



AHS Update Engagement Plan Summary

October 14, 2024

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Bellevue City Council adopted the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) in 2017. The AHS included 5 strategies and 21 actions to expand affordable housing opportunities in Bellevue. Most actions are complete, have made significant progress, or have ongoing work. Along with the 2017 Strategy, the Council established a goal to build or preserve 2,500 affordable units in 10 years. The city has exceeded this goal, with 2,750 affordable housing units built or preserved in Bellevue between 2017 and 2023.

Recognizing the continued need for affordable housing across income levels, Council established a new starting point goal to build or preserve 5,700 affordable units (0% - 80% AMI) in the next ten years. Updating the AHS will identify the next set of near- and mid- term actions to help the city achieve the new affordable housing target and meet other affordable housing priorities.

ENGAGEMENT SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

As the City undertakes ambitious affordable housing goals, community members and other constituents should be educated, engaged, invested in being part of the solution to ensure successful implementation of the AHS Update.

Engagement and outreach for the AHS Update has three overarching objectives.

1. **Provide information on affordable housing.** Everyone comes to the subject of affordable housing with their own level of knowledge and experience. This objective aims to provide a foundation of information for interested community members to engage in public dialogue.
2. **Create opportunities to inform the Strategy.** This project has a wide range of interested parties, with commonalities across identities or “affinities.” This objective aims to provide a range of opportunities for all voices to be heard in the process – community members, technical experts, and others – to ensure the AHS Update is informed by broad participation.
3. **Elevate diverse and representative voices in decision-making.** We recognize the need to elevate voices not typically heard, those with limited resources, or who have other barriers to participation. . This engagement strategy aims to intentionally engage the Bellevue community and those marginalized or underserved in AHS Update decision making processes.

These objectives are informed by the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, which included new policies on engagement and collaboration on housing planning.

- HO-3. To ensure progress toward reducing housing disparities, collaborate with those disproportionately impacted by housing cost in creating and implementing city housing policies, practices and regulations.
- HO-12. Collaborate with diverse partners on the provision of resources and programs to meet the city's housing need.
- CE-5. Prepare a robust, transparent and user-friendly community involvement program that is tailored to effectively, efficiently and equitably involve the public at the appropriate level of engagement on city projects and policy-making. Utilize a combination of innovative and proven outreach methods to educate the public about the substance of issues and include viewpoints representative of the entire community.

CONSTITUENT OVERVIEW

As a basic need, housing has a broad scope of constituencies and impact. Every person, regardless of identify, needs access to safe, secure, and affordable housing. As such, this issue is important to technical experts and community members, including those needing access to or utilizing to the affordable housing system and the general public.

Technical Experts	Community members	
	Those Needing or Utilizing Affordable Housing	General Public
Affordable housing and market rate housing developers	Residents of affordable housing	Bellevue residents & property owners
Business community	Households seeking affordable housing	Bellevue workforce & employers
Social service providers	Those experiencing homelessness	Those wanting to live in Bellevue
Advocacy organizations	Those qualified for homeownership without affordable options	
Philanthropy		
Other Public Agencies and Coalitions		

Relative to engagement of these groups, it is important to consider who is most impacted by housing outcomes and who is most likely to have their voice heard. Groups who are already well connected with city government and have resources and knowledge of civic processes will need less assistance in participating. Voices that aren't typically heard, don't have many resources, or have other barriers to participation need to be elevated.

Policy guidance on planning for housing emphasizes representative and diverse engagement, with a focus on those marginalized and underserved. Marginalized and underserved communities are those who have been systematically underserved, excluded from decision making, and faced systematic disadvantages from their identity. The staff team has identified intersecting factors influencing housing outcomes and data-supported disparities: income, race & ethnicity, age, neighborhood, ability, citizenship, language proficiency, and tribal affiliation.

City boards, commissions and committees also play an important role in housing planning as providers of guidance and recommenders. Notable overlap was identified in the work and interests of the Planning Commission, Human Services Commission, Bellevue Development Committee, Bellevue Network on Aging, YouthLink, and Bellevue Diversity Advantage Network. While these groups are not part of the formal recommendation process, the staff team will engage the forums with informational briefs at the project start and conclusion to keep them informed and aware as planning efforts advance.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Phase 0: Pre-Launch (June – December 2024): focuses on engaging technical stakeholders on the starting point target and building project awareness. The staff team will consult stakeholders and solicit input via EngagingBellevue to identify topics for education.

Phase 1: Launch (January – March 2025) focuses setting project expectations, providing accessible and understandable information on affordable housing subject matter, and understanding key community values and concerns. Activities will include sharing information and engaging with diverse groups. The staff team will share information through hybrid information sessions and online materials.

Phase 2a: Assess (April – May 2025) involves engaging with technical stakeholders and those with lived experience of housing insecurity. Technical experts will be engaged to inform and evaluate the list of possible actions and identify policy tradeoffs. Those with lived experience will be invited to share the housing issues most impacting them and their experience accessing the affordable housing continuum. Stakeholders will be invited to review possible actions and participate in focus groups. Input will inform the development of staff-developed action alternatives.

Phase 2b: Assess (May – June 2025) engages community members to identify priorities given limited resources and requirements. Staff will also report out on findings on values and concerns identified in Phase 1. Community members will be invited to participate in an online open house and attend Q&As.

Phase 3: Refine (July – September 2025) focuses on recommending a set of actions based on policy, stakeholder, and analytical inputs. Engagement will focus on facilitating deliberations through a Representative Community Panel, but will also include hybrid information sessions where community members can ask questions. The Representative Community Panel will be selected via a lottery process to assemble a group of participants that reflect the Bellevue community and those impacted by housing unaffordability.

Phase 4: Adopt (October – November 2025) is when the final draft of the strategy and implementation plan will go before City Council for review and adoption. The staff team will provide information on how the community can provide comments during City Council review.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY TABLE

TIME	PHASE	GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
June – Dec 2024	0 – Pre Launch	Vet Starting Point Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain a broad understanding of barriers and opportunities related to the starting point target Build community awareness of the Affordable Housing Strategy Update process Identify areas for community education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations to and focus group with technical stakeholders Council launch presentation EngagingBellevue site Organization introductions and presentations to stakeholder groups
Jan – March 2025	1 – Launch	To Level Set & Build Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide accessible and understandable information on affordable housing subject matter Set expectations and clarify timeline for stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue organization introductions and presentations to stakeholder groups Online informational content Hybrid educational events (e.g. Lunch & Learns)
March – May 2025	2a – Assess	To Evaluate Tradeoffs and Understand Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage technical stakeholder to finalize list of possible actions Work with technical stakeholders to understand tradeoffs and impacts Connect with those with lived experience to identify user concerns and issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups with technical and lived experience stakeholders Council briefing
May – July 2024	2b – Assess		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report out on community values and concerns Engage community members to identify priorities given limited resources and other requirements Develop action alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online open house Public Information and Q&A forums

<p>July - Sept 2025</p>	<p>3 - Refine</p>	<p>To Prioritize Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to Representative Community Panel to evaluate action alternatives against inputs (policy, analysis, engagement) • Ensure community members know how their input shaped the draft plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative Community Panel • Public information session
<p>Oct-Nov 2025</p>	<p>4 - Review</p>	<p>To Adopt the Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure community members understand the adoption process and know how to share comments with City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recommendation and adoption by City Council