

# **Meydenbauer Bay Park 2023 Outreach Summary: Community Priorities**



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## Executive Summary

The City of Bellevue engaged area residents in Summer through Winter of 2023 to understand how the City could best honor the goals of the 2010 Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan and meet the present day needs and priorities of our current community. Through a variety of multilingual and accessible platforms—including pop-up events, public forums, a dedicated website, and a survey—the City informed the public on the Park’s redevelopment plan and gained valuable feedback on the values and preferences of residents.

## Community Participation

During our 2023 engagement to build project awareness and understand community park priorities, the project team reached:

- 3,300 visitors to the Engaging Bellevue project website
- 487 survey respondents across 7 languages
- 375 views of a [Meydenbauer Bay Park informational video](#) showing how the park has evolved over time
- Over 300 total participants at 7 community events

## Key Feedback

Several themes were emphasized in survey results, including for Meydenbauer Bay Park improvements and for broader City of Bellevue improvements.

- Meydenbauer Bay Park improvements focused on:
  - Providing less steep access
  - Mitigating overcrowding
  - Providing additional parking
  - Providing a variety of spaces, uses, and amenities
- Broader City of Bellevue improvements included:
  - Improving walking paths and corridors
  - Adding signage and street markings to assist with wayfinding



## Background

Meydenbauer Bay Park - established by King County in the 1930's and incorporated into the City of Bellevue in 1953 - is one of the community's oldest parks with protected public access to Lake Washington for almost 100 years. On December 13, 2010, the Bellevue City Council adopted the [Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan](#) as a guiding document for the expansion of the park. In 2019, the first phase of the expansion of Meydenbauer Bay Park was completed and included a range of new amenities including an expanded beach, a children's playground, a pedestrian pier, a public bath house, expanded parking, and much more.

The Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use plan, adopted by City Council in 2010, was instrumental in completing Phase 1 of Meydenbauer Bay Park's expansion and continues to serve as a guiding document for the Phase 2 design process. The plan includes 12 planning principles which address the visitor experience and considers park priorities. These principles are:

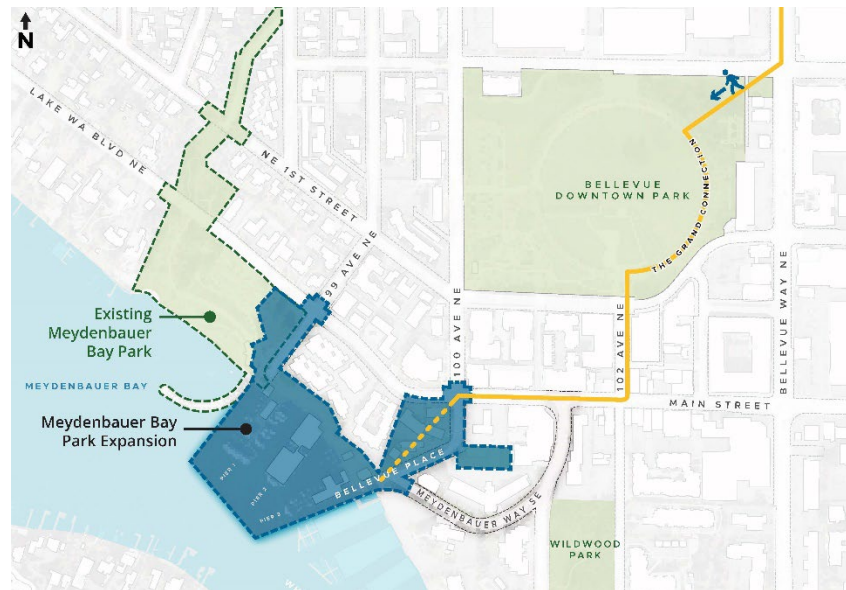
- **Remarkable and Memorable Shoreline Experience:** Provide a remarkable and memorable shoreline experience.
- **Spectrum of Activities:** Provide visitors with a wide range of activities and experiences.
- **Complementary Land Uses:** Ensure areas adjacent to the park create an inviting and pedestrian-oriented transition into the park itself.
- **Increased Physical and Visual Access:** Increase visual access and cues from downtown to encourage the public to access the park.
- **Pedestrian Priority:** Improve the pedestrian connection between downtown and the water, with safety in mind.
- **Economic Vitality:** Support local businesses by creating a welcoming downtown environment for employees, residents and visitors.
- **Superior Design:** Ensure a high-quality design for landscape, streetscape, and architecture both in and around the park.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Respect the park's sensitive waterfront setting, and explore opportunities to improve water quality and shoreline characteristics.
- **History:** Reflect the bay and park's unique heritage through art, interpretive materials/programs, and by preserving historic structures.
- **Neighborhood Enhancement and Protection:** Revitalize older neighborhoods while minimizing impacts on nearby residents.
- **Coordinated Planning Process:** Plan with park master plan and land use plan in close coordination.
- **Commitment to Implement:** Fulfill the vision

