward, further from the shoreline edge.

**F. The committee recommends that the expanded Pier 1 maintain as many long-term moorage slips as possible, after providing for pedestrian access to the water, shoreline restoration, and at least 14 transient moorage slips.**

The committee recognizes that the floating boardwalk between the pedestrian pier and Pier 1 will be designed and located as necessary to comply with regulations in effect at the time of its construction, including the City’s updated Shoreline Master Program. Should those regulations require locating that boardwalk farther away from the shoreline, the design of Pier 1 and its moorage capacity could be affected. Therefore, the committee recommends that, if adjustments to the boardwalk are necessary, they should occur in a manner that maintains as many long term moorage slips as possible, and still provides pedestrian access to and over the water, allows shoreline restoration, and at least 14 transient boat slips as required by funding sources.

**A** Figure 2.5-9: Elevated Viewing Platform Provides Unobstructed Views of the Bay.

**B** Figure 2.5-10: Bellevue Marina Pier 1



**G. The Committee recommends that Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code amendments be drafted to implement the modest land use changes included in the Plan and described below.**

The purpose of the land use study was to explore market-based land use incentives and zoning standards that would support redevelopment and encourage through-block public corridors for views of, or pedestrian access toward, the water. The committee held six meetings focusing on land use in the upland area to understand how much incentive would be necessary to encourage redevelopment and public corridors and spaces, and to evaluate what level of incentive would be acceptable.

Planning Principle 3, Complementary Land Use, provides that:

“Urban design and land uses in the upland area adjacent to the park should be pedestrian-oriented and serve the broader community to make the transition from the upland to the shoreline seamless, enjoyable, inviting and compelling. They should draw the pedestrian toward the water, convey a sense of excitement, and provide an interactive experience between the waterfront and upland area”

Ultimately, in the Upper Block the Committee reached two critical conclusions. First, due to topography and the location of nearby buildings, opportunities for ground-level views of the bay from NE 1st Street were limited at best. Second, the development intensity necessary to persuade

property owners to redevelop properties and create a significant view and pedestrian corridor was so great in the context of the current market that it would result in buildings having much greater bulk and height than those on surrounding properties. The Steering Committee determined that such buildings would be unacceptable in this location and would provide too little public benefit.

Additionally, aging apartment structures in the Upper Block exceed current density limits, reducing the potential for incentives to encourage redevelopment. Recognizing this as well as the committee’s resolve to maintain existing height limitations, the recommended plan incorporates incentives not for the purpose of creating through block corridors, but to help improve the edge treatment along public walkways through implementing the following concepts:

- Incentivize redevelopment of existing structures to provide public benefits.
- Incentives should maintain existing height limits and existing allowable uses.
- Redevelopment should achieve improved architecture and pedestrian amenities (consistent sidewalk system, landscaping, surface treatments, benches, signage, public art).
- Incentives to consider include increased density (to approximately 60 dwelling units per acre – control through FAR), modest relaxation of coverage and setback development standards to accommodate the increased density, and reduced parking requirements.

There are three parcels in the subarea South of Main that will likely redevelop in the foreseeable future. The Chevron Station and Meydenbauer Apartments are privately owned, and the east Bayvue Village Apartments parcel is owned by the City of Bellevue. To encourage coordinated redevelopment among all three property owners, the recommended plan incorporates the following concepts:

- Facilitate coordinated redevelopment to provide public benefits.
- Incorporate 100th Avenue SE into the pedestrian connection from Main Street; close road to vehicles but ensure emergency and service vehicle access to adjacent properties.
- Change the character of Meydenbauer Way SE to be more “pedestrian friendly”, by emphasizing pedestrians but still providing access for vehicle use, access, and parking.
- Redevelopment should promote shared underground parking with access from Main Street and 101st Avenue SE, provide pedestrian connection to Wildwood Park, and use water as unifying theme and to strengthen connections.
- Incentives to consider include increased density (to approximately 60 dwelling units per acre – control through FAR) on multi-family parcels, southerly expansion of retail uses east of 100th Avenue SE, modify development standards to accommodate the increased density, and parking controls (maximum limits).
- Incentives should maintain existing height limits on all parcels.



