

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

A survey was created to gauge public knowledge about affordable housing and respondents' reactions to a sampling of ideas on the types of actions on the potential action list. It is important to note that the survey is not a statistically valid sample and does not necessarily reflect the overall characteristics or views of the population or of Bellevue voters. The survey offered a broad range of community stakeholders an opportunity to share their opinions of affordable housing. The survey is one tool in the overall community engagement program for Bellevue's affordable housing strategy. As of late August, more than 900 responses were received with over 800 of those being completed online.

### METHODOLOGY

One of the goals of the engagement program is to connect with communities not typically engaged in local planning issues, including non-English speaking persons. Based on available demographic information, staff identified Russian, Spanish, and traditional Chinese as the three languages most commonly spoken in the city, other than English; therefore all survey materials were translated into these languages. Other languages were available by clicking a link on the first page of the online survey. Although computer translations can be difficult to accurately track due to the variety of methods people use to translate web content, Google reported that the site was primarily viewed in English. The only other language used by visitors was traditional Chinese (about 1.5% of users).

The paper survey was initially distributed in June at the Community Education Forum, at the North Bellevue Community Center, at listening posts at Crossroads Mall Mini-City Hall and at Factoria Mall, and at stakeholder meetings. Paper copies of the survey translated in Russian, Spanish, Chinese and English were available at Mini-City Hall. The survey was made available online (in multiple languages) from July 25 to August 21. Promotion of the survey included announcements on the city's website, posts on social media (*Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Nextdoor*), and direct communication with cultural groups in the community for broad distribution. Social media promotion of the survey included three weekly posts on *Facebook* in English, Spanish, Chinese and Russian; more than 30 tweets on *Twitter*, including 20 in Spanish, Russian, and traditional Chinese; and two posts on *Nextdoor*. Information was also disseminated through connections with organizations that are culturally affiliated with, or provide services to, historically underrepresented groups. Identifying key cultural contacts helped the City of Bellevue increase the level of engagement of these groups.

### RESPONDENTS: ACCESS + DEMOGRAPHICS

During the period the survey was online the website received 1,585 visits from 1,310 unique visitors. More than 63% of visitors to the site participated in the survey. More than half of all site visits lasted more than one minute, suggesting that these visitors engaged with the online content instead of immediately leaving the site. The majority of visitors came from a direct link provided to them, however, 12% arrived through *Twitter* and 19% arrived through *Facebook* posts. People visited the site on mobile devices and desktop computers equally.

Nearly nine in ten respondents (88%) reported living in Bellevue. Generally, respondents were fairly representative of the Bellevue community; however the percentage of respondents who are white, home-owners, and in higher income households represented a slightly higher proportion than the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) demographic figures:

- 50% reported a household income over \$100,000 (ACS = 44%)
- 64% reported their ethnicity as white (ACS = 62%)
- 65% reported owning a single-family home (ACS = 59%)

### TOP-LINE FINDINGS

Highest level of support:

1. Develop housing options and services that enable seniors to stay in their homes or neighborhoods (*79% favor, 51% strongly/28% somewhat*)
2. Invest in city infrastructure (e.g. parks, streets, utility upgrades) that reduces costs for affordable housing developments (*63% favor, 35% strongly/28% oppose*)
3. Require developers to include affordable units with certain multi-family development (*59% support, 42% strongly/17% somewhat*)

Highest level of opposition:

1. Allow greater flexibility in requirements for private development (e.g. permit fees, building codes, parking standards, density transfers) in exchange for providing affordable units (*44% oppose, 30% strongly/14% somewhat*)
2. Grant developers additional development in exchange for providing affordable units with certain multi-family development (*38% oppose, 25% strongly/13% somewhat*)
3. Use surplus public land (e.g. city, county, state) to build affordable housing (*35% oppose, 24% strongly/11% somewhat*)

More information needed (i.e. highest not sure/NA):

1. Invest in city infrastructure (e.g. parks, streets, utility upgrades) that reduces costs for affordable housing developments (*19% not sure or NA*)
2. Allow greater flexibility in requirements for private development (e.g. permit fees, building codes, parking standards, density transfers) in exchange for providing affordable units (*18% not sure or N/A*)
3. Increase local rental/operating subsidies that help people with low incomes stay in their homes (*18% not sure or NA*)

Affordable housing strategies using city regulations (ranked by level of support):

1. Require developers to include affordable units with certain multi-family development (*59%*)
2. Allow additional types of smaller-scale housing like cottages, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units in single-family areas but only if approved as part of a neighborhood plan (*56%*)
3. Grant developers additional development in exchange for providing affordable units with certain multi-family development (*47%*)

