

Consolidated Policies and Needs for HB 1590 Interest Statement

1. The Human Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following policies:
 - HS-2. Encourage efficient use of public and private resources and develop a broad base of community support.
 - HS-3. Identify opportunities and develop strategies that are preventive in their approach to human services needs.
 - HS-4. Allocate funds and other resources across the continuum of human service needs by soliciting proposals from nonprofit agencies for services benefiting low- and moderate-income residents.
 - HS-8. Make Bellevue a welcoming, safe and just community marked by fairness and equity provided to those disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and victimization.
 - HS-9. Improve access to services throughout the community by removing physical and systemic barriers and empowering individuals to overcome other barriers that may exist.
 - HS-11. Encourage culturally competent service delivery that respects the dignity of individuals and families, and fosters self-determination and self-sufficiency.
 - HS-12. Support and actively coordinate with local, regional, and national efforts that address local human services needs to ensure local programs complement programs provided at the county, state and federal level.
 - HS-13. Encourage partnerships among public and private institutions, schools, human services providers, and others to collectively address needs of children and families using schools as a focal point for the community.
 - HS-15. Support a network of service points that are easily accessible by Bellevue residents and workers, geographically distributed within the city and proximate to public transit.
 - HS-18. Support an intentional local community response to homelessness with housing and supportive services provided to families, youth and single adults.

2. The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following policies:
 - HO-7. Encourage the development of affordable housing through incentives and other tools consistent with state-enabling legislation.
 - HO-11. Encourage housing opportunities in mixed residential/ commercial settings throughout the city.
 - HO-12. Provide incentives to encourage residential development for a range of household types and income levels in multifamily and mixed use commercial zones.
 - HO-14. Provide opportunity to allow a demonstration project through methods such as an interim ordinance enabling a demonstration project(s) that would serve as a model for housing choices currently not being built in Bellevue.
 - HO-18. Promote working partnerships with housing developers to help create a variety of housing types in the community.

- HO-20. Encourage a range of housing types for seniors affordable at a variety of income levels.
- HO-21. Address the entire spectrum of housing needs, including the need for housing affordable to very low, low, and moderate income households, through the city's affordable housing programs.
- HO-22. Work cooperatively with King County, A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), and other Eastside jurisdictions to assess the need for, and to create, affordable housing.
- HO-24. Develop and implement an effective strategy to ensure affordable housing opportunities are available in Downtown and throughout the city at a range of affordability levels. Monitor quantity, types, and affordability of housing achieved for potential unintended consequences and to determine if the need is being met.
- HO-25. Provide funding to support housing need, especially for low and very low income households. Assess housing fund guidelines on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with changing community needs and priorities.
- HO-26. Provide incentives and work in partnership with not-forprofit and for-profit developers and agencies to build permanent low- and moderate-income housing.
- HO-27. Encourage preservation, maintenance and improvements to existing affordable housing.
- HO-30. Ensure that all affordable housing created in the city with public funds or by regulation remains affordable for the longest possible term.
- HO-33 Recognize that adult family homes and other state regulated special needs housing provide stable, neighborhood housing options for elderly and disabled residents. Work to address needs for services, emergency response and other potential accommodations.
- HO-34. Provide reasonable accommodation for housing for people with special needs in all areas, and avoid concentrations of such housing, while protecting residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts.
- HO-35. Support regional efforts to prevent homelessness, and make homelessness rare, brief, and one time when it occurs. Provide a range of affordable housing options and support efforts to move homeless persons and families to long-term financial independence.
- HO-36. Collaborate with other jurisdictions and social service organizations to assure availability of emergency shelters and day centers that address homelessness.

3. The Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following policy:

- ED-16. Encourage development of a range of housing opportunities to accommodate Bellevue's growing workforce.

