



Bringing Idaho neighbors together through outdoor spaces



**ENGAGEMENT TO ACTION: Project Report & Resources**

**BELLEVUE, IDAHO | 2025**

## A Place Made for Us, by Us

This project began with a simple goal: to bring our community together.

In a time when so many feel disconnected from each other, from community life, from shared experiences, we set out to create something that encourages connection in everyday ways. Not by starting from scratch, but by building within a space that already holds meaning.

Our parks have long been part of the fabric of our city. But through this effort, shaped directly by the voices of community members, we're making Memorial Park an even more welcoming, vibrant, and inclusive place — one that reflects the ideas, hopes, and experiences of the people who live here.

This project wasn't approached as a one-size-fits-all solution. We approached it with care by listening first and then responding with purpose. The updates and upgrades being made are a direct result of what we heard: that everyone should feel welcome, that the space should reflect our shared values, and that even those who don't typically spend time in outdoor spaces might feel inspired to come, stay, and connect.

This is about more than a park — it's about the people who make this community what it is. And it's about building spaces that help us see one another, show up together, and strengthen the ties that already make Bellevue feel like home.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** Community Input Online Survey
- 11** In-Person Data Summary
- 13** Recommendations
- 14** City of Bellevue Branding
- 15** Civility Pledge
- 16** Digital Announcement Templates
- 17** Bellevue Communications Playbook

# COMMUNITY INPUT ONLINE SURVEY

For five weeks, an online survey was made publicly available and promoted within the Bellevue community. To encourage honest feedback regarding community gathering space needs and opinions, the responses were kept anonymous. The survey successfully collected a total of 131 responses!

## Are public outdoor gathering places, such as parks or plazas, valuable? Why or why not?

Even across diverse opinions, it has been made clear by the community that these spaces matter. Here are the key themes:

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION & BELONGING

- Spaces bring people together for birthdays, reunions, sporting events, local events, and to see familiar faces
- They're one of a few free and accessible places where everyone, no matter their background, can gather
- The importance of a shared, neutral space that fosters connection and creates a sense of pride was emphasized

### HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- Respondents repeatedly mentioned how parks support mental and physical health, offering a space to relax, breathe fresh air, or get exercise
- Especially because of the long winters, parks become vital during the warmer months
- Parents, seniors, pet owners, and kids want a place nearby where they can move, socialize, and reset

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY & ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

- Parks are referred to as a lifeline for families because they are a safe place for children to play, meet friends, and be active
- They offer important alternatives for those who don't have large yards or a private outdoor space
- Respondents love that these are areas for everyone, whether you're walking a dog, playing soccer, or reading on a bench

### VITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Several respondents compared these gathering spaces to roads and police services in terms of their essential role in supporting the functioning of a healthy town
- They're viewed as part of what makes Bellevue livable, attractive, and welcoming to both residents and visitors
- Some responses noted the importance of funding, maintenance, and safety to ensure these spaces remain inviting and usable

## What age groups are underrepresented when it comes to community gathering spaces (parks, play areas, activities, etc.)? Select all that apply.

- Preschool age and younger 22%
- Elementary and school kits 11%
- Middle school age kids/pre-teens 27%
- Teenagers (13-18 yrs) 43%
- Young adults 35%
- 30-50 yrs 40%
- Senior citizens 67%

## What would be an ideal addition or amenity for the underrepresented age groups?

The responses were creative and thoughtful, suggesting enhancements from play structures to quiet zones. The most common themes and requests, with no prompting or guidance, are:

### TOP ACTIVITY REQUESTS

- **Pickleball courts** because it's fun to play, it's a social sport, and it brings people together
- **Volleyball courts** (sand and grass)

- **Basketball courts** with updated equipment
- **Skatepark improvements** or new builds
- **Outdoor games** like chess, bocce, horseshoes, cornhole, and shuffleboard
- **Outdoor fitness equipment** for all ages (calisthenics stations, walking paths)