4. Allow greater flexibility in requirements for private development (e.g. permit fees, building codes, parking standards, density transfers) in exchange for providing affordable units (38%)

Affordable housing strategies using city resources (ranked by level of support):

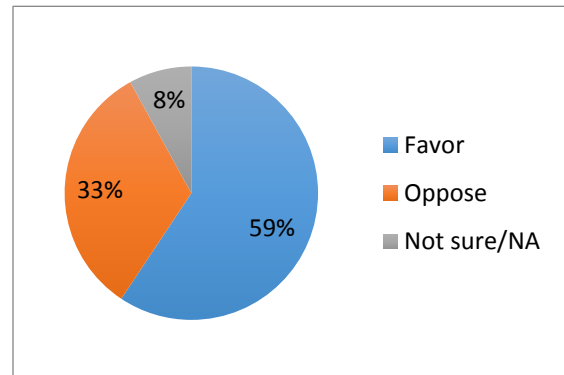
1. Develop housing options and services that enable seniors to stay in their homes or neighborhoods (79%)
2. Invest in city infrastructure (e.g. parks, streets, utility upgrades) that reduces costs for affordable housing developments (63%)
3. Increase city funding to acquire and preserve existing affordable housing (57%)
4. Pursue changes in state law that will give cities more tools to support affordable housing (57%)
5. Increase city funding to other agencies that provide affordable housing (54%)
6. Increase local rental/operating subsidies that help people with low incomes stay in their homes (53%)
7. Use surplus public land (e.g. city, county, state) to build affordable housing (51%)

**FINDINGS BY QUESTION**

*Please indicate your level of support for or opposition to the following strategies Bellevue might consider to increase the amount of affordable housing by using city regulations:*

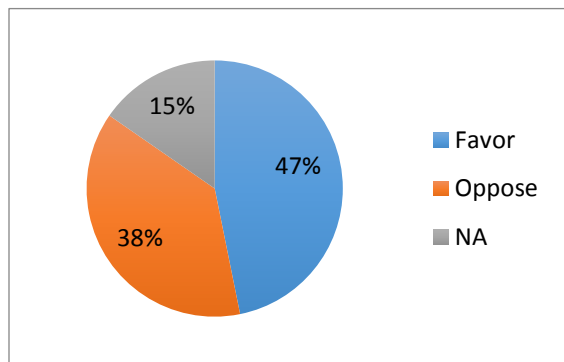
Require developers to include affordable units with certain multi-family development

- **59% support** (42% strongly/17% somewhat)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> highest level of support
- **33% oppose** (23% strongly/10% somewhat)
- **8% not sure or N/A**



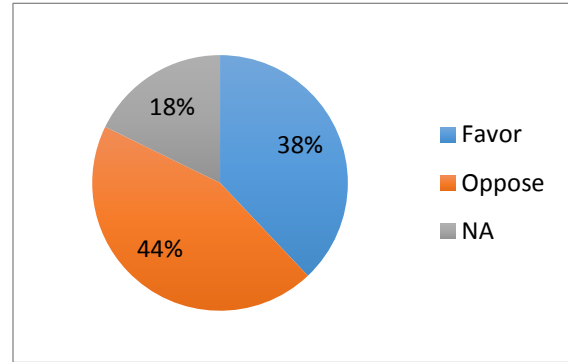
Grant developers additional development in exchange for providing affordable units with certain multi-family development.

- **47% favor** (27% strongly/20% somewhat)
- **38% oppose** (25% strongly/13% somewhat)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of opposition
- **15% not sure/NA**



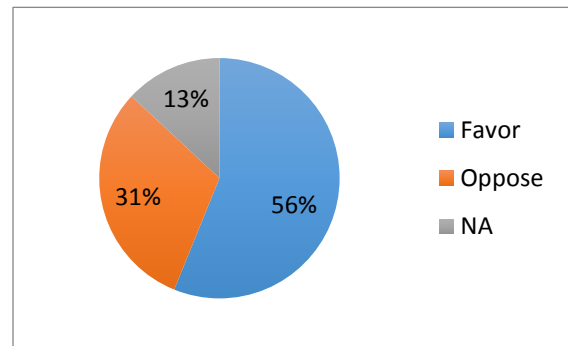
Allow greater flexibility in requirements for private development (e.g. permit fees, building codes, parking standards, density transfers) in exchange for providing affordable units.

- **38% favor** (20% strongly/18% somewhat)
- **44% oppose** (30% strongly/14% somewhat)
  - Highest level of opposition
- **18% not sure or N/A**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of NA/not sure



Allow additional types of smaller-scale housing like cottages, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units in single family areas but only if approved as part of a neighborhood plan.