These planning principles establish a framework of priorities and constraints which reflect the sentiment of the community prior to 2010. The City of Bellevue found it important to examine these priorities, and their impact on the Phase 2 expansion, in the context of the Bellevue of today. The survey explored people's reactions, values, and additions to these principles. Community feedback will help inform initial designs of the park's expansion.



## Bellevue Parks & Community Services

See the map below of Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 expansion area:



***The dark blue shading in the map above outlines the Phase 2 expansion project area, and the yellow line shows the City of Bellevue's Grand Connection.***

### Phase 2 Engagement Schedule

Engagement for the park's Phase 2 expansion is split into three phases. The first, which began in Summer 2023 and wrapped up in Winter 2023, focused on building awareness of the existing master plan and receiving input on current park priorities from Bellevue residents. In the next phase, which will wrap up in Summer 2024, the City of Bellevue will share design alternatives for the expansion site with the community to weigh in on. In the third and final phase, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2024, the City of Bellevue will propose a final design and implementation plan to the community.

### Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 Expansion



\*Additional community conversations not specifically noted here will be held throughout the design process





## Outreach Summary

The project team developed a website, hosted on Engaging Bellevue, to share Meydenbauer Bay Park project information and provide a platform for online feedback. Engaging Bellevue included its first Meydenbauer Bay Park survey opportunity, open from November 10 to December 31, 2023. In-person community outreach and the online engagement platform created diverse opportunities for area residents to provide feedback in the Park's redevelopment process.

The engagement websites and surveys were translated in English, Chinese (Traditional), Chinese (Simplified), Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Russian. The **survey received 487 total responses**, with 480 English, 5 Japanese, 1 Korean, and 1 Chinese (Simplified). Each Engaging Bellevue site reached a total of:

- **3,200 English** website visits
- **7 Traditional Chinese** website visits
- **58 Simplified Chinese** website visits
- **17 Korean** website visits
- **73 Japanese** website visits
- **17 Vietnamese** website visits
- **21 Spanish** website visits
- **7 Russian** website visits

To receive comprehensive community feedback, the Meydenbauer Bay Park expansion project promoted the Engaging Bellevue website and survey via the following methods. *10 percent of survey respondents heard about the engagement opportunity through word of mouth, illustrating the success of organic promotion.*

- **3 tabling events** in Meydenbauer Bay Park and the Welcoming Week Resource Fair at Crossroads Mall in Summer 2023 to raise awareness about the park expansion.
- **4 community pop-ups** held at City Hall, the Bellevue Downtown Library, Bellevue Botanical Garden D'Lights and the Downtown Ice Rink. Across all events, the project team spoke to 168 people about the park expansion and community priorities.