#### **BETTER SPACES FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES**

- Fenced-in playgrounds with shaded seating
- Sensory play areas and water features
- Interactive elements like splash pads, sandboxes, and story paths
- Picnic tables and benches near play zones
- Safety and cleanliness were mentioned often, especially around animals, water features, and restrooms

#### **SERVING TEENS, ADULTS & SENIORS**

- Teens: hangout spots, sports leagues, digital-friendly zones (e.g., charging stations, music, and movie nights)
- Adults (30-50): wellness zones, peaceful areas, food truck gatherings, beer gardens
- Seniors: flat walking loops, shaded seating, accessible chess/gaming tables, wheelchair-friendly courtyards

#### **COMFORT, SEATING & GATHERING**

- More benches, tables, and shaded areas
- Covered gazebos and patios for group events
- Fire pits, soft seating, and “cool” environments for casual meet-ups
- Spaces that encourage multi-generational mingling

#### **EVENTS, CULTURE & CREATIVITY**

- Small amphitheaters or stages for local music, theater, or classes
- Art displays and community murals
- Outdoor programming like yoga, tai chi, chess clubs, and maker events
- Seasonal events like music festivals, night markets, or movie nights

#### **ADDITIONAL AMENITIES**

- Clean, permanent restrooms
- Drinking fountains and access to water
- Bike repair stations
- More trees, gardens, and quiet areas for reflection
- Better maintenance, lighting, and ADA access

#### **How often do you visit a park (Memorial, O’Donnell, Howard Preserve, Wood River Trail)?** Choose the option below that best applies.

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| • Daily                  | 19% |
| • About 2-3 times a week | 27% |
| • About weekly           | 16% |
| • A few times a month    | 27% |
| • Almost never           | 11% |

#### **Which park and why?**

##### **HOWARD PRESERVE**

For dog walking, walking/hiking, accessing the river, fishing, bird watching, and swimming. It’s a peaceful natural setting perfect for quiet reflection.



### **WOOD RIVER TRAIL**

For walking, biking, scootering, commuting, and exercising. It's a scenic, quiet route great for running errands or accessing other parks.

### **MEMORIAL PARK**

Chosen for the playgrounds, playing basketball, hosting family activities, and proximity to homes. It's familiar because of the public events hosted at the park.

### **O'DONNELL PARK**

Frequently used for dog training, open space play, and to relax outdoors. Some mentioned using this park for volleyball and soccer, though crowdedness can be a concern.

## **When you visit one of the city parks here in Bellevue, what do you often find yourself wishing there was one/more of?**

The responses have been summarized into 7 categories

### **MORE SEATING & SHADE**

- Benches, shaded seating areas, picnic tables, and small gathering spots
- Comfortable places for adults and seniors to rest, relax, or socialize

### **BETTER PLAY EQUIPMENT**

- More fun, creative, and age-appropriate play structures
- Safer equipment with regular maintenance

### **SPORTS & ACTIVE RECREATION**

- Outdoor pickleball courts, volleyball, handball walls, roller hockey rink
- Space for soccer, skateboarding, ninja-style obstacle courses, and exercise

### **CLEANLINESS & MAINTENANCE**

- More trash cans, especially in high-use areas like Howard Preserve and Wood River Trail
- Improved lawn care, consistent park cleanup, and attention to damaged infrastructure

### **WATER, RESTROOMS & COMFORT AMENITIES**

- Permanent restrooms (instead of porta-potties), water fountains, and bottle-fill stations
- Better lighting and general safety improvements

### **EVENTS & GATHERING SPACES**

- Desire for more community events: live music, food trucks, cultural gatherings
- Use of the stage at Memorial Park and creative programming

### **BEAUTIFICATION & EDUCATION**

- Landscaping, trees, pollinator plants, and historical or cultural info
- Art installations or storytelling about local people and places

## **In which season do you most visit your favorite park?**

- Spring 12%
- Summer 69%
- Fall 19%
- Winter 0%

## **When you do visit, what are your primary uses?** (Choose all that apply)

- Doing business with the city or nearby businesses 4%
- Sports/activities (baseball, sledding, etc.) 29%