**A** Figure 2.5-11: Rental of People Powered Vessels (PPVs)

**H. The committee recommends that commercial uses west of 100th Ave SE and within the park be limited to vendors, leased moorage, and rental of people powered vessels (PPVs) such as canoes and kayaks. The committee also recommends the following commercial uses for the Upper Block and the South of Main subareas:**

- In both upland areas, continue to allow commercial uses where allowed by existing zoning (i.e., in the DNTN and O districts)
- In the South of Main area, allow limited retail expansion south of the Chevron site (east of 100th Ave SE).

The committee considered various alternatives which evaluated commercial uses within the proposed park boundaries west of 100th Ave SE, including vendor kiosks, café, leased moorage, and rental of people powered vessels (PPVs) such as canoes and kayaks. After considerable discussion, the committee concluded that west of 100th Ave SE, only limited commercial activities are appropriate within the park as similar opportunities are found in close proximity along Main Street. The recommended Plan includes up to six temporary vendors to provide food, non-alcoholic beverages, and/or items for use in the park, but cautions that vendors should use portable rather than fixed carts or kiosks, be located where impacts on neighboring residential properties are minimized, and be restricted to certain hours of operation. The recommended Plan reflects the committee’s decision not to include a café. These recommendations are intended to minimize commercial activity within the park to help maintain the tranquility of surrounding residents while still providing water-oriented activities and basic conveniences for park users.

**I. The committee recommends that sufficient on-site parking be provided to meet the demands of a typical day’s use at the park.**

Meeting the parking demand of a typical day’s use will help avoid spillover parking in surrounding neighborhoods. The peak parking demand on a typical day is estimated to be 149 stalls, based on a review of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation manual, the City of Bellevue Land Use Code, and estimates prepared by Per-teet, Inc. The recommended plan provides parking for approximately 156 vehicles in a combination of surface parking areas and underground structures, exceeding the peak demand by a small amount. The existing parking lot in the west ravine that now serves the existing Meydenbauer Beach Park would be retained as part of the on-site supply. In addition, 10 short-term parking spaces are included in a vehicle pullout along Lake Washington Boulevard, and 8 short-term and accessible spaces are provided near Pier 1. An additional 8 surface stalls, not included in the on-site 156 stall total, would be located along the west side of 99th Ave NE (in the right-of-way) in close proximity to the swim beach and Pier 1.

The majority of the parking is provided by two underground structures. One is located west of 99th Ave NE, south of Lake Washington Boulevard, and would be integrated with the activity building proposed at that location. Access would be from 99th Ave NE. The other is located west of 100th Ave SE, south of Lake Washington Boulevard, and would be located below the entry plaza. Access to this structure could be provided by both Lake Washington Boulevard from above and Meydenbauer Way SE from below.

Placing much of the parking below grade helps reinforce the pedestrian character of the park, minimize view impacts, and maximize above-grade areas for park purposes. The plan includes construction of a primary pedestrian entry and waterfront connection consisting of plazas, walkways, and stairs that create below grade space that can be captured for parking development southwest of 100th Ave SE and Lake Washington Boulevard.



**J. The Committee recommends that buildings and structures in the park be limited to park uses and be designed to take advantage of the project area steep slope to avoid interrupting views, provide accessibility, and maximize available open space for park use.**

The committee considered and discussed a variety of buildings or structures for the park, including a 4,000 to 8,000 sf activity building; 3,000 sf environmental education center; 3,000 sf café; enclosed (or enclosable) space on the parcel at the west of 100th Ave SE/south of lake Washington Blvd; retained Whaling building for use as a historic/cultural maritime center; retained ice House for harbormaster residence and support, storage or marina office space; and restrooms in appropriate locations.

- The committee supports an activity building of up to 8,000 sf in size, but recommends that the building footprint be limited to 4,000 sf. The activity building provides opportunities for enjoying programmed and unprogrammed activities during all kinds of weather, has the flexibility to accommodate a variety of activities, and increases viewing opportunities.
- The recommended Plan retains the Whaling Building and Ice House, recognizing the heritage and importance of Meydenbauer Bay in Bellevue's history, and providing opportunities for maritime, cultural and historical activities, public art and interpretive programming. Support for this concept was evidenced by both public comment and non-profit organizations who might offer such activities.