*The project's designers and planners tabled near the Downtown Ice Rink to talk to community members about the park's expansion and feedback opportunity.*



## Bellevue Parks & Community Services

- **10 social media posts**, including an engaging short video and customized advertisements for different platforms, shared on the City of Bellevue's Facebook, X, Instagram and NextDoor accounts.
- **12 English and in-language online and print display ads** published in the International Examiner (English), Seattle Chinese Times (Simplified Chinese), Joy Seattle (Korean), Soy Source (Japanese), Northwest Vietnamese News (Vietnamese), and in El Siete Dias (Spanish) through print and online publications and on WeChat.
- **8,500 mailers** sent to neighbors of Meydenbauer Bay Park.
- **2 E-newsletters** sent to 700+ project list subscribers on Nov. 11 and Dec. 26, 2023.
- **20 posters** distributed at the Bellevue YMCA, Downtown Library, Downtown Ice Rink and Crossroads Mall as well as distributed to community members to share in their neighborhood.
- **Fun fact posters** posted at Meydenbauer Bay Park to engage park users and lead them to the project website and survey.
- **City of Bellevue (Neighborhood News) article** published in December of 2023.
- **Briefing** with the Meydenbauer Bay Neighborhood Association and Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club.
- **Press release by the City of Bellevue** published city-wide in December 2023.



*A City of Bellevue Facebook post to promote the community engagement opportunity.*



## Survey Results

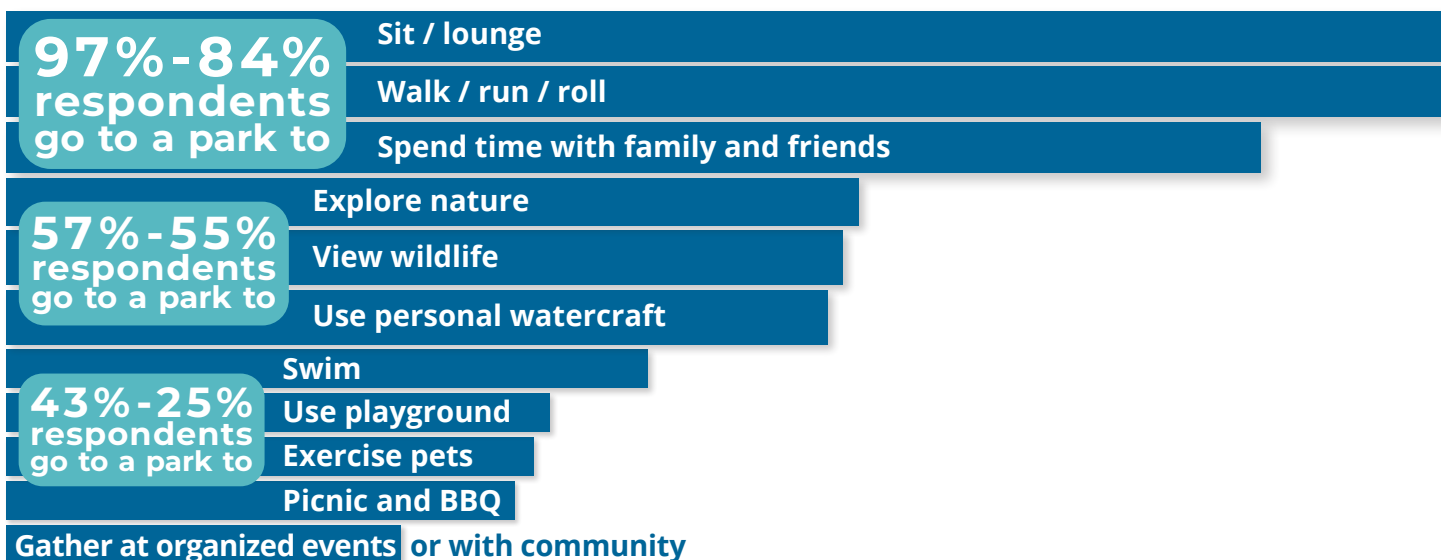
A Community Feedback Survey was conducted to gather feedback on priorities for the next phases of Meydenbauer Bay Park. The survey was conducted from November 10 to December 31, 2023, and had 480 respondents.

## Understanding Needs

To better understand the needs of park users, the design team asked respondents how they get to parks, what activities they generally go to a park to participate in, and what makes them feel included in a park.

**Park Access:** While park access may change over time, respondents indicated overwhelming access to Bellevue parks by foot (72%) or car (60%), with a small percentage currently accessing via public transit (13%), bike (7%), or watercraft (10%).