- Events (live music, farmers market, etc.) 45%
- Social gatherings (meeting friends, relaxing, etc.) 53%
- Remote work 1%
- I don't visit enough to have a specific purpose 14%
- Casually hanging out 54%

**Complete this sentence: For me, the most important elements of an outdoor community gathering space are \_\_\_\_\_.**

Summarized to encompass all feedback:

- Clean and well-maintained
- Safe (no gangs or drugs)
- Shade and seating
- Clean bathrooms
- Pickleball courts, sports fields, and skate parks
- Open grassy areas and room to move
- Beautiful space with natural features like native plants, flowers, and trees
- Something for all age groups, including kids, adults, and seniors
- Comfortable and inviting
- Friendly and inclusive
- Drinking water and places to fill up water jugs
- Trash cans and doggy bags — and emptied regularly
- Space to be with friends and neighbors
- A mix of quiet reflection and active play
- Programming and events like music, outdoor movies, and farmers markets
- A covered area or stage for gatherings
- Community garden
- Access by walking or biking

**What do you believe is missing from community gathering spaces in Bellevue?**

- Shade 25%
- Public internet access 11%
- Conversation & gathering areas (seating, furniture, etc.) 57%
- Structured play areas (playgrounds, game tables) 34%
- Unstructured play areas 27%
- Public art installations 30%
- Interactive exhibits 27%
- Other 20%

**OTHER ANSWERS INCLUDE (AS WRITTEN):**

- Sports fields and courts
- None of these things listed interest me
- Maintenance
- See earlier comments for seniors
- Dedicated fire pits
- Sponsored events that bring people together
- I feel there's an absence of police presence at the intersections around the park... it's a very dangerous area for foot traffic
- A suitable indoor gathering space
- Shelter from rain



- Skate park and water fountains
- Would LOVE to see the bike path get extended all the way down to the community of Gannett—even all the way to Hwy 20!
- Water feature for children
- Snack shacks and coffee stands
- Pickle ball courts, outdoor roller hockey rink
- Some security issues – the feeling of safety
- Pickleball
- A regular spring/summer community event
- Fun activities like bocce ball, tables for chess or art classes, or group activities
- A lap swimming pool would be awesome!!!
- Proper maintenance, dark sky lighting and oversight
- Sponsored events that bring people together
- I feel there's an absence of police presence at the intersections around the park... it's a very dangerous area for foot traffic
- A suitable indoor gathering space

- Shelter from rain
- It's more the vibes than one of these specific purposes
- If you try to do everything it's not a nice destination
- Making a family picnic area may create only mess and be rarely used
- Planned events
- Covered stage
- Dog park
- Soul
- Fix city streets
- People
- Essential services
- Comfortable seating
- Splash pad!
- A place for teens to gather and play
- Virtual Reality play area, with monitors
- Fitness equipment

### Do you live, visit, or work in the city of Bellevue?

- Live 91%
- Visit 3%
- Work 27%
- None 0%

### Anything else you'd like to add? Comment with anything else you'd like to share or give your thoughts on.

#### OVERALL FEEDBACK & THEMES

- Many respondents are excited to see money invested in the parks and appreciate being asked for input
- There's a strong desire for upgrades and improvements to what already exists, rather than only building something new
- Several voiced concern about ongoing maintenance, especially if new amenities are built without a plan to care for them
- Some comments reflect skepticism that community input will be used or respected
- A few noted that the survey questions felt repetitive, limited, or leading
- Several people offered big, community-building ideas – ranging from coffee stands and food trucks to long-term funding models
- There's an underlying request for Bellevue to feel more inviting, inclusive, and alive, with special care to keep its small-town character
- Comments also touched on broader City priorities – from traffic enforcement to city code and fixing roads

#### DESIRED PARK FEATURES

- Water features to play in, like splash pads
- More basketball courts
- A tennis court



