

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Resolution adopting The Diversity Advantage Plan 2035.

Joseph Todd, Deputy City Manager, 452-4113

Sara Boyle, DEI and Community Outreach Administrator, 452-6021

City Manager's Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**ACTION**

This resolution adopts the Diversity Advantage Plan 2035 as the City of Bellevue's official strategic framework to guide policies and practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, in accordance with all applicable laws.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Resolution No. 10568

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Recent Edits to DAP 2035**

After the November 25 Council meeting, staff made edits to the Diversity Advantage Plan consistent with all direction provided. These edits amended equity objective 6.1, regarding access to human services; equity objective 2.1, adding nonprofits as a focus group; and section 7.3, clarifying the language pertaining to the city's Cross-Cultural Center project.

History and Background

Just over a decade ago, the City of Bellevue created the Diversity Advantage Initiative, and the City Council adopted the City's first diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategic plan, called the Diversity Advantage Plan (DAP). In 2014, the City was responding to significant changes in the demographics of the Bellevue community. In the nearly 25 years spanning from 1990 to 2014, the face of Bellevue had changed. The Bellevue of 1990 was largely homogenous, with 87% of the community identifying as white, US-born and English-speaking (86%). By the adoption of the DAP in 2014, nearly half of the community identified as a race other than white, approximately 40% of residents were foreign-born and less than 60% of the population spoke English in their homes.

With 93% of the city's population growth being comprised of immigrants and refugees between 2000 and 2015, the City knew that it had to change to meet the changing needs and lived experiences of its residents. Bellevue embraced this evolving diversity, adopting the vision statement "Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength. We embrace the future while respecting our past." The 2014 Diversity Advantage Plan (DAP), with its 60 goals, has been fundamental to bringing that vision to life.

The Need for an Update

The decade-old DAP requires an update to reflect Bellevue's priorities, emerging challenges and opportunities and changing demographics. This update presents an opportunity to address arising and upcoming challenges and disparities with innovative solutions, to respond to more current community

needs, to create processes and systems for more gracefully integrating DEI into the City's operations and services and to build out measurement and accountability tools to report on our progress.

While Bellevue residents overall enjoy a high level of prosperity compared to other cities in our region, Bellevue's growth has also exacerbated some significant challenges. These challenges often impact individuals and social groups differently within Bellevue, resulting in differences and disparities in our residents' access to a high quality of life. With nearly 75% of Bellevue's population under age 18 identifying as a race other than white, Bellevue is presented with a unique challenge and opportunity to build a livable and welcoming city both for our current residents and for the even more racially diverse community of our future.

Community Engagement

DAP 2035 reflects long-term priorities for both our external-facing services and the organization's internal operations. In order to ensure the updated plan reflects the needs and aspirations of both staff and the diverse communities we serve, the Diversity Advantage Team (DAT) led a robust staff and community engagement campaign in 2023 to inform the goals and strategies to be included in DAP 2035. In partnership with the Centering Communities of Color (CCC) Coordinating Team and the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network, staff convened a dozen community conversations that asked communities to speak to current challenges and their ideas for further supporting Bellevue's most marginalized population. From these dialogues and additional staff focus groups, the DAT collected over 1,000 individual pieces of community and staff feedback.

Completing DAP 2035

Using the feedback collected through staff and community engagement, in 2024 staff identified over 40 major themes and priorities that were then translated into a set of three guiding principles and 41 long-term equity objectives. While the guiding principles ground DAP 2035 in the "why" and "how" of the plan, the 41 equity objectives identify the specific visions Bellevue aspires to for our community over the course of the next decade. These equity objectives are categorized into the six Strategic Target Areas to ensure alignment with existing city strategy and also reference goals and strategies included in other enterprise plans, such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Human Services Strategic Plan. This conversation and alignment across multiple plans and City initiatives supports a more seamless integration of DEI into the City's existing operations and services.

The first draft of DAP 2035 was reviewed by department and city leadership to confirm that the equity objectives included in the plan were both feasible and reflective of the City's scope of influence. A second draft was then completed. In early 2025, this second draft underwent significant legal review to ensure the plan's compliance with local, state and federal law. The preliminary plan was then reviewed by the current Centering Communities of Color Coordinating Team and was presented to the public for the first time at an Open House on November 20.

Operationalizing DAP 2035

In addition to updating the content of the Diversity Advantage Plan, DAP 2035 also presents the City with a unique opportunity to improve our accountability and reporting processes related to the plan.

Despite including a specific goal related to the creation of performance metrics in the 2014 DAP, the City never developed metrics for measuring success on the 2014 DAP or processes for reporting progress to the community. Likewise, DAP 2014 lacked a formal mechanism for adapting the City's DEI goals and priorities to the changing needs of the communities we serve. This limitation was especially relevant with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and national conversation on social and racial justice that surfaced in 2020.

With this in mind, the implementation of DAP 2035 will include the development of formal processes for operationalizing, prioritizing, adapting and measuring our DEI work. The two main mechanisms for this include:

- 1) The creation of short-term departmental workplans aligned to DAP 2035 that identify the specific actions departments will be taking towards making progress on the equity objectives
- 2) The development of a set of Key Equity Indicators that will be used to measure our progress on DAP 2035.

Through these processes, the City will be positioned to respond creatively to changing community needs while still staying accountable to the long-term visions and aspirations outlined in DAP 2035.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Adoption of The Diversity Advantage Plan 2035 is supported by several legislative policies, including:

- Bellevue City Council 2024-2026 Priorities – No. 9:
Update the Diversity Advantage Plan and implement the near-term actions.
- Bellevue City Council 2024 Strategic Target Areas and Objectives – 6.4:
Provide accessible programming opportunities and events that reflect Bellevue's growth and diversity, are culturally responsive, strategically distributed and driven by community needs and interest.
- City of Bellevue – Comprehensive Plan – Human Services Element – HS-10:
Educate human services providers, community stakeholders and city leadership on the needs of the community and the City's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging to support the funding process.
- City of Bellevue – Comprehensive Plan – Neighborhoods Element – NH-5:
Promote inclusive community connections that strengthen the social fabric of neighborhoods, including support for organizations that foster community cohesion and sense of belonging.
- City of Bellevue – Comprehensive Plan – Neighborhoods Element – NH-6:
Support citywide initiatives to involve communities of color in identifying and promoting policies and projects to increase equity, inclusion and a sense of belonging within the city.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact at this time. Any fiscal impacts resulting from plan implementation will be addressed in future budget cycles.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Resolution adopting The Diversity Advantage Plan 2035.
2. Do not adopt and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Diversity Advantage Plan 2035
Proposed Resolution No. 10568

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A