

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC**

Update on Innovation Forum progress to date including interviews, focus groups, and the forum preview event in November.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****INFORMATION  
ONLY**

Tonight's Study Session will provide an overview of the results of the Innovation Forum work to date, including results from the community engagement work in Fall of 2024. This presentation is for information only.

**RECOMMENDATION**

NA

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

The Bellevue City Council Vision includes, *"Innovation is an integral part of our community. We embrace and support innovation in all aspects of our community – systems, institutions, businesses, schools and government. This innovative spirit is crucial to Bellevue's success."*

The goal of the innovation forum is to advise city staff on advancing Bellevue's capacity as a city where innovation supports opportunity, equity, mobility, and economic development.

Staff started conversations with the Council, community, and businesses in 2024 to solicit early input on how the city could further support innovation, both in delivery of city services, and in support of the innovative spirit of the community and businesses who call Bellevue home. Staff and volunteers completed 1 x 1 interviews with people representing residents, education, small business, digital equity, affordable housing, non-profit, and large businesses. Staff also conducted a survey promoted through mailing lists and social media with 60 respondents.

The results of these conversations were previewed on November 14, 2024 at an event in Bellevue City Hall, where staff gathered additional input from approximately 50 attendees and volunteers.

Across these engagements, three areas of focus stood out:

1. **Digital equity:** Ensuring everyone in Bellevue can take advantage of the digital economy through connectivity, technology tools, and skill building. Highlights included:
  - a. Increasing opportunities to support digital skill building
  - b. Identifying partnerships for free or more affordable internet connectivity at home
  - c. Increasing computer equipment available to low-income people and families
  - d. Partnering with educational institutions for training opportunities and technology support

2. **Policies and priorities:** Opportunity to provide city staff feedback on technology policy, examine equitable impacts, and develop a framework for continuing to advance innovation in city government operations.
  - a. Supporting continued smart city development
  - b. Developing a framework for city staff to support prioritization of meaningful innovation projects and pilots
  - c. Planning for an AI enabled future with appropriate policies and safeguards
3. **Equitable innovation, collaboration, and small business development:** Businesses (small, start-up, and large) and representatives from education and non-profits identified the need for neutral space to collaborate, test innovative products, learn, and grow skills and services. Small businesses specifically identified interest in core business services support.

The next Innovation Forum will be held at City Hall on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, and will feature the results of the engagement in the Fall. Staff will also work with volunteers on next steps and work plans for 2025-2026.

The Innovation Forum will meet four times a year with sub-team work conducted in between meetings to support the workplans.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

### **Policy Impacts**

From the Comprehensive Plan, this work aligns to:

ED-5. Foster business innovation through business development strategies and promoting digital infrastructure.

UT-4. Encourage public-private partnerships to take advantage of the city's fiber optic network to facilitate innovation, service delivery and competition for broadband deployment throughout the city

### **Fiscal Impact**

The 2025-2026 General Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget created a new Innovation project (CIP Plan No. G-125) to fund innovation across the city. This funding will be used to support the forum and the priorities identified by the community, including innovative ways of delivering city services.

## **OPTIONS**

NA

## **ATTACHMENTS**

A. Innovation Forum Results

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A