- Skate park
- Shade structures — especially for the stage at Memorial Park
- Picnic tables and benches
- Exercise equipment
- Horse shoe pits
- Rocks to climb on
- More courts for more sports — not just basketball, soccer, or baseball
- Splash park, garden, town square
- Safe and fun play structures
- Food truck area (especially summer weekends)
- Snack shack or coffee stand — “for senior citizens,” pitched as a weekly or evening pop-up
- Farmers market in the park
- Casual get-togethers with music or storytelling
- A better sound system or banner-hanging solution for the Memorial Park stage
- More poop bags and trash cans
- “Not more structure. Open space that encourages hanging out. Stumps, stools, small tables to mix/match and move around.”
- Technology use to bring people together in outdoor spaces

#### **MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS**

- Fix the roads and clean up dead branches
- Keep parks clean and beautiful
- Make trees safe
- Better parking — especially near O’Donnell Park, The Hunger Coalition, and Bookmobile visits
- Ongoing maintenance needs to be a priority — some worry that new investments won’t be maintained
- Use grant money to upgrade parks “week to week” if a big project isn’t realistic
- Form a citizen-led Parks and Recreation Committee to guide and help fundraise
- Consider a 3-year maintenance fund or endowment model
- Follow up on past park committee recommendations
- Fix up the Memorial Park stage — “needs a roof and better banner setup”
- Extend the paved bike path all the way to Hwy 20 or Gannett

#### **INCLUSIVITY AND COMMUNITY USE**

- “Shoot for the moon and build a legit park and rec facility that supports kids and adult team sports”
- “Love the small-town charm and want to keep it, while giving teens, young adults, and little ones a place to feel welcome”
- “Excited to have money to invest in building out the parks!”
- Request for shaded, quieter areas where people can relax away from active kids zones
- “Bellevue is a wonderful little town that has so much potential to grow in a way that brings a sense of community to everyone of all ages.”
- “Please no housing on Main Street.”
- “We are the gateway to the Wood River Valley — we should look like it.”
- “Think about your citizens when we use these parks. If we can’t safely get to them, what’s the point?”
- “Not everyone is being served — Bellevue feels like it’s only addressing one group.”



## EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

- A summer event like Ketch'em Alive — even if it's once or twice a month
- Vintage thrift or music festivals
- “More events to bring activity into the spaces we already have”
- Weekly summer/fall food truck round-up (even on Main Street, not just in a park)
- Storytelling nights, live music, community gatherings
- “A coffee stand or snack shack could be run by seniors and be a real draw”

## OTHER NOTES, CONCERNS, AND BIG IDEAS

- “Listen to your community!”
- “Bring us into the current age — use technology to get people of all ages outside together.”
- “Don't build something you can't maintain — it'll just decay.”
- Bellevue should consider signage and amenities that encourage visitors to stop, not just drive through
- Past memories of Bellevue parks as a gathering place with BBQs, fire pits, and fun
- Multiple mentions of wanting to be inspired by parks in nearby cities (e.g., Bowler Park in Boise, Jimmy's Garden in Hailey, splash pads in Ketchum)
- A couple of mentions of Bellevue's City leadership not enforcing code violations or having enough resources
- A few people expressed frustration or distrust in how community input is used

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

### What is your age?

- |            |     |
|------------|-----|
| • Under 18 | 0%  |
| • 18-24    | 0%  |
| • 25-34    | 7%  |
| • 35-44    | 16% |
| • 45-54    | 12% |
| • 55-64    | 28% |
| • 65+      | 37% |

### Please specify your ethnicity

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • American Indian or Alaskan Native           | 1%  |
| • Asian/Pacific Islander                      | 1%  |
| • Black or African American                   | 0%  |
| • Hispanic                                    | 2%  |
| • White/Caucasian                             | 85% |
| • Multiple ethnicities/other (please specify) | 3%  |
| - Canadian/Ukrainian                          |     |
| - Latina                                      |     |
| • Would rather not answer                     | 8%  |

