

2026-2032

Draft Affordable Housing Strategy

Public Comments

Staff solicited additional written comments on the draft 2026-2032 Affordable Housing Strategy between February 4 and March 3. Comments received after this date will be shared with City Council prior to the meeting.

Written public comments received during this period are included below. They were varied with both concerns and support expressed from different constituencies around varied aspects. At a high level, the most recent engagement represented:

- A segment of the public comment represented strong support for the bold strategies around housing affordability and housing stability, including maintaining aspects around mandatory inclusionary zoning.
- Another segment of public comment expressed concerns around strategies perceived as having a negative impact on supply by adding to the cost to develop and operate housing.
- Comments at the information session reflected the need for housing for those who work in Bellevue and for proactive communications around the City's housing work and resources.
- Comments were also received expressing a desire for a thoughtful approach to affordable housing and supporting quality of life.

This feedback reflects the diverse views and perspectives heard throughout the 2025 engagement process and incorporated into the recommendation.

Comments received between February 4 and March 3

I appreciate the fact that there is expedited permitting for fully affordable housing for Administrative Design Review but none of the construction permits (GD, BB, BV, UA, UB, UC etc.) have expedited permitting. This seems counterintuitive as the construction permits are what allow the construction of the building to begin. I also recommend having someone whose sole role is to be a permit coordinator for affordable housing projects and thus can facilitate reviews and meetings with applicants and all departments. City of Seattle does this and it is very effective.

First, thank you for sharing this with us and for giving us the opportunity to provide our comments and inquiries. My questions and concerns focus on our low-income

communities, families with loved ones who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, and our BIPOC population. As we consider housing and the development of new apartment complexes, are we ensuring that these communities are being taken into account? Specifically, are we equipping apartments, waiting areas, and entrances to be ADA-compliant, and are we creating opportunities for these communities to access low-income rental apartments and be fully included in these developments?

Hello,

I cannot attend sessions due to disability and would like to leave a written statement as a constituent of Bellevue City about housing affordability plan. On Washington legislative bills in Olympia I can provide written statements and cons. I am not against affordable housing in general but against housing first. I have been subject to the horrors of housing first where me and my family endured stabbings, shootings, robberies, people trying to prostitute me out in the middle of the night, violent drug dealers and my teen daughter almost raped. I literally had to become homeless again just to escape. Emergency section 8 housing, or regular section 8 is one thing where property management can evict dangerous tenants but no one should be subject to housing first.

Thank you,

Many years ago an area next to where I lived was designated for affordable housing and some 50 houses were built.

Thirty years later I read that the houses were in such bad shape that they were all going to be pulled down. This was in part because they were shoddy to begin with. However it was more because the people who got to live in them didn't give a damn and essentially destroyed them.

You think you are doing good but the government almost always screws up when it gets involved with this sort of thing. You would do much better if:

(a) Gave rent subsidies to people in distress and (b) let the market take care of building and maintaining the houses.

Government involvement is usually accompanied by massive corruption so all your good intentions will mainly help a few crooks.

Good Afternoon,

Please accept this as public comment for Bellevue's Affordable Housing Strategy. King County Housing Authority (KCHA) supports advancing the City of Bellevue's Affordable Housing Strategy and urges the City Council to adopt the Strategy without weakening its core commitments to affordability and housing stability for people at the lowest income

levels. Specifically, we support the expanded mandatory affordability requirement. Bellevue faces profound housing affordability challenges, and KCHA believes the Strategy appropriately centers the need for preserved and newly created affordable homes that serve households at lower Area Median Incomes (AMI). As a major affordable housing provider and preservation partner in Bellevue, KCHA encourages the City to move forward with a bold Strategy that prioritizes affordability for people at the lowest AMI.

Please reach out with any questions.

I have not attended your “info” sessions, as experience has taught me that they will be tightly controlled to maximize presentation and selling of one viewpoint and minimize substantive input from citizens with alternative data or viewpoints. They seem designed to mimic communication, define that as outreach and then tout said outreach. There is no real collaboration in this process, and those who seek or expect it have become frustrated and unwillingly to waste their time to serve the predetermined agenda. Input and data provided will be dismissed and nothing substantive about what is being presented ever changes. Bellevue’s definition of “outreach” seems to mean a process where decisions which have already been made are presented along with their accepted justifications. Any questioning about the validity of said justifications or the efficacy of decisions is quickly glossed over and forgotten as the train continues to its pre-determined destination.