### Park Activities:



### People indicated feeling included in parks that have:

- Amenities/activities for all abilities/ages/weather.
- Visual cues that it is a community space.
- Individuality and respond to their context.
- Connectivity to the rest of the city.
- A balance between energetic spaces and quiet areas.
- Intuitive and safe access.
- A variety of activities going on.
- Other people around.
- Parking and bike parking.
- Nature, water, and greenery.
- Views.
- Seating.
- Safety.
- Cleanliness.
- Open spaces.
- Restrooms.
- Events.
- Places to exercise.
- Good pet etiquette.





## Priorities for Meydenbauer Bay Park

The survey asked for feedback on the existing Meydenbauer Bay Park and future needs. Questions included asking respondents to share barriers to accessing the park, suggestions to make the park easier to discover and reach, proposed elements or activities that could be added to the waterfront experience, and for personal or community priorities that should be considered.

**Support for the Project:** While there was a contingent of respondents asking for no change to the existing park and the surroundings, the overwhelming majority supported the idea of expanding park space and improvements.

**Nearby Residents:** Many nearby residents emphasized the need to maintain easy driving access and parking for their properties, to respect their privacy and views, and to prioritize a safe environment near their homes.

**Equity:** Equity was mentioned many times, with requests to be forward thinking to make people of many cultures comfortable in the park, to provide information in many languages in the park, and to invest in elements that can be used by all.

The existing Bayvue Village apartments were mentioned a handful of times, with people emphasizing the importance of providing affordable places to live in the city and liking that the current apartments help provide this service in a good location.







## Themes

Several themes appeared throughout the survey, organized here by “larger city connections” and “within the park.” Overall, for larger city connections, respondents want the city to prioritize improvements to walking paths and pedestrian corridors, followed by signage and street or sidewalk markings. Within the park, respondents want more accessible and less steep (flatter) access and for the city to implement ways to mitigate overcrowding and parking challenges.

### Larger City Connections

Respondents prioritized the need for improved walking paths and pedestrian corridors to the park, followed by signage and street and sidewalk markings.



#### Improved pedestrian corridors:

71% of respondents indicated improved pedestrian corridors would make the park and waterfront easier to reach and discover.

- More sidewalks (and more inviting sidewalks with crosswalks) between Downtown Park, downtown, Bellevue Square Mall, and Clyde Beach to the park.
- Sidewalks on both sides of the roads.
- Safe crossings with crosswalks from neighborhood to park.
- Protected bike lanes.
- Traffic-calming initiatives including reduced speeds or less lanes.
- A pedestrian bridge.
- Advertise the Bellhop Circuit bus service to the park and/or run a shuttle from surrounding areas to the park.
- Enhance transit connections from downtown.



#### Signage:

42% of respondents indicated improved signage would make the park and waterfront easier to reach and discover, noting that the park is hard to find due to a lack of signage marking a route for both cars and pedestrians. Ideas included:

- Better signs to the north parking lot for vehicles.
- For pedestrians, a map at Bellevue Downtown Park showing a walking route to the park, perhaps maps like those in Old Bellevue.
- A map of downtown and nearby parks at the parks, including pedestrian routes, restrooms, beach access, and swimming spots.
- Wayfinding signage, whether signs or incorporated on the sidewalks.
- A more noticeable entrance to the park.

## Within the Park

Respondents shared that their priorities included creating more accessible routes and implementing mitigating strategies to handle overcrowding and parking challenges.



### Less steep access:

The steepness of the park and access points were overwhelmingly mentioned, especially that the routes from parking areas are too steep, creating accessibility issues for seniors and individuals with limited mobility, wheelchairs, or strollers.

- Flatter access routes for accessibility and possibly incorporating elevators.



### Parking:

The majority of respondents requested more parking while also requesting reduced car traffic within the park. Respondents shared wanting the following:

- More parking, so that people don't have to park in the neighborhood.
- More handicap accessible parking and entrances.
- Better wayfinding and more intuitive access to all parking areas.
- A parking lot expansion for the marina to promote the use of the lake.
- Convenient parking and load/unload zones for people bringing personal watercrafts.
- EV charging stations.
- A parking garage.



