



# Public Outreach Summary for the 2021-2022 Budget

## Public Engagement

The 2021-2022 budget process includes several options for public engagement. The **Budget Process Public Involvement Website** is available at <https://bellevuewa.gov/budget> and provides links and contact information for anyone interested in further information. Below is a status of each engagement option.

## Resident and Business Surveys

### Budget Survey

<https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/finance/budget-and-performance/performance-reports/budget-survey>

In preparation for the new budget, the city conducted a budget survey. The survey was designed to provide a statistically valid tool to enhance the city's knowledge of residents' perceptions about the city and to better understand community priorities and expectations regarding city services. This survey has been conducted every other year since 1998.

### Performance Survey

<https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/finance/budget-and-performance/performance-reports/performance-measures-survey/>

The city conducts a performance survey annually to measure the performance of the city. The methodology for the Performance Survey is the same as in the Budget Survey.

### Business Survey

<https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/finance/budget-and-performance/performance-reports/business-survey/>

The city conducted the business survey for the first time in 2015. The survey is conducted every other year with the 2019 survey as the most recent available. The survey addresses Bellevue's key metrics, attitudes about operating and owning a business, starting a business, and questions relating to taxation.

## Public Hearings

The City Council holds three public hearings on the 2021-2022 budget to provide stakeholders multiple opportunities to officially comment on the operating and capital budgets. Two public hearings, one in July and the other in September, are held prior to the submission of the Preliminary Budget to the council and offer residents and other stakeholders the opportunity to let the council know what issues are important to them. The third hearing, in November after the council receives the Preliminary Budget, provides interested parties the chance to address new budget proposals and comment on significant budget issues.



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Summaries of the July, September, and November public hearings are presented in this section. Additional emails, phone calls, and communications may have been received by councilmembers over the course of 2020.

### Public comment

The public are also welcome and encouraged to speak during public comment periods at all regular Council meetings once physical meetings resume. Council agendas are posted on the Council website in advance of the meeting.

### Boards and Commissions

Four city boards and commissions provide input on the budget process and they can be found at [http://www.bellevuewa.gov/boards\\_commissions.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/boards_commissions.htm)

- Transportation Commission: provides funding recommendations on the Capital Investment Program (CIP) budget.
- Environmental Services Commission: provides funding recommendations on both the operating and CIP Utilities budgets as well as rate recommendations.
- Parks and Community Services Board: provides funding recommendations on the CIP budget.
- Human Services Commission: provides funding recommendations on allocations to human services (City/CDBG) agencies.

### E-mail/Contact Councilmembers

Comments to the full Council may be emailed to [Council@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:Council@bellevuewa.gov) or by leaving a voicemail with the Council Office at 452-452-7810.

### E-mail/Contact Finance and Asset Management

#### Presentations to Neighborhood Groups, Business Associations and Others

The Finance and Asset Management Department will give presentations about the budget upon request to any group. Please contact the department at 425-452-5281 or at [FAM@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:FAM@bellevuewa.gov)

#### Information Provided Upon Request

Finally, the Finance and Asset Management Department responds to any communication received regarding the budget process. Please contact the department at 425-452-5281 or at [FAM@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:FAM@bellevuewa.gov)



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### Public Hearings Testimony (paraphrased)

#### July 27, 2020 (source: adopted Council Meeting Minutes)

Assistant City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo noted that Council's desk packet included the comments submitted to the City Clerk and the Budget Manager. Additional comments were sent directly to the Council via email for consideration.

The following individuals provided public comment:

1. Lucas Peterson, a resident of southwest Bellevue, said the purpose of his testimony is to promote and support the demand made by the Eastside for Black Lives organization to remove school resource officers (SROs) from the Bellevue School District. He said that none of the key community indicators or performance indicators used by City staff considered the views of the people most affected by the SRO program. He said SROs do not create safe schools, and they perpetuate the school to prison pipeline in Bellevue. Mr. Peterson commented on equity and asked the City to defund the police department and to support affordable housing. He asked the Council to approve a budget that reduces harm for black and brown students. He said students want counselors and social workers as well as accountability for racist ideas in their schools.

2. Rachel Krinsky thanked Councilmembers for their work on behalf of the community. She noted that she is the Executive Director for LifeWire but speaking as the Co-Chair of the King County Alliance for Human Services. She said she sent a letter in March asking the Council to increase human services funding to two percent of the General Fund. Acknowledging the impacts of the pandemic on the City's budget, she sent a second letter in May asking the City to maintain its current level of funding. Ms. Krinsky said the City has gone the extra mile to provide needed funds during the public health emergency. She said it has been nice to see the community coming together to help each other. She said many families are experiencing food insecurity and financial hardship. She asked the Council to maintain human services funding levels and to increase funding where possible.