Nevertheless, I will put on the record some things I find problematic. One is that the needs of seniors seem to be given lip service here, but not really addressed in a meaningful way. When discussing “Geographic equity” there is verbiage about living in their chosen neighborhood in proximity to various things people value. Under Housing Stability there is talk about minimizing risks of displacement and seniors no longer being able to afford their homes because of increased costs (maintenance, taxes, utilities). There is recognition that they may not be able to find an affordable alternative in their communities. There is also the statement that Housing stability is foundational to personal well-being, including physical and mental health. With the exception of a mention of help with maintenance issues, I find no help with these issues in this draft. Instead I find things making it worse. Taxes and utility costs are not addressed at all, and in fact the emphasis on “funding” (levies, bonding, etc.) is likely to make this worse for seniors and others. Most of these funding mechanisms will shift even more tax burden onto property and other regressive taxes, increasing not decreasing affordability and stability. For example, my (regressive) property taxes are currently more than 12 times my (progressive) income taxes. And no, we do not qualify for the senior exemption, as I suspect not many senior homeowners in Bellevue do. I didn’t see any data on that included, how about providing that. I also noticed that the only ‘solutions’ mentioned for the seniors’ issues seem to involve them moving into different “units” or new development (preferably with “universal design” features). How

does that address them living in their chosen neighborhood or in proximity to things they value? In all likelihood it does not. What evidence is there this will even lower their costs? There is a lot of supposition here without much supporting data. This draft identifies seniors as a “fast growing demographic, almost doubling since 1990”. I question if that is true of Bellevue itself, and not a more general statistic. I recall being told in the past the percentage of seniors in Bellevue, and it was noticeably more than the percentage based on more recent statistics. Seniors are moving out Bellevue, and often not because they want to. Because of my experience with friends, neighbors and acquaintances, I think this is due to the increasing difficulty of Bellevue seniors being able to absorb increases in regressive property and other taxes, and increased costs of life essentials like utilities. Based on things I have seen or heard said in city processes and informational meetings, some see seniors being forced out as a positive, making room for other more desirable groups. None of this tends to make us feel valued.

In the section on addressing homelessness, Bellevue sticks with the increasingly discredited canard that lack of affordable housing is the primary cause of homelessness, stating that “while various difficulties can contribute”, the only predictive factors are costs of housing and vacancy rates. This is a classic case of stating a single correlation as causation, with the added dismissal of even the “various difficulties” mentioned as possibly contributing. This ignoring of other variables is bad science, which has not led to solutions in the past, and will not do so going forward. Other correlated variables such as mental illness and drug problems have not and will not be solved by housing alone. Allowing them to remain unsolved impacts negatively on the safety and quality of life of the homeless and those surrounding them. In projects supported by public funds, related supportive services need to be utilized, hopefully required, not just available.

I notice a lot of similarity of solutions between this Affordable Housing draft & the previous Middle Housing draft. I find that surprising given the admission by city staff members that the middle housing would not be affordable. That brings up the issue of metrics and accountability. I don't find any metrics in here balancing affordability with quality of life in the broader community. I recall when homelessness programs were judged on bed nights provided, and not people actually being helped or moving forward in their lives. Collateral impacts on the surrounding communities tended to be dismissed or ignored. I would like to see metrics for affordability that address more than just units provided at various levels, but measurement of standards valued by the broader community.



**HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT**
consortium

March 3, 2026
Bellevue City Council
450 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

Subject: Support for Bellevue's Ambitious Affordable Housing Strategy Update in 2026

Dear Bellevue City Councilmembers:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. **HDC is writing to express our enthusiastic support for Bellevue's 2026-2032 Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) update** (see: [report & action plan](#)). Bold action on affordable housing will be critical for Bellevue to remain a welcoming and accessible place for a diverse range of community members. Thank you for your commitment as a city to increase affordable housing supply, revenue, and community stability.

We encourage Council to see the updated AHS plan as a ceiling of what actions can be explored over the next 10 years, not a floor that limits the City's future consideration or options. This is not a code update, but a broad menu of future discussions that Council will control. It is unlikely that all actions from this plan will be implemented; several priorities from the 2017 plan were never implemented. When prioritized actions do come up for Council discussion, there will be ample time to direct staff and ensure that the policies balance Bellevue's goals, stakeholder interests, and public needs.