- The Plan calls for removal of the existing restroom building at Meydenbauer Beach Park, and the provision of a new restroom building in convenient proximity to the relocated swim beach, given that the existing restroom would be separated from the park activity area and swim beach by the daylighted stream. Other restrooms would be provided in the activity building, and at the marina.
- The Plan also includes some enclosed or enclosable gathering space in the entry plaza at Main Street and 100th Avenue SE to allow enjoyment of the views during inclement weather.

The committee first favored an environmental education center, in response to Planning Principle No. 8 Environmental Stewardship, but eventually chose to incorporate environmental activities in a multi-purpose activity building and the park features themselves. Contributing to that decision was our conclusion that a single purpose environmental education center in the park would replicate the new Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center. Nor does the Plan include a café, because of the park's proximity to Main Street restaurants and cafes.



**A** Figure 2.5-12: Lewis Creek Community Center (Miller Hull)



**B** Figure 2.5-13: Whaling Boats Docked in Meydenbauer Bay, Bellevue, ca. 1925 (Image Courtesy Eastside Heritage Center, L 85.39.2)

**K. The Committee recommends that the culverted stream in the existing park’s northwest ravine be daylighted from Lake Washington Boulevard to the shoreline.**

The committee proposes that only the lower portion (from Lake Washington Boulevard to the shoreline) be daylighted. The EIS evaluated both an alternative that daylighted the entire stream from the park entry to the shoreline, and the alternative that evaluated a partial daylighting, and concluded that little added environmental benefit would be gained by daylighting the upper portion. The committee feels that the limited additional benefit would not justify displacing the existing parking lot in the ravine.

Daylighting the stream will require the removal and relocation of the existing swim beach, swim beach pier, restroom, and play area. These uses are accommodated in the committee’s recommended plan, in a more centralized location near other active recreation uses. The removal/relocation of these features and the daylighting of the lower portion of the stream contribute to the park’s transition from a more natural character at its northwest end to a more urban character at its southeast end, and present an opportunity to introduce a stormwater feature with potential environmental and/or educational benefits.

## Broader Issues

The committee grappled with many challenging issues throughout the course of our work. Some of these issues are specific to the recommended plan or to alternatives that were discussed as part of the process, and were summarized earlier in this Recommendation.

However, several concerns were raised repeatedly throughout the planning process addressing existing issues that extend beyond the scope of the committee’s work. While it was not the committee’s charge to address these larger concerns, they do provide some context for the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan. These concerns exist with or without the proposed project. The committee offers some actions for the City to consider in response to the concerns listed below. Recognizing and addressing these existing issues may help ease concerns related to the narrower focus of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan.

**A. Traffic.** There was a great deal of concern expressed about traffic congestion in and near the Downtown, particularly along Main Street. Turning movements to and from Main Street, especially left-turn movements, are reported as often difficult due to vehicle volumes and queues. Limited sight distance at some intersections compounds the difficulty and increases the chance of accidents. Pedestrian crossings and bicycle travel must compete with vehicles. The committee was urged to address these existing issues and ensure that they will not worsen as a result of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan. Although the EIS concludes that the plan creates no significant unavoidable adverse traffic impacts, the committee recognizes the concerns raised by the public regarding existing traffic conditions and encourages the City to continue working toward solutions for existing and future area congestion.

**B. Parking.** Limited parking exists in and near Old Bellevue. This reinforces the importance of the new park providing enough parking to meet its typical demand. It also suggests

that opportunities be explored for shared or centralized structured parking to help meet growing Downtown parking demand. An underground parking structure in Downtown Park was often suggested as a location for such a structure. Other public facilities in the area might offer similar opportunities.

**C. Water quality.** Many comments were received with respect to aquatic vegetation (e.g., milfoil) and sedimentation in Meydenbauer Bay.

1. **Aquatic Vegetation.** The City currently controls aquatic vegetation at the Bellevue Marina, and coordinates the timing and type of treatment to the extent possible with the adjacent Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club. This is expected to continue when the new park is completed. However, it is possible that a more comprehensive approach involving most or all shoreline property owners on Meydenbauer Bay, including the City, would improve coordination and effectiveness of vegetation removal measures.

