



Exploring our parks one step at a time

By Robin Haaseth, Parks & Community Services Public Information Officer

With nearly 100 parks in the city, there probably aren't too many residents who can say that they have seen each one. Soon, there will be at least one who can make that claim.

Over the past year, Stuart Heath has visited nearly every park in the city—and he doesn't just visit each park. He takes time to explore each one “corner to corner” and walk from one park to the next to see how they all connect.

Heath, an attorney who lives in the Bridle Trails neighborhood, estimates that he's seen 85 to 90 percent of Bellevue's parks and he plans to see the rest by early March, checking off each park as he visits on the Bellevue park guide map he carries with him. Though the effort will take almost exactly a year to complete, he believes it has been well worth it.

“I thought it was just a good way to get to know both the city and our parks system up close,” he said. After joining the Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board in 2012, Heath wanted to learn more about the system he was serving.

He began visiting the parks last March, and he's generally working his way from west to east, “with some backtracking along the way.” For example, even though he has already walked all of the parks near downtown, he hasn't yet been to Meydenbauer Beach Park or Clyde Beach Park. “I already did that in the past, but I want to go back and pick those up on this journey, with this perspective,” he said.

Though he mostly walks the parks solo, he is occasionally joined by his wife and two young daughters, Tamryn, 2, and Morgan, 14 months, for a family picnic or playtime at the park.

“It's been great exercise and a fun way to spend time together,” he notes. “Also, what I have learned by walking is amazing. I could never have known how well our parks connect to so many different neighborhoods by just driving by the main entrances. It is so great to see how well connected our system is and how accessible it is from so many different points.”

“I have visited many other cities' parks systems around the country. What we have developed here and how we have maintained this system is great and it's very well run,” he says. “I have nothing but high marks for all of



Stuart Heath, with wife Britt and daughters Tamryn (left) and Morgan at Bridle Trails Corner Park.

the employees and contractors that maintain such a high quality standard—and our parks, trails and sidewalk systems are the best I have seen.”

When asked what the biggest surprise has been along the way, Heath said “a person just really never has to leave the city for recreation opportunities. The breadth and depth of our parks system has been a big, big realization for me. There really is something for everyone.”

To see photos Heath has taken along his journey, see the city's “flickr” page at www.flickr.com/photos/bellevuewashington/sets/

For more information about Bellevue Parks & Community Services, including trail guides and driving directions, visit <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/parks-community-services.htm> or email Parksweb@bellevuewa.gov.

Downtown intersections get more pedestrian-friendly



The intersection of 108th Avenue Northeast and Northeast Fourth Street will be improved this year to make it more pedestrian-friendly.

Several intersections downtown will become more pedestrian-friendly – with features such as wide or raised crosswalks, curb ramps and audible “walk” messages.

The city's Transportation Commission has identified intersections used

by high numbers of pedestrians and vehicles that would benefit from design improvements, including those near the Transit Center and the future light rail stations.

These intersections are called out in the Downtown Transportation Plan to be enhanced over the next several years. Some will be under construction as early as this year.

Crosswalk enhancements – designed to improve pedestrian safety and visibility – range from simple solutions, such as widening the crosswalk, to more elaborate components such as special paving and weather protection. The entire crossing may be raised or include way-finding landmarks.

This year the intersection of 108th Avenue Northeast and Northeast Fourth Street will get more pedestrian standing space at the corners, wider crosswalks and curb ramps, special paving, new landscaping and weather protection.

The intersection at Northeast Sixth Street at 110th Avenue Northeast may be raised to allow for an easy pedestrian connection between the Transit Center and the future light rail station.

For information about more downtown intersection improvements recommended in the Downtown Transportation Plan, please contact Kevin McDonald at kmcdonald@bellevuewa.gov or see the study at www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-transportation-plan-update.htm.

Around the city...

Draft comp plan update ready for review

After two years of collecting comments from the public and analyzing policy and current conditions, city staff have drafted an update of Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan, which lays out a community vision for the next 20 years and spells out policies to guide the way. The state-mandated update is the first since 2004.

You can review the draft plan and offer feedback through March 3 at <http://bellevue2035.publicmeeting.info>. A limited number of printed copies of the draft are available at City Hall and at Bellevue public libraries. Other opportunities to comment on the draft plan include:

- Open house, 5-7 p.m., Feb. 25, City Hall, 450 110th Ave. NE;
- Open house, 5-7 p.m., Feb. 26, Interlake High School, 16245 NE 24th St.; and
- Planning Commission public hearing, 6:30 p.m., March 4, City Hall.

Please share your comments by March 4. Later comments will be accepted, but may not be part of the official record. The Planning

Commission will consider the draft plan over the coming weeks, then forward a recommendation to the City Council, which will have the last word on changes. The council could adopt the new Comprehensive Plan in June.

City in running for energy prize

The City of Bellevue is a semifinalist for the Georgetown University Energy Prize, a \$5 million award to the small- or medium-sized U.S. community that can cut its energy consumption the most over the next two years.

“Bellevue decided to compete for the prize because it helps get folks to think creatively about saving energy, and that way everyone wins,” said Mayor Claudia Balducci. “When we work together to be more energy-efficient, our residents save money and improve the environment.”

Bellevue's strategy for winning includes promoting resources already available to residents from Puget Sound Energy (<https://pse.com>), including the HomePrint Assessment, Condominium Direct Install and Energy Advisor Hotline.

Youth volunteers in the new Eastside Energy Corps program will develop a community call to action. More information about Bellevue's efforts and how you can save energy is at www.bellevuewa.gov/environmental.htm, or contact Paul Andersson at pandersson@bellevuewa.gov.

Photo enforcement cameras added

The city has added three cameras to catch red-light runners and one to catch school-zone speeders after traffic-enforcement cameras installed in 2009 and 2010 greatly reduced infractions.

The new red-light cameras, installed on Northeast Eighth Street in January, are at the 112th Avenue (eastbound and westbound) and 116th Avenue (westbound only) intersections. The new school-zone camera, installed earlier this month, is at Sunset Elementary School, 4400 West Lake Sammamish Pkwy. SE (southbound only).

Photo enforcement infractions result in a \$124 fine. Infractions issued by photo are not moving violations, and will not appear on an offender's driving record.