

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Update on key demographic characteristics of Bellevue in 2020.

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Community Development

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

Tonight's study session is informational only. It will provide an update on key Bellevue demographic characteristics with a focus on economic expansion, income inequality in the community, and residential character. The upcoming 2020 U.S. Census and importance of accurate data will also be highlighted.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Analyzing trends is an essential part of the City's planning function and integral to policy discussions. Much of the data the City uses to understand our community relies on federal data collection done by the U.S. Census Bureau. In March, Census 2020 will begin in our community. The counts will impact funding for transportation projects, education, housing, and other programs. The City has been working to ensure an accurate, complete count by partnering with organizations and reaching out to communities that are often undercounted.

Highlighted below are some examples of the key trends the City follows relating to economic expansion, income inequality, and residential character. These data sets come from the U.S. Census Bureau and other complementary sources.

Economic Expansion and Hidden Human Capital

Bellevue is currently home to about 7 percent of the region's jobs and 3.5 percent of the region's population. While jobs in Bellevue have grown slightly more slowly than the region as a whole since 2010, that could change with the current cycle of downtown office space construction. The number of jobs grew in the Puget Sound region by 23 percent between 2010 and 2018. Though Bellevue is the second largest economic center in the region, behind only Seattle, jobs grew by 18 percent over that time period. Between 2000 and 2010 when jobs in the region as a whole grew by about half a percent, jobs in Bellevue grew by 1.4 percent. Growth does not follow a smooth trend line. With the additional office construction occurring right now, the City will likely be on track to meet its 2035 job growth target.

Households in Bellevue are more likely to have only one employed person than the region, regardless of household size. This is likely related to our cultural diversity in the City. Anecdotally, information available to the City suggests that there are many H1-B visa holders living in the City. The H1-B visa

program “allows companies in the United States to temporarily employ foreign workers in occupations that require the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge and a bachelor’s degree or higher in the specific specialty, or its equivalent.”¹ The visas are issued to the firm, with the visa usually recorded at the company headquarters. The top four companies in Washington State that employ workers with H1-B visas are Amazon, Microsoft, T-Mobile, and Expedia, all companies with ties to Bellevue. For households with an H1-B visa holder, often the accompanying spouse is not able to work, even though they may be highly educated and skilled. This may be the underlying factor explaining the City’s distinction regarding households with only one employed person.

About 85 percent of the people not in the labor force in the region between the ages of 18 and 64 (working age) are citizens. In Bellevue, the percent is similar among men but only about 61 percent of women not in the labor force in this age range are citizens. About 65 percent of working age women not in the labor force who are not citizens have a spouse who is employed in a computer, engineering or science occupation – one of the prime occupation groups the visa targets. This indicates that there is a substantial population capable of working but prevented from doing so due to immigration issues.

Income Inequality

Even though household income in Bellevue continues to rise dramatically, income inequality is also rising. Despite the propensity toward single-earner households, household income in Bellevue has risen. Median household income was \$80,500 in 2010 (\$89,838 in 2018 dollars) and rose to \$113,700 in 2018. That is an increase of about \$23,000 beyond inflation. While people in all income groups have seen their income rise in the City, the distance between the average income of the wealthiest 20 percent and the average income of the poorest 20 percent has increased by 28 percent. This is because, while average income rose for all groups, it rose faster for wealthier households.

Income inequality is increasing in the Puget Sound region as a whole at about the same rate. However, the average income of each income quintile is about a third higher in Bellevue. Even so, the lowest earning 20 percent of households in Bellevue, about 11,500 households, earned an average of about \$28,000 a year in 2018. It is a struggle for even a single-person household to manage on that wage in Bellevue.