3. Christopher Randalls expressed support for funding related to climate change actions, including renewable energy investments, new and greener building codes, and non-motorized transportation facilities. He noted current discussions nationwide about public safety funding and functions. He expressed concern regarding systemic racism in our society and the use of chokeholds by police officers. He noted statistics regarding a disproportionate number of arrests and traffic citations for minority individuals. Mr. Randalls encouraged the Council to defund the police department by



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a minimum of 25 percent and to engage the public in deciding how to use the funding.

4. Mahathi Mangipudi, a senior at Interlake High School, noted her interest in earth sciences and climate change, which she said is already impacting our communities through extreme weather events and forest fires. She said she founded an initiative to elevate youths' voices in climate protection advocacy. She thanked the City for its work to update the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Plan. She said the climate crisis will affect all aspects of society, including the economy. Ms. Mangipudi expressed concern about the health impacts related to climate change as well. She said the City must prioritize climate change items in the budget.

5. Jan Keller, a Lake Hills resident, thanked the Council and staff for their hard work during the pandemic and during this time of asking important questions about racial justice. She noted that she is a member of People for Climate Action (PCA) Bellevue but speaking as an individual. Ms. Keller urged the Council to fund climate action planning in the budget.

6. Warren Halvorsen said that most organization's budgets can be reduced by approximately 15 percent without impacting future results. He expressed concern regarding personnel costs. He expressed support for complete funding for the Police Department and the Fire Department. He said Bellevue is fortunate to have extraordinary Chiefs in both agencies. Referring to the earlier update regarding the incident in the Somerset neighborhood, Mr. Halvorsen noted that pipeline fuel cannot be extinguished with water.

7. April Stevens thanked the Council for all of its work to protect Bellevue's beauty and livability. She said she appreciates the City's response to the pandemic. She asked the Council to fund climate action planning in the budget. She said that being proactive with climate actions can actually accelerate the economy. She asked the Council to ensure that the budget reflects the crucial importance of climate action planning.

8. Matthew Tkachuk noted that he lives near the border between Bellevue and Redmond. He concurred with comments made earlier by Christopher Randalls and thanked everyone who took the time to speak today, especially the youths.

9. Cynthia Cole commented on the role of public safety in overall quality of life. She expressed concern regarding nationwide efforts to defund police and suggested increased funding for the Police Department. She expressed support for separate social services staff to respond to calls involving individuals experiencing



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homelessness or in need of other services (e.g., mental health services). She noted that Fire Department personnel depend on the Police Department to secure incident scenes to enable them to safely work on saving lives.

10. Ruth Lipscomb, a resident of the Newport Shores neighborhood, expressed concern regarding the militarization of police departments across the country and in Bellevue. She noted that the Bellevue Police Department deployed its armored vehicle and SWAT personnel to Seattle over the weekend. She said there are rumors that foam bullets used by the department were provided by the Bellevue Police Foundation. Ms. Lipscomb highlighted information from the Foundation's web site. She asked whether there is a process to ensure that the equipment requested and any training provided by outside funders is in alignment with the City's values. She requested enhanced transparency in the Police Department's budget, including any resources received from outside groups. She suggested reallocating a portion of the police funding to areas of the budget that more equitably support the well-being of all fellow citizen.

11. Ruth Vaughan spoke to the need for a strong emphasis on public safety for a city to attract residents, businesses, and visitors. She said it is not reasonable to defund the police based on a few specific incidents. She said that lawlessness has not been effective in Seattle, where a group of individuals have established control of several blocks. She noted that two deaths have occurred in Seattle's occupied area. Ms. Vaughan expressed support for community policing and for the Police Department's interactions with youth. She asked the Council to not reduce public safety funding. Ms. Vaughan expressed support for prohibiting the use of chokeholds.

### **September 21, 2020 (source: adopted Council Meeting Minutes)**

Assistant City Manager Kyle Stannert said fourteen individuals signed up to speak during the hearing. The City received four written communications regarding the budget and CIP Plan and those have been provided in the Council's desk packet. Mr. Stannert said David Plummer signed up to speak. However, he notified the City Clerk's Office earlier in the day that he would not be able to participate. Mr. Plummer sent written comments to the Council the previous week.