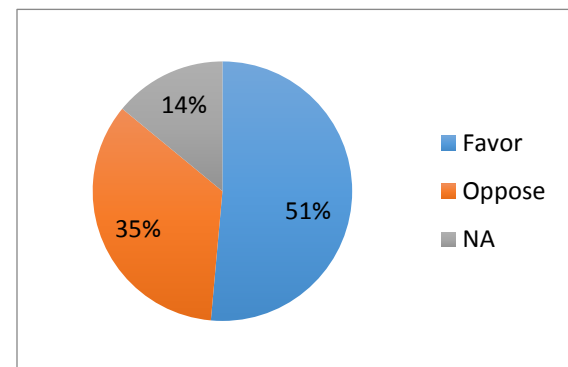
- **56% favor** (34% strongly/22% somewhat)
- **31% oppose** (23% strongly/8% somewhat)
- **13% not sure or N/A**



*Please indicate your level of support for or opposition to the following strategies Bellevue might consider to increase the amount of affordable housing by using city resources.*

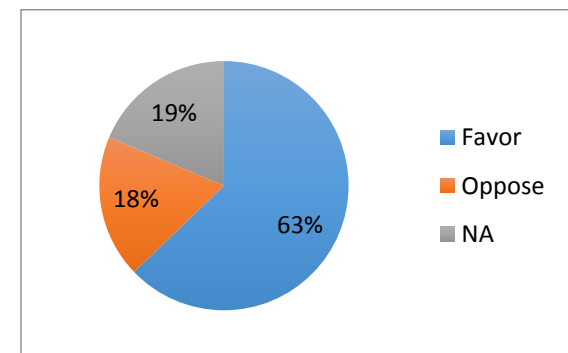
Use surplus public land (e.g. city, county, state) to build affordable housing.

- **51% favor** (31% strongly/20% somewhat)
- **35% oppose** (24% strongly/11% somewhat)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> highest level of opposition
- **14% not sure or N/A**



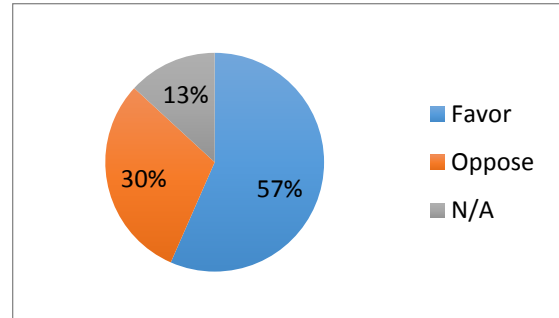
Invest in city infrastructure (e.g. parks, streets, utility upgrades) that reduces costs for affordable housing developments.

- **63% favor** (35% strongly/28% somewhat)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of support
- **18% oppose** (13% strongly/5% somewhat)
- **19% not sure or NA**
  - Highest level of NA/not sure



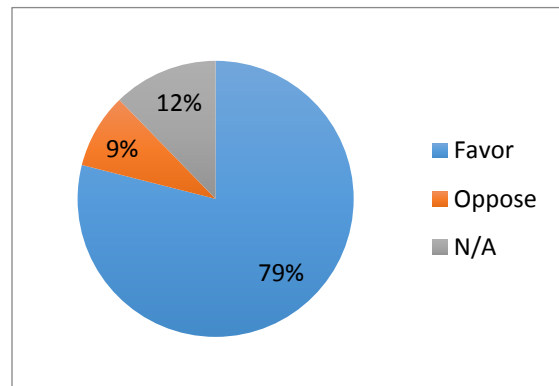
Increase city funding to acquire and preserve existing affordable housing.

- **57% favor** (34% strongly/23% somewhat)
- **30% oppose** (21% strongly/9% somewhat)
- **13% not sure or NA**



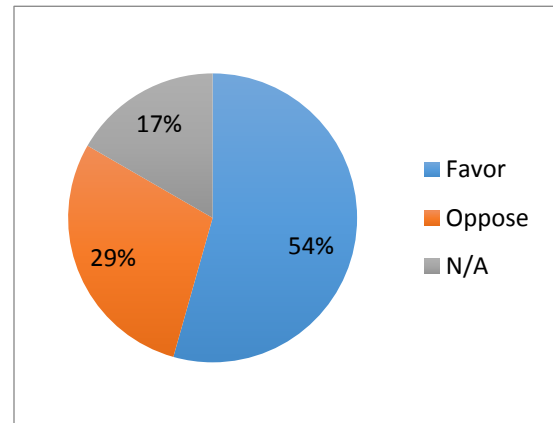
Develop housing options and services that enable seniors to stay in their homes or neighborhoods.