Changing Residential Character

Bellevue’s housing growth has kept pace with regional growth but the housing stock is increasingly stratified between very small homes and very large homes. There has been a net loss of over 300 family-sized homes (2- & 3-bedrooms) since 2010 while there has been a net gain of more than 2,000 very large homes (4 or more bedrooms) and about the same number of small homes (1 or no bedrooms). The Puget Sound region grew by 12 percent between 2010 and 2018. That is an amazing 2.75 percent of the total national growth. Bellevue’s population grew by 16 percent between 2010 and 2018. Even if the 2012 annexations are not counted in the growth, the City grew by 14 percent. Although faster than regional population growth, it is slower than job growth in Bellevue. As of 2018, the

¹ US Citizenship and Immigration Service. 2019. “H1-B Visa Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Cap Season.” Webpage, <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-and-fashion-models/h-1b-fiscal-year-fy-2020-cap-season>

City was behind in meeting its housing growth target – only 19 percent of the 15,800 units targeted by 2035 were built by the end of 2018 but 26 percent of the time has passed. Current residential development activity is being tracked to see where the City stands regarding long-range housing targets. Future planning work will examine jobs/housing balance within the City and the broader Eastside.

This increasing demand for housing is changing the character of most neighborhoods in the City but the change looks different in each neighborhood. For example, the Lake Hills neighborhood has had only slight housing growth, about 4 percent, but the neighborhood lost about 5 percent of the family-sized homes and added 26 percent more very large homes. By contrast, housing growth in BelRed is comprised of a majority of small housing units. In Downtown, the fastest growing neighborhood in Bellevue, there was about a 43 percent growth in housing units between 2010 and 2018. About two-thirds of the growth was in small units and one-third was in family-sized units.

Collecting Accurate Data in the 2020 Census

The City can continue to have good data about its population by supporting participation in the 2020 Census. A complete and accurate census is the cornerstone of the nation's **democracy**; it is the basis for allocating **dollars** to fund critical facilities, services and programs; and it is the **data** upon which the City relies to inform planning for Bellevue's future. An accurate census empowers the City to be **effective, efficient** and **equitable**.

Starting in mid-March, every household in Bellevue will receive a letter in the mail inviting them to go online and take **ten minutes** to answer **ten questions** that will shape future investments in Bellevue for the next **ten years**.

Community partners have been reaching out to everyone in the community to raise awareness of the importance, confidentiality and ease of participating in the 2020 Census. Below are examples of some of the great work they are doing:

- The **Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition (ERIC)**:
 - o ERIC created an eastsidecensus.org website and the Eastside Census Facebook page, which contain resources in 16 different languages that provide everyone on the Eastside with answers to their questions about the 2020 Census. These resources reflect months of effort by cultural groups who have combed through and selected materials that are clear, impactful and relevant to the community.
 - o ERIC has also convened the East King County Communities Count Committee (EKC CCC) bringing together local jurisdictions, school districts, King County Library, King County Housing Authority and several local service providers to share resources and collaborate on outreach.
 - o In addition to convening the broad EKC CCC, ERIC has been convening community cultural and faith based organizations for several months to learn about the challenges and strategize on best methods for delivering information to historically undercounted populations.
- The **Chinese Information Service Center (CISC)**:
 - o CISC launched two Chinese 2020 Census webpages one in [Traditional Chinese](#) and