The following individuals came forward to comment:

1. Dave Hamilton, a resident of the Tam O'Shanter neighborhood, said he served on the task force created by the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce and the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) to draft the letter provided to the Council tonight. He noted the strong sense of community in Bellevue. He encouraged the City to maintain its critical



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investments and to be strategic in budget reductions related to the COVID-19 impacts. He expressed concern regarding affordable housing needs. Mr. Hamilton thanked Councilmembers for their work.

2. Albert Rosenthal encouraged the City to not defund the Bellevue Police Department. He noted an article he sent to the Council and said the vast majority of police officers are not racist. He opined that most of the individuals who are killed by police were resisting arrest. He expressed concern regarding the handling of the looting in Downtown Bellevue in late May. Mr. Rosenthal encouraged the Council to not increase taxes.

3. Court Olson thanked the Council for its support of climate action efforts and for signing the updated agreement with the King County Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C). He noted a global effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, which is consistent with the K4C commitments. He encouraged the City to be a regional leader and to retain funding in the budget for climate change initiatives. Mr. Olson acknowledged that it will take a significant staffing effort to adopt and implement a robust climate action plan.

4. Noel Pai-Young expressed concern regarding public discussion about defunding the police department. She said the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased violence, including domestic violence. She encouraged the Council to continue full funding for the police department. She noted lawsuits in other cities responding to local government's efforts to reduce police funding. She encouraged enhanced transparency and accountability. Ms. Pai-Young encouraged the recruitment of more women police to be available on site in domestic violence and sex trafficking situations involving women and children. She suggested that wildfires should be investigated to ensure whether they are related to arson or climate change.

5. Matt Jack, Director of Public Policy for the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), said that he and Chris Johnson (Chamber of Commerce) would comment on their joint message regarding the challenges and opportunities facing the City's budget. Mr. Jack referred the Council to their letter submitted earlier in the day. He described the involvement of the business community to identify key priorities and proposed solutions. Mr. Jack noted the Keep Bellevue Strong initiative to support economic resiliency and recovery and to ensure that the City continues the capital investments needed to add the capacity needed to support continued growth. Mr. Jack thanked Councilmembers for their leadership.

6. McKenzie Toomey, a sophomore at the International School, expressed her concerns regarding climate change. She noted her involvement in organizations including the Sustainability Ambassadors and the Bellevue Youth Climate Action Team. She thanked



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Councilmembers for their dedication and commitment to Bellevue and for their efforts to keep the community safe throughout the pandemic. She thanked the Council for allocating funds for climate action planning, which will be important in economic recovery as well. She said that reducing Bellevue's carbon footprint will increase community health, provide jobs, and protect the environment.

7. Chris Johnson, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, commented regarding the recommendations of the Chamber and BDA joint budget task force. Noting the uncertainty regarding the pandemic and economic recovery, Mr. Johnson encouraged flexibility in terms of funding priorities. He requested continued investments to support the COVID-19 response and economic recovery, maintain current funding levels for police and fire services, and to support health and human services for members of Bellevue who are struggling to meet basic needs. Mr. Johnson urged the Council to continue to invest in transportation projects, including those listed in the BDA-Chamber joint letter to the Council. He briefly highlighted additional suggestions provided in their written comments to the Council.

8. Charles Landau encouraged the Council to maintain funding for the Bellevue Police Department. He said his family no longer feels safe in Seattle. He expressed concern regarding homelessness and the use of illegal drugs in public. He said he moved to Bellevue in part due to its police department and public safety. He encouraged continued full funding for the police.

9. Denny Andrews said he is a former Air Force officer and retired businessman. He said he strongly opposes any defunding of the police department. He noted the protests and related violence in Seattle, Portland, Chicago, Minneapolis, and New York City. He encouraged the City to consider reductions in other areas of the budget.

10. Marlene Meyer said she has worked as an educator in Bellevue for more than 20 years and she has seen the impressive growth. She noted her experience living in California and in observing both the positive and negative elements of rapid growth due to the technology industry (e.g., traffic congestion and pollution). Ms. Meyer thanked the Council for signing the updated K4C agreement. She encouraged adequate funding for addressing the impacts of climate change.

11. Hanna Floss, a resident of the Crossroads neighborhood, encouraged the Council to provide needed human services funding.





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12. Stefan Sharkansky expressed support for maintaining the current level of funding for the Bellevue Police Department. He commended Bellevue’s leadership in supporting funding for public safety.

