



Bellevue Planning Commission

January 22, 2020

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

2020 Census: The What, Why and How

STAFF CONTACT

Gwen Rousseau AICP, Senior Planner, 452-2743
Community Development Department

POLICY ISSUES

None

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

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DIRECTION

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INFORMATION ONLY

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At this study session, staff will provide the Planning Commission with an overview of what the decennial census is, why it is important, how it will be conducted in 2020 and how Commissioners can help raise awareness in the community.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Beginning this March, the U.S. Census Bureau will invite households across the country to participate in the 2020 Census.

What is the decennial census?

The census is a head count of every person living in the United States. To be sure the government represents the people, the U.S. Constitution requires a population count every 10 years. Ever since 1790, the census has determined the number of seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2020, Washington State gained a tenth seat in the House since its population had grown. The census is, and always has been, a cornerstone of our democracy.

Why is it important?

Leaders use Census data to make decisions. Census data help guide planning for the future of communities. The 2020 Census will help inform decisions on how billions of dollars are allocated annually for critical services like roads, schools, hospitals and healthcare clinics, fire and emergency response services, and hundreds of other programs.

Since the last decennial Census, the City of Bellevue has received \$76.2M in federal and state funding for Transportation projects, \$7.1M for Park projects, \$5.8M for Community Development Block Grants and

\$40.9M in state distributions. Bellevue School District has received over \$112M in federal revenue over the past 10 years.

How will it be conducted?

In 2020, for the first time, one will be able to complete the census online, by phone or by mail. It will ask a few simple questions, such as how many people live in one's home on April 1, including their age, sex, race, ethnicity, relationship to the householder and whether one rents or owns their home.

How is the information protected?

By law, all census responses are completely confidential and personal information cannot be shared with any other government agency, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement or the Department of Homeland Security. A person's responses cannot be used against them by any government agency or court.

Who counts?

Every person counts, no matter who they are or where they live. Whether a family has participated for decades or the 2020 Census will be their first, everyone has a role in shaping the future of our country.

How Commissioners Can Help

Spread the Word

Through the power of social networks and social media channels, commissioners can help raise awareness of the 2020 Census by sharing interesting facts, real-life stories, and how-to information to encourage the community to participate in the 2020 Census. Staff have been visiting boards and commissions as well as social service providers, faith-based organizations and training all front line staff.

Stay Up to Date

The 2020 Census marks the first time that residents will be able to respond to the census online. Commissioners can sign up here for updates and to receive a reminder when it's time to respond.

Set the Record Straight

An accurate count is critical for communities across the country. One of the best ways to show support for the 2020 Census is by knowing the facts. Review the basics of the 2020 Census and how the Census Bureau protects everyone's data, then share these facts with the community. If you hear false information or are wondering whether a rumor is true, please contact rumors@census.gov.

Learn How Others Are Helping

Across the country, people are stepping up to support the 2020 Census. Check out the creative ways that Census Bureau partners, community leaders, and others are making a difference.

- City of Bellevue 2020 Census [webpage](#)
- East King County [Communities Count Committee](#)
- King County [Regional Census Committee](#)
- Washington State [Complete Count Committee](#)
- U.S. Census Bureau webpages: [2020 Census](#) and [Become a Census Partner](#) and [Partner Spotlight](#)

Next Steps: 2020 Census Timeline

- March 12-24: Letter mailed inviting people to complete the census questionnaire online

If people don't respond ...

- March 26-April 3: Reminder postcard mailed
- April 1: Census Day – Count Everyone!
- April 8-16: Reminder letter and paper questionnaire mailed
- April 20-27: Final reminder postcard mailed
- May-late July: Census takers knock on doors of households who have not responded to collect information in person

ATTACHMENTS

1. Bellevue 2020 Census Brochure
2. 2020 Census Sample Questionnaire