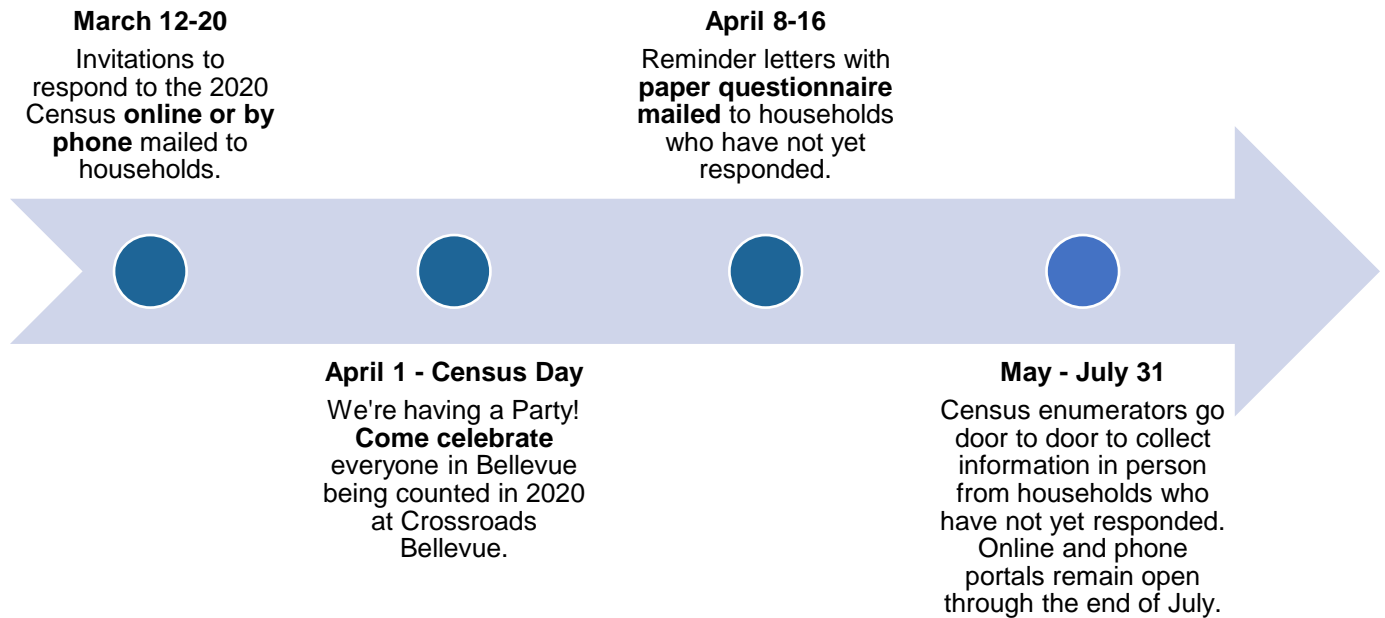
one in [Simplified Chinese](#).

- They have also convened both a Chinese Complete Count Committee and a Russian Complete Count Committee, which meet monthly enabling residents and their networks to stay informed about 2020 Census operations.
- From March 16 through April 30, they will be hosting weekly Questionnaire Assistance Centers at their CISC Bellevue office where they will be providing translation support, materials and electronic devices for completing the Census questionnaire online.
- Lastly, they have been conducting outreach to other Chinese organizations including the Washington Association of Chinese American Physicians, Kin On and the Chinese Institute of Engineers.

- The **Indian Association of Western Washington (IAWW)**:

- Census Web Page: IAWW launched an [IAWW 2020 Census webpage for Asian Indians](#).
- Trainings: IAWW has also been offering weekly Census Ambassador trainings at the North Bellevue Community Center enabling residents to educate themselves and their neighbors about the importance, confidentiality and ease of participating in the 2020 Census. Ambassadors include women in their Moms network who are our Census ambassadors within their apartment buildings.
- Census Outreach Campaign: IAWW is educating the community about the 2020 Census at Crossroads Bellevue on Friday nights, cultural events on Saturday evenings and at places of worship and grocery stores on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons.
- Census Assistance Centers: IAWW has formed eight teams (each with one ambassador and three youth volunteers) who will be providing Census questionnaire assistance on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at places of worship, cultural events, and shopping centers starting March 12. On weekdays, their teams will be conducting census assistance at pop up centers.
- Media Campaign: IAWW has shared Census videos with our seniors, youth and families through social media, newsletters and flyers. <https://www.facebook.com/iawwicc/>

Important dates to remember about the upcoming 2020 Census are shown in the timeline below:



POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

There is no policy impact associated with this update.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this update.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A