

## **Newport Hills Park Parks Levy – Sports Field Improvements Background**

The Newport Hills Park property was purchased by King County in 1973, primarily for the purpose of baseball and soccer use at the urging of the Newport Hills Park Society. Most of the park development was completed by the Society in the late 1970s and remains essentially the same today. Bellevue acquired the property from King County in 1996 and has completed several modest upgrades since then. Facilities include a lighted soccer field, unlighted Little League baseball field, playground equipment, restroom, picnic shelter and off-street parking for 32 cars.

In June of 2007, the City Council asked the Parks & Community Services Board to conduct a public outreach process to gauge voter interest in a potential parks voter initiative, and to assist the council with decisions on timing, content and funding mechanisms for the initiative. The outreach was conducted throughout the fall of 2007. The City Council eventually placed the “Parks & Natural Areas” levy on the November, 2008 ballot. The Newport Hills project was identified in the levy, with the fact sheet stating: *“Building on the expanded capacity of the Robinswood Sports Fields, additional synthetic fields will be installed to improve safety and play at Wilburton Hill and Newport Hills Parks.”*

After the decision was made to place the measure on the ballot, additional outreach was conducted to inform the public about the levy, including the distribution of fact sheets and attendance at community meetings. Parks staff attended an Oct. 21 meeting of the Newport Hills Community Club to review the content of the levy, and to discuss the Newport Hills synthetic turf project specifically. Approximately 15 to 20 residents attended. The following comments/questions were raised at that meeting:

- A question about the projected timing of construction should the levy pass;
- A request that the City host a public meeting to inform the neighborhood of the project details prior to construction; and
- A request that part of the park remain in natural grass to accommodate the neighborhood’s annual picnic.

The levy was approved with 67 percent of Bellevue residents voting yes. The precincts immediately surrounding Newport Hills Park indicate a similar approval percentage.