We will share specific comments below:

- **AH.7: We applaud the explicit emphasis on new affordable housing revenue sources and financing tools.** This strategy acknowledges that while regulatory reform and programmatic change are essential, they are insufficient alone to close the gap for Bellevue's lowest-income households.
 - In particular, we appreciate **AH.7.3**, which acknowledges the need for local sources for affordable housing revenue.
 - Thank you for including **AH.7.4** which recognizes the need to pursue new state authorization for local revenue options. We urge you to design this action language in a way that will enable Bellevue to be responsive to State opportunities in the future, with Council's direction, of course. It is not necessary to mention specific policies, especially because the City's state agenda changes year-to-year and is based on the specifics in policy proposals.
- **AH.10.1 and AH.10.2: We appreciate the explicit mention of an expanded mandatory affordable housing requirement.** This has already been an active part of Wilburton, HOMA, and BelRed land use code updates and is a common policy across the Eastside region and WA State. In fact, Bellevue must implement this policy to meet requirements from [HB 1491](#) (TOD bill) by December 31, 2029. It is wise to begin planning for expanded mandatory affordable housing requirements now to reflect active discussions and state mandates.
- **AH.8 & SD.2:** Thank you for focusing on strategies to reduce costs and timelines for affordable housing, as well as for removing supply barriers. These strategies make special sense for affordable

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housing because it will help limited public resources go further to create affordable housing on a per-unit basis.

- **AH.8.3** (exempt affordable housing from design review) and **AH.8.4** (continued implementation and expansion of expedited permitting for AH), and **AH.8.5/6** (align departments and create housing liaison) are among the highest-impact changes from this category. *We encourage you to engage directly with the Affordable Housing Sector as this work continues.*
- **SD.2.2/3:** thank you for specifically naming the need to update state building codes to remove local barriers to certain housing types (Ex: elevators). In particular, we appreciate the action to enable regular, contiguous floor plates for mid-rise construction. Most affordable housing is produced in this economically efficient building typology. We hope to see effective height and floor plate allowances for midrise in code updates, like BelRed.
- There is a need to focus on a range of solutions to make meaningful and equitable progress at a time of increasing community need for affordable housing. *This includes strong policies related to housing stability.* Housing stability programs are an important part of any comprehensive affordable housing approach. The success of these programs depends on how they are implemented.
 - **HS.1.3:** We urge you to keep this policy, which reflects existing policies in Bellevue. For example, Bellevue's current MFTE program already prevents rent increases above the AMI limit, but it also limits rent increases to 3% annually. It's possible to improve tenant stability while maintaining development feasibility.
- **AH.2:** Thank you for including land acquisition strategies which are among the most impactful actions that Bellevue can pursue to increase affordable housing supply. Nonprofit developers and operators depend on discounted or no cost land from governments and agencies for some projects to pencil. This will be critical as a long-term strategy.
- We appreciate that the AHS includes a range of housing types in a "housing ladder" that goes from shelter and supportive housing all the way to moderate income rental housing and homeownership units. We need housing across income range and level of need.
 - **HE.3:** Thank you for including priorities related to affordable homeownership, insurance reform, and alternative ownership models.
 - **HS.3.1:** Please strengthen language to connect the need for increased operational funding to outcomes. We deeply appreciate the naming of rising operational costs in affordable housing as a key issue, however, language like "explore ways" doesn't commit the city to specific action.
 - We appreciate **AH.4**, which is intended to improve siting and approval of extremely low-income housing. In particular, *we encourage the city to treat supportive housing and shelter the same as all other types of housing, which may be required by state mandate after the passage of HB 2266.* Also, we urge the city to go further and name other specific actions that are meant to advance 0-30% AMI housing. Permanent supportive housing and shelter are included inferentially in priorities like "new affordable housing revenue" and "site acquisition," but it will take focused action, like targeted land disposition, to see new 0-30% AMI units created on the ground.
- Thank you for including preservation strategies. Preservations is an important part of any comprehensive affordable housing strategy and can help the city from losing ground. However,

preservation will need to be paired with robust new development to meet net-new affordable housing goals. *We urge you to focus on net-new affordable housing creation, which includes but goes beyond preservation strategies alone.*

We are thrilled about Bellevue's ongoing commitment to take value-driven and informed action on affordable housing. **Please advance the Affordable Housing Strategy.** Thank you for your leadership and continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Eastside Affordable Housing Coalition
Housing Development Consortium