4. The Affordable Housing Strategy includes the following strategies, guiding principles, and identified needs:

Strategies

- Strategy A-1. Partner with non-profit organizations and housing agencies to fund the purchase of existing, affordable multi-family housing to preserve it for the long term.
- Strategy C-1. Increase development potential on suitable land owned by public agencies, faith-based and nonprofit housing entities for affordable housing.
- Strategy E-1. Tap additional local sources to dedicate more funding to affordable housing (e.g. reallocation of general fund and/or REET, increase of property tax and/or business & occupation tax, bonds).

Guiding Principles

- Recognize that the City has a sizable affordable housing problem and we are committed to addressing our local challenges and become a regional leader in the affordable housing effort.
- Focus on Action. This effort will build from the strong policy base already in place in the Comprehensive Plan, and be action-oriented, advancing additional tools and strategies that will produce effective results.
- Build upon ongoing and recent tools the City has developed while strengthening partnerships with relevant organizations.

Identified Needs

- As one part of the city's larger effort to address homelessness, the Affordable Housing Strategy includes actions, such as increasing the supply of very-low and low income housing, that serve families and individuals at risk of becoming homeless or working to transition out of homelessness.
- Lower-income and fixed-income people, especially seniors, who have owned their homes for a long time but can no longer afford to live there because of increased costs (e.g. maintenance, taxes, utilities) may be unable to find an affordable alternative that allows them to remain in their communities.
- Affordable housing is not one-size-fits-all. Housing options should be thought of as a menu—with a variety of options that appeal to people at different income levels and life stages, from young adults to working families to seniors.
- Bellevue has a shortage of housing that is affordable for people earning less than \$25 per hour or about \$50,000 per year (e.g. dental assistants, hotel workers, baristas). More than 75% of Bellevue households in this income group spend more than 30% of their income on housing-related expenses. This may mean difficult choices must be made between housing and other essentials, such as food, transportation or medical care. Strategy C seeks to increase the amount of affordable housing in the city so people who wish to live here will have a chance to make this community their home.
- The cost of housing is rising faster than incomes, especially for lower income households, and the amount of affordable housing produced for lower income households is not meeting the need.
- About half (49%) of Bellevue's work force earns less than \$50,000 year and cannot afford average rental rates in Bellevue.

- Over 9,100 Bellevue households (17%), or about 22,000 people, have low and very low incomes (i.e. household incomes less than 50% of area median income). There are only 3,095 units (6% of Bellevue's housing supply) affordable to people in these households.

5. The 2019-2020 Human Services Needs Update includes a summary of trends to provide a broad vision of understanding human service needs in Bellevue. This document is updated every two years and will identify new trends and data to inform future decisions. While this is not an exhaustive list of identified needs, below are key themes and trends identified in this update related to HB 1590:

- The high cost of living continues to be a major concern for Bellevue residents, and lack of affordable housing was the top community problem for the 11th consecutive survey (a period spanning more than 20 years). This is a substantial problem for moderate-income and low-income households, many of whom are cost burdened.
- Housing options for older adults are needed to address the huge shortfall of affordable housing for many older adults on a fixed income.
- Survivors of domestic violence are faced with barriers to housing and legal services. The high cost of housing in Bellevue creates a serious challenge for survivors who want to remain in the community to maintain their jobs and support systems.
- Lack of affordable housing is a problem for people with disabilities as the need is growing faster than housing stock is produced. It is especially critical for people with disabilities to find housing in familiar neighborhood settings, near support systems and convenient amenities, in order to maintain their independence to whatever extent they are able.
- The most critical needs for veterans mentioned are mental health services, rental assistance, legal assistance, and housing. Veterans and service providers attending a meeting of the King County Veterans Consortium in May 2019 commented that one of the top needs for veterans included housing and rental support.
- Many factors lead to someone becoming homeless, including lack of affordable housing, mental health, substance use disorder, economic disparities, racial disparities, criminal justice system, and lack of services for youth exiting the foster care system. Focus on resources to address the root causes of homelessness is needed to truly address homelessness.
- For the 2019-20 school year as of February 4, 2020, BSD is reporting that 338 students were experiencing homelessness.⁸ One hundred sixty-eight youth were doubled up (due to economic or similar reasons), 35 were living in an emergency/transitional shelter, 6 youth were unsheltered at some point, and 3 used a hotel/ motel as a primary form of residence, and 24 are living on their own (unaccompanied).
- Continuing to implement the Affordable Housing Strategy and looking for additional opportunities to increase the supply and variety of housing types would help ensure household types from all income levels could live in Bellevue and benefit from the high quality of opportunities the city provides.
- Increased job growth will result in greater demands for housing, which could lead to cost escalations and housing unaffordability if job growth is not balanced by housing growth. If housing costs increase, workers in occupations with lower earnings will be less likely