- **79% favor** (51% strongly/28% somewhat)
  - Highest level of support
- **9% oppose** (5% strongly/4% somewhat)
- **12% not sure or NA**



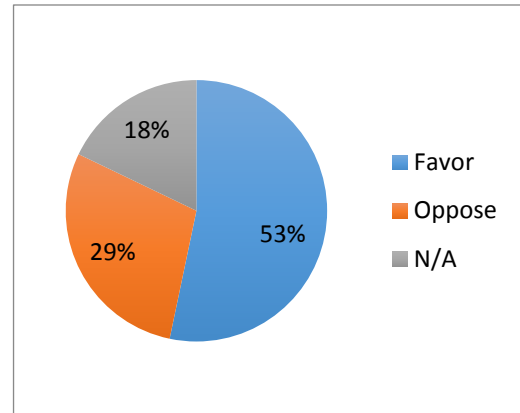
Increase city funding to other agencies that provide affordable housing.

- **54% favor** (33% strongly/21% somewhat)
- **29% oppose** (21% strongly/8% somewhat)
- **17% not sure or NA**



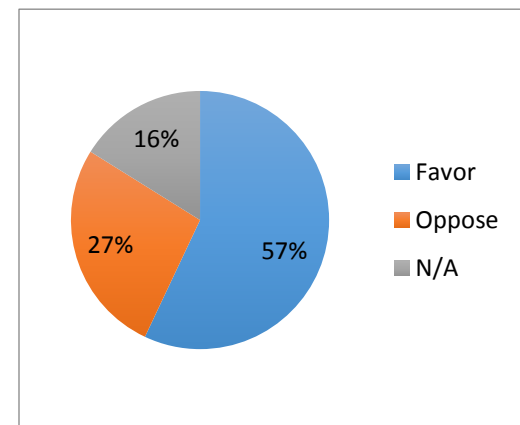
Increase local rental/operating subsidies that help people with low incomes stay in their homes.

- **53% favor** (32% strongly/21% somewhat)
- **29% oppose** (19% strongly/10% somewhat)
- **18% not sure or NA**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of NA/not sure



Pursue changes in state law that will give cities more tools to support affordable housing.

- **57% favor** (40% strongly/17% somewhat)
- **27% oppose** (21% strongly/6% somewhat)
- **16% not sure or NA**



The analysis of data by demographic characteristics tells a more complex story.

**Age:**

- The highest level of favorability across all age groups is with those who strongly favor requiring developers to include affordable housing units with multi-family development, and more than twice that of those who even somewhat favor this approach.
- Respondents over the age of 65 (73%) are the most likely to strongly favor the practice of developing housing options that allow seniors to stay in their homes and neighborhoods. Similarly, more than half of those aged 50-65 (57%) also strongly favor this practice.
- The lowest level of favorability across all age groups is with offering greater flexibility in requirements for private development in exchange for affordable housing options. All age segments show stronger opposition to this metric than strong favorability, with the exception of those over 65, among whom a quarter of respondents both strongly oppose and strongly favor this strategy.
- Respondents between ages 35-49 are particularly opposed to the practice of using surplus lands to build affordable housing. While more than half of those age 18-34

(55%), those age 50-65 (52%), and those over age 65 (67%) either strongly or somewhat favor this practice, favorability is less than half (44%) among respondents between age 35-49 and more than one out of three (35%) of this segment are strongly opposed.

**Income:**

- Respondents with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 show the highest level of favorability for all surveyed practices with regard to affordable housing in Bellevue, with just one exception. Favorability for the practice of developing housing options that allow seniors to stay in their homes is equally high among all income segments, and highest among those who make \$45,000 to \$70,000 annually, suggesting that this is the sole metric that is favored by all, irrespective of income.
  - Respondents who have an annual income of \$100,000 or more are the least likely to strongly favor any surveyed approach to affordable housing in Bellevue; however, these respondents most strongly favor the practice of developing housing options that allow seniors to stay in their homes (35%), investing in city infrastructure that reduces costs for affordable housing (31%), and requiring developers to include affordable units with certain multi-family developments (31%).
  - Nearly three out of four respondents (73%) who have a household income under \$30,000 per year strongly favor the practice of pursuing changes in state law that will give cities more tools to support affordable housing. Conversely, just one in four respondents (27%) who make more than \$100,000 annually strongly favor this practice.
  - Three out of four respondents (76%) who report a household income under \$30,000 per year indicate that they strongly favor the practice of requiring developers to include affordable units with certain multi-family development. This is a measurably higher level of strong favorability than reported by any other income segment, and more than twice the level of strong agreement among those who make more than \$100,000 (31%).
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