



CITY OF BELLEVUE HISTORY SNAPSHOT

The City of Bellevue has made a remarkable transformation from a largely agricultural area, to a suburban “bedroom” community and now into a major regional center for business, culture, retail shopping and technology.

Aaron and Ann Mercer filed Bellevue’s first land claim in 1863, around the same time as William Meydenbauer. As the area was logged by subsequent settlers, open areas were turned into orchards, vegetable fields and berry farms. Ferry service, beginning in the 1880’s, and rail service, beginning in 1904, connected Bellevue to Seattle and beyond. Coal and lumber were transported from around Bellevue for sale on the other side of Lake Washington. Farmers benefited from the rich soil in the region and their surplus produce was sold in Seattle and shipped across the county.

In 1940, Bellevue was transformed by the completion of the first bridge across Lake Washington. The new bridge brought a multitude of new residents and spawned the opening of one of first suburban shopping centers in the country.

Bellevue was finally incorporated in 1953 with the old Main Street School serving as city hall until 1960. The young city proceeded to annex neighboring areas, growing from an area of 4.7 square miles around Meydenbauer Bay to 33.5 square miles today. In 2000, Bellevue had more jobs than residents which marked the city’s transition from Seattle’s bedroom community into a global city.

In the past two decades, the city has continued to grow to skyscraper heights, offering residents and visitors a safe and diverse community to live, work and play.

LEARN MORE

For more information on Bellevue’s history, visit the Eastside Heritage Center’s website: EastsideHeritageCenter.org

Based in Bellevue, the Eastside Heritage Center stewards the history of the communities along the eastern shores of Lake Washington, actively engaging with the public through exhibits, services and a wide variety of education programming.



GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The City of Bellevue has approximately 1,300 full time employees, driven by core values of exceptional public service, stewardship, commitment to employees, integrity and innovation. As an award-winning organization, there is a consistent emphasis in improving operations and maximizing efficiencies.

Bellevue operates under a council-manager form of government, popular among cities of all sizes. The arrangement is similar to a corporate structure where the board of directors (city council) determines the policy direction and oversees the conduct of the corporation and its chief executive officer (city manager). The city manager's responsibilities include:

- Carrying out the policy established by the City Council;
- Acting as the business manager of the city, recommending and advising the council on a broad array of issues; and
- Developing a proposed budget for consideration, and, ultimately, approval by the council.

Seven residents serve part-time as members of the city council which meets every week. Elected at-large, they serve staggered four-year terms. The elected councilmembers, in turn, select a mayor and deputy mayor from among themselves.



From Left to Right: Councilmember Jared Nieuwenhuis, Councilmember Jennifer Robertson, Councilmember Conrad Lee, Mayor John Chelminiak, Deputy Mayor Lynne Robinson, Councilmember Janice Zahn and Councilmember John Stokes.

To learn more about the City of Bellevue, including council priorities and agendas, visit: BellevueWA.gov.

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