

Affordable Housing Strategy Public Engagement Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

The Affordable Housing Strategy is intended to significantly increase the amount of housing opportunities in Bellevue at a range of affordability levels. The goals and/or individual actions of the strategy will be of interest to different stakeholder groups and the community. This project will build on prior public input related to affordable housing that was received during development of the *Comprehensive Plan Update*, the *Economic Development Plan*, and the *Human Services Needs Update*. These documents will also provide policy guidance for developing the actions that will comprise the overall affordable housing strategy. Public engagement will consist of two main phases: 1) information/education about the need for affordable housing and why it is important to sustaining Bellevue's economic viability and livability; and 2) soliciting feedback from the full spectrum of stakeholders and the broader community on the range of actions that will be presented for Council consideration. The following plan describes the objectives, types of stakeholders and tools that will be used over the course of the project.

II. OBJECTIVES

Public engagement is a key component of the project, and is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Raise community awareness and understanding about the need for and importance of providing affordable housing for all income levels in Bellevue.
2. Foster broad public engagement throughout the shaping of the affordable housing strategy.
3. Provide robust opportunities for input by stakeholders and the community through the use of tools such as social media, online surveys, Planning Commission and Human Services Commission study sessions, interviews, panels and workshops.
4. Identify a focused set of affordable housing strategies that build on tools already in place (multi-family tax exemption, BelRed transit-oriented development, BelRed floor-area-ratio incentives, etc.).
5. Include input from those impacted by specific strategies.
6. Parallel ARCH consortium-wide outreach provides options for new funding strategies, and update of ARCH Housing Trust Fund goals.

III. INTEREST GROUPS

There are already many groups in Bellevue that have a vested interest in which tools will be used to create affordable housing and how those could be implemented. In addition to the broader community engagement effort, the program will reach out to groups that represent the full spectrum of interests. Some are already engaged through related projects and all will be made aware of the development of the affordable housing strategy and encouraged to participate. It is important to engage these groups early and maintain that involvement throughout the project. The initial list of interest groups includes:

- Low-income and vulnerable persons seeking affordable housing
- Affordable housing advocates
- Market (for profit) and non-profit housing developers
- Land developers and other real estate interests

- Local employers and business groups
- Financiers: private and other public funders
- Neighborhood leaders group
- City employees who work in areas with overlap (Human Services, Economic Development, Diversity, etc.)

IV. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The following are examples of tools and techniques that staff anticipates using to engage the public and interest groups during the project (staff will explore these and determine which will be most effective):

- 1) Presentation material on affordable housing needs within the community (e.g. brochures, fact sheets)
- 2) BTV video on housing needs in Bellevue
- 3) Project website and social media; on-line surveys; on-line story maps
- 4) Neighborhood media e.g. Next Door, neighborhood newsletters
- 5) Expert panels/educational workshops; work with other groups to organize, host and record for on-line and BTV presentation
- 6) Small group meetings on specific topics and/or with specific groups
- 7) News articles and press releases, including *Its Your City*
- 8) Traveling informational display(s) (City Hall, Mini City Hall at Crossroads, Factoria)
- 9) Electronic communications, e-mail subscriber list

V. ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

The public engagement process is designed to provide ongoing opportunities for public information and feedback during the entire project with an emphasis on soliciting feedback at key points in the process as described below. Following is a schedule of milestones in the public engagement schedule.

APRIL

- Launch project website.
- Engage community partner(s) in public outreach.

MAY

- Initiate public information about Bellevue's need for affordable housing

JUNE

- Public information and outreach program on affordable housing need continues.
- Solicit stakeholder and public feedback on list of potential actions.

JULY

- Public information and outreach program on affordable housing need continues.

AUGUST

- Prepare materials for public information and feedback on results of evaluation (i.e. describing performance of potential actions).

SEPTEMBER

- Solicit stakeholder and public feedback on potential actions based on evaluation results.

OCTOBER

- Solicit public comment on draft plan.