



DATE: May 23, 2022

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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Community Development

SUBJECT: Experience Bellevue Neighborhood Conference 2022

This is for information only; no action is required.

Background:

In 2022, Experience Bellevue! Neighborhoods Conference welcomed Bellevue's community back to City Hall after over two years of pandemic and remote-only engagement. With the opportunity to "come for an hour or come for the day.", the Saturday was rich with indoor and outdoor experiences, including, 17 workshops that included walking, park and tree tours, and two bus excursions.

The conference kicked off with a "meet and mingle" breakfast with the city council followed by councilmembers sharing their reflections in an interview format. An art exhibit from the Cultural Craft Club at Interlake High School, an HR recruiting exhibit and information tables in the concourse offered additional resources and take-home information for participants.

Bellevue Neighborhoods Conference was first introduced in 2016 and scheduled as a bi-annual event in the Spring. The 2016 neighborhood conference was neighborhood focused, with themes of building community, diversity, neighborhood safety and navigating city programs. In 2018 the neighborhood conference attracted a younger, more diverse audience with an overarching theme of Innovation – centered around transportation, the environment, urban growth, and community stories. Due to the pandemic, there was no neighborhood conference in 2020.

Key program goals:

Provided an accessible opportunity for residents to engage with the city and with each other in a relaxed, "choose your custom experience" environment. Many topics and entry points provided the opportunity for those engaging for the first time to explore areas of interest and for those who engage often, like Bellevue Essentials graduates, a chance to continue their city education.

Create a growing and more knowledgeable resident base for future city engagement When residents understand how the City functions and participate in

government, they become ambassadors for the city and provide voice and meaningful engagement in the future.

Build and strengthen staff relationships with residents After a long absence from personal contact, the conference gave staff from multiple departments the opportunity to interact with the community in a learning and exploring environment. These interactions help build strong, on-going staff-resident relationships as well as trust in local government.

Workshops included:

Individual skill development and civic engagement

- Building Bridges: Creating a Safe, Supportive and Diverse Community
- The Why and How Behind Civic Engagement
- Artful Listening and How to Broach Challenging Discussions
- Help Shape Hybrid Government

Insights on key city initiatives, growth, and economic development

- Affordable Housing Bus Tour
- Wilburton Eastrail Walking Tour
- BelRed's Spring District Walking Tour
- Downtown Development Walking Tour
- Reimagining Retail
- Eastlink Tour

Visiting parks, environmental and neighborhood treasures

- Neighborhood Character Bus Tour
- Bellevue Botanical Garden and Wilburton Tree Tour
- Lewis Creek Park and Tree Tour
- Practical Tips to Protect Your Home and Our Environment

Keeping our city safe

- Emergency Management*
- Introduction to CPR Training*
- Staying Safe and Preventing Crime

The Experience Bellevue Neighborhood Conference was a One-City effort with participation from Bellevue City Council, City Manager's Office, Transportation, Development Services, Utilities, Bellevue Police, Bellevue Fire, Parks and Community Services, Information Technology Department, Human Resources and Community Development.

This report will share highlights of the day's activities and community engagement during the conference. The overall feedback from community participants was positive.

What a fabulous event, thank you for all the work you put into making this conference so enjoyable. When I signed up, I was hoping to learn about opportunities to get more involved in our beautiful city and I was not disappointed! -- Bellevue resident

* Note: Some workshops were cancelled at the last minute due to illness.