able to afford housing within the city requiring them to travel longer distances to get to work.

- An increased imbalance of jobs and housing will diminish access to jobs and services for lower income households further degrading racial and social equity.

6. The Bellevue Diversity Advantage Initiative includes the following guiding principles:

- Access: Build an environment that values the abilities of all by proactively removing barriers and providing accommodations for full participation.
- Equity: Create a fair and just community where equality is the outcome, by recognizing and correcting historic and systemic inequity.
- Inclusion: Foster a welcoming city by providing a safe and gracious space where the entire community can engage in civic life.
- Opportunity: Share prosperity by connecting residents, schools, businesses, faith and nonprofits to work together for the common good.

7. The Bellevue Diversity Plan includes the following principles and strategies:

- Human Services - No individual or community can achieve their full potential until their basic needs are met. For this reason, it is critical that Bellevue's public and non-profit service providers emphasize the importance of providing culturally competent human services that are easily accessible to all.
- Human Services Recommended Action 3 - Assist non-profit human service agencies to provide culturally competent care and support to Bellevue residents of all ages, abilities and ethnic backgrounds.
- Economic Development Recommended Action 1 - Provide opportunities for current and future Bellevue residents and workers by implementing regulatory and incentive tools to increase the supply of affordable housing.

8. The Economic Development Plan includes the following strategies:

- Foundational Strategy 6: Encouraging a variety of housing choices within the city - After transportation, cost is consistently cited as one of the greatest challenges for business in Bellevue, especially cost of housing for workers. A sustainable economy requires workers at all income levels, but rapid population growth in Bellevue and the region has made housing unaffordable for many residents and workers at lower income levels. Bellevue, the Eastside, and the larger Puget Sound continue to need more housing choices for diverse income levels throughout the city.
- Foundational Strategy 7: View all activities through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion -- Bellevue prides itself on its diverse population, a dynamic that enhances the city's cultural and economic vibrancy. Although overall Bellevue is relatively affluent and well-educated, poverty and disparities still existing within the city. In a truly successful and sustainable economy, all members of the community have the opportunity to thrive, and Bellevue must continue to identify challenges, resource gaps, and other opportunities to better support underserved residents and businesses. All economic development activities and investments must consider how they proactively address and impact diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Tactic CB 2.2 - Develop additional public-private partnership tools and funding mechanisms.

9. The 2021 Legislative Agenda states the following:

- The City supports efforts to provide funding and funding tools to construct and/or preserve affordable housing units and housing for people experiencing homelessness, with a focus on a broad array of income levels, including very low-income and workforce housing.
- As the state balances its budget, the City opposes cuts to programs that serve our most vulnerable populations, including funding for treatment and prevention programs that focus on the root causes of homelessness, mental and behavioral health services, addiction, domestic violence, diversion programs such as community courts to keep people out of the criminal justice system and re-entry programs for previously incarcerated people.

10. The Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEH) – Strategic Plan 2015-2019 Interest Statement includes the following guiding principles:

- Continue to Support a Broad Continuum of Services
- Focus on Prevention
- Align Existing Funding Resources
- Coordinate Efforts with Other Regional Human Service Initiatives
- Continue to Support Existing Conduits for Affordable Housing Production