### Mitigating overcrowding:

Overcrowding of the current park was mentioned multiple times, with people indicating that the park gets too crowded for comfort in the summer, which deters them from staying and enjoying the park.



### Other Key Themes Within the Park

#### Improve circulation and experience for pedestrians and cyclists:

- Add bike racks.
- More paths near the water.
- Circuit paths and path connections.
- A beautiful Grand Connection end point.

**Emphasize nature.** 80% of respondents indicated the importance of viewing and stewarding nature when building this park:

- Trees and woodlands for increased canopy and shade.
- Ecosystem-friendly plantings: native plants, aquatic plants, and plants supporting wildlife.
- Enhanced shoreline ecosystem.
- Stormwater treatment and clean water.
- Less hardscape/concrete.

#### Consider safety and comfort:

- Access to shade (more covered areas).
- Better lighting.
- Continue to have rangers and lifeguards.
- Emphasize cleanliness/maintenance, especially in relation to bird and pet waste.
- Less noise on the bay.

#### Access to food vendors and retail:

- Concession stands, food carts or restaurants, small vendors for retail and essentials.

#### Increased rentals

- Watercraft and water toys.
- Beach amenities such as chairs and umbrellas.
- Rentable shelters/spaces.

#### Provide classes or programs:

- Sailing.
- Yoga.
- Swimming/water activity club.



## Bellevue Parks & Community Services

### **Flexible use spaces:**

- Ability to host special events at the park.
- Ability to host cultural community events.
- Event area or stage with programmed movies, performances, or concerts.
- Wintertime activation.
- More open spaces.

### **Gathering and pausing places:**

- BBQs on the waterfront.
- Firepits.
- More seating and picnic tables for gathering and pausing for older folks and parents watching children.
- More shade (trees or covered areas).
- Seating within green space/lawn.
- Sensory gardens.
- Play spaces for adults.
- Enhanced play area and/or a splash zone.
- Strategic covered areas for sun and rain protection.

### **Create small, quiet spaces:**

- Serene places near the water.
- More quiet places.
- Less crowded spaces.

### **Add space for active activities:**

- Sport courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball).
- Beach volleyball.
- Off-leash dog area.
- Outdoor gym.

### **Add educational components and art:**

- Informational signage about wildlife.
- Informational signage about history.
- Recognize and incorporate indigenous history.
- Include public art.

### **Preserve views:**

- Preserve view corridors to the lake for all.
- Preserve view corridors through the park.

### **Enhance or increase public boat access:**

- Boat rentals.
- More public docks and public boat launch.
- Beaching and loading locations for boats.
- Better load/unload area for kayakers.
- Make the kayak launch easier to find and use.
- Water taxi.
- Seaplane access.
- Storage for personal watercraft.
- Air station for inflatable watercraft.

### **Enhance beach and swimming use:**

- Expand sand beach.
- Lap swim area.
- No-wake zone for swimmer/kayak safety.
- Swimmers and waders separate from marina.
- Lockers for swimmers.
- Baby/toddler pool area.
- Hot showers.
- Clean up bird poo on beach and in water.

### **Debate over monthly and visitor moorage:**

Around 6% of respondents mentioned the marina and moorage. Of those people, 50% supported keeping the monthly moorage, 35% wanted an increase in day use moorage, and 15% wanted the marina decreased or eliminated. Where moorage was discussed as decreased or eliminated, it was with an equity lens, such as investing in elements that can be used by all incomes and providing a park for all to enjoy. Where increased moorage was discussed, it was with a history lens (i.e., historical use of the bay) with an acknowledgment that it is difficult to find publicly accessible (day use or monthly) moorage on the lake and acknowledging how difficult it is to permit and build new overwater structures.

## **Thank you!**

The design team and the City of Bellevue are incredibly grateful for your time and feedback. We're excited to incorporate your priorities and look forward to hearing your thoughts as the project moves forward into making the design a reality!