### **What gender do you identify as?**

- Female 59%
- Male 36%
- Not listed 0%
- Prefer not to answer 5%

### **Marital status**

- Married 67%
- Widowed 5%
- Divorced 10%
- Separated 3%
- Never Married 6%
- Would rather not answer 9%

### **How many children do you have?**

- None 28%
- 1 13%
- 2-4 39%
- More than 4 8%
- Prefer not to say 12%



# IN - PERSON DATA SUMMARY

To ensure inclusive participation across the Bellevue community, in-person engagement opportunities were thoughtfully planned and executed. Locations were selected strategically to reach a broad cross-section of residents, with attention to accessibility and community presence. A Spanish-speaking translator was present, connected to the community and very interactive to support language access and ensure that all voices could be heard. This approach prioritized equity and representation throughout the community feedback process.

## May 15-16, 2025

To build on the input gathered through the Community Input Online Survey, we conducted in-person outreach at six community locations: Ridley's Family Market, La Cabañita, Bellevue Elementary School, Family Dollar, Coffee Corner, and the Bellevue Public Library. These stops represented a meaningful cross-section of the Bellevue community.



At each location, we used visual prompts based on online feedback to spark conversations. These tools helped residents more easily respond, elaborate, and share their own ideas. Many people were happy to share their thoughts and often spoke with real pride about living in Bellevue. Their input gave us helpful context not only about what they want, but why it matters to them.

## Community Feedback (in order of importance)

1. Play areas: include learning opportunities and accessible equipment
2. Shaded areas: offer a little protection from the elements
3. Sport courts: the conversation about transitional courts came up often.  
The community wants to be able to choose between sports like pickleball and tennis
4. Benches and resting spots
5. Picnic/Lunch areas: mainly to have a place to sit
6. Art installations

## What We Learned:

Overall, residents expressed a high level of satisfaction with what Bellevue already offers. While amenities like a pool or splash pad came up, most of what people said mattered to them can already be found in existing parks. Interestingly, many responded with ideas that seemed less about their personal needs and more about what they felt would benefit others, suggesting a strong sense of community and a desire to make public spaces more inclusive.

**When asked specifically what would get them outside, this is what we heard:**

- Outdoor grills for BBQs are a great idea!
- Families and friends want to gather for big events
- Anything along the trails for bikers, walkers, or scooters would be a benefit
- Beautify existing outdoor spaces
- Offer nets, games, etc. for kids to use at the park

**Mentioned most:** Cover the amphitheater at the park so we can use it for more things!

During the initial rounds of community engagement, it became clear that teen voices were notably absent. This gap was significant, given the project’s goal of creating a community outdoor space that serves all ages. In response, and with guidance from the City and the Bellevue Public Library, a targeted effort was made to engage this important demographic. A dedicated teen event was organized to encourage authentic input. This gathering provided valuable insight into what local teens want and need in a community space.

**Do you ever hang out at your local park?**

- Yes 85%
- Occasionally 15%

**What do you like to do there?**

- Hang out with friends/chill
- Swing
- Sit/walk my dog in shade
- Take kids from daycare
- Play

**What would you like to see for your age group there? (activity, sports court, event space)**

- Ice rink
- Tennis
- Park movies
- Pool
- Big TV
- Splash pad
- Basketball
- Pickleball

**Is there something you’ve seen in another town or city that you’d like to see in Bellevue?**

- Ice rink
- Zip line
- Clubs/day camps
- Splash pad

**Do you think you would hang at the park more if the city added certain amenities?**

- Yes 85%
- Maybe 15%



# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Main Site:** Memorial Park

**Secondary Sites:** Bellevue Public Library and the Wood River Trail

**Theme:** The message was clear. Bellevue is already a special place. Community members aren't asking for big changes, they just want upgrades that make what's in Bellevue even better.

## **Opportunities for Enhancement**

- Cover and improve the amphitheater
- Convert the existing court to a multi-use play space
- Add public-use grills to Memorial Park picnic shelter area
- Install trailside bike repair stations trail-adjacent on City of Bellevue property