2. **Sedimentation.** Concern was heard about sedimentation in the bay, particularly near storm water outfalls and the mouth of Meydenbauer Creek. The EIS concluded that the proposal would not cause long-term sedimentation impacts, but that does not address concerns about the present conditions. The City could work with the shoreline property owners to evaluate this situation and help develop an appropriate course of action.

**D. Bay enforcement.** The committee heard several complaints about undesirable activity in the bay itself and its negative effects in terms of noise, rude or disrespectful behavior, and lack of compliance with the “No Wake” zone. There was a desire voiced for increased patrolling and enforcement of on-water and in-water activities in the bay, as well as requests to extend the No Wake zone out as far as possible toward the mouth of the bay.



**A** *Figure 2.5-14: Example of a Footbridge over Restored Wetlands (EDAW AECOM)*

## Summary of Recommended Plan Concepts

The recommended Plan incorporates the following concepts that are important to the committee. Some of these Plan concepts originate in and respond directly to the planning principles, others were in response to public comment, and some emerged through committee discussion and review of data, studies, and information requested of city consultants and staff.

- The Plan serves the broad interests of the community at large, and recognizes that the park will be a community-wide asset.
- The Plan is guided by, and is consistent with, the Council-approved Planning Principles.
- The Plan is designed to coordinate with other plans, including the Parks and Open Space System Plan, the Lake-to-Lake Trail, Art Walk, downtown circulator, and Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan.
- The Plan emphasizes environmental stewardship, including stream, wetland and shoreline restoration and enhancement, incorporation of stormwater treatment in project design, minimizing impervious surfaces, and pursuing LEED or similar certification for new structures. Implementing the plan will result in visible ecological benefit.
- The Plan seeks to improve streetscapes throughout the study area, including connections to adjacent neighborhoods, Downtown Park, Wildwood Park, and Old Bellevue, to enhance character, continuity, and wayfinding.
- The Plan ensures appropriate vehicle, pedestrian, and emergency and service access to adjacent residential properties.
- The Plan incentivizes redevelopment of aging structures and coordinated redevelopment to provide public benefits, such as improved streetscapes, public spaces, pedestrian connections, and shared parking.
- The Park transitions from a more natural character (at its northwest end) to a more urban character (at its southeast end).
- The Plan improves the ecology of the site.
- The Plan increases public access to and over the water through careful redevelopment and restoration.
- The park provides a wide variety of user experiences, including on-water, in-water, and near-water recreation, viewing opportunities, and both indoor and outdoor activities.
- The Plan maintains flexibility of on-site programs and structures.
- The Plan fulfills requirements of funding sources used for the purchase of park parcels, including transient moorage quantity and location requirements, impervious surface limitations, and public access to the shoreline.
- The Plan maintains and expands boating opportunities to include a different mix of boat users – long term and transient moorage as well as people powered vessels (PPVs) such as canoes and kayaks.
- The Plan limits commercial uses to the east side of 100th Ave SE, except for temporary or seasonal vendors with moveable or portable carts, PPV rental, and leased moorage.
- The Plan takes advantage of steep topography to minimize the visual impact of structures and provide public views of the water.
- The Plan uses water features to create a strong elemental connection between Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Bay.
- The Plan provides sufficient parking on-site to meet typical park demand.

## Conclusion

As the Council is aware, the steering committee developed this Plan over a period of two and one-half years. We held twenty-one public meetings and six public open houses and workshops, attended two public hearings related to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and received and considered a significant volume of oral and written comment from the public. Guided by our Steering Committee Charge and Planning Principles, the committee worked through many issues and ultimately identified a preferred alternative. The preferred alternative was evaluated in the Final EIS and serves as the basis for the Draft Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan. The result is a Plan that weds a unique and memorable waterfront park for all Bellevue residents with the surrounding neighborhoods through pedestrian improvements and modest land use changes, providing connectivity between Downtown Park, Wildwood Park, Meydenbauer Bay, Old Bellevue and downtown.

It has been a privilege to serve as co-chairs of this committee and to work with our dedicated and knowledgeable committee members. The combination of expertise and perspectives represented on the committee helped ensure a Plan that is responsive to our Charge and the Planning Principles. We look forward to seeing the Plan become reality in the years to come.

Sincerely,

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Doug Leigh  
Committee Co-Chair

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Iris Tocher  
Committee Co-Chair