13. John Bagge said he has worked and lived in Bellevue since 1976. He expressed concern regarding public safety and commended the Bellevue Police Department. He expressed support for de-escalation training for police officers. He urged the Council to continue to fully fund the police department.

14. Heidi Dean expressed support for continuing to fully fund the police department. She said it is important to continue the Bellevue Police Department’s relationship with the Bellevue School District through the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. She expressed support for the creation of affordable housing that would allow police officers to live in the communities that they police. She said that police officers have found that to be rewarding in other cities.

15. Ruth Lipscomb referred to the earlier public comments regarding the issue of defunding the police. She said it is not the funding that we need to be looking at, but we need to be listening to the community, especially to those who maybe have not had positive interactions with police officers. She noted that the Bellevue police officer union contract expires at the end of 2020. She asked the City to not sign a new contract until after the Mayor’s Pledge public safety review process is completed. She said there might be an opportunity to include requirements ensuring transparency and accountability in the next union contract.

### **November 23, 2020 (source: adopted Council Meeting Minutes)**

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo noted that the Council received 13 total written comments on the budget topic and those comments were included as part of the desk packet provided to Council.

The following individuals provided oral comment:

1. Reverend Patty Ebner noted that she is one of the pastors at the First Congregational Church of Bellevue and a member of the Eastside Interfaith Council. She thanked the Council for the City’s response to the pandemic, including increased human services funding. She encouraged the City to support the Muslim Community Resource Center and The Sophia Way transitional housing program.





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2. Lei Wu encouraged the Council to support funding for the cross-cultural center. She said that she and her husband moved to the United States more than 20 years ago. She said a cross cultural center would bring the community together and provide the opportunity for everyone to share their values, heritage, customs, arts, and history. Ms. Wu encouraged the Council to engage the public in planning the cross-cultural center.

3. Samuel Rodriguez said he is the founder and CEO of a company that works in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. He said the cross-cultural center provides the opportunity for businesses, organizations, faith communities, cultural groups, parents, volunteers, and others to become engaged in learning and sharing their cultures.

4. Matt Jack, Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), expressed support for the preliminary budget released in October. He noted the BDA-Chamber of Commerce joint letter of support in the meeting materials. He said the budget responds to the revenue shortfall related to the pandemic while funding vital services and capital projects that support recovery and growth.

5. Chris Johnson, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, said the BDA and the Chamber encourage the City to continue investing in its COVID-19 response and economic recovery, maintain current funding levels for the Police and Fire Departments, continue supporting human services, and to consider a phased opening of Fire Station 10. Mr. Johnson urged the Council to adopt the one-percent property tax adjustment. He encouraged the City to be aggressive in implementing transportation projects and to seek grant funding. He thanked Councilmembers for their leadership through difficult times. He said the BDA and the Chamber look forward to continued collaboration with the City.

6. Weitong Wang, a high school student, expressed enthusiasm for the cross-cultural center. He said the center would provide accessible space and programs for residents of different cultural identities to learn and to support each other. He believes there are other young people like him who would be interested in connecting and finding common interests and activities.

7. Jennifer Keller, a Lake Hills resident, said she was speaking on behalf of People for Climate Action (PCA) Bellevue. She thanked the Council for its budget allocation for the implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She said it is important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by half by 2030. She encouraged an allocation of



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at least \$500,000 for the implementation of the plan over the next two years. She thanked the City for its commitment to addressing the seriousness of climate change.

8. April Stevens concurred with Ms. Keller's request that the Council allocate \$500,000 toward the implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan over the next two years.

9. Ruth Lipscomb noted the Council's vision statement that "diversity is our strength." She said that with diversity comes friction between people and between groups. She said greater investments are needed to address racial equity and justice. She noted references in the budget to an equity lens but said the concept is not defined. She said there are five references to Amazon in the budget but no references to racial equity. Ms. Lipscomb encouraged the City to develop a racial equity task force to bring the community together around fulfilling the Council's vision.

10. Christopher Randels encouraged the Council to continue to invest in implementing the Vision Zero safety program elements. He expressed support for pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure that promotes sustainable and safe transportation. He thanked the City for including non-motorized transportation facilities in the budget. He thanked the City for the implementation of new pedestrian interval crossings at several intersections. He expressed concern regarding traffic fatalities in Bellevue this year and urged the City to prioritize Vision Zero implementation.

11. Heather Kelley said it is important to center questions of race and equity in all aspects of budgeting. She said she would like to see a formal statement reflecting the City's commitment to addressing racial equity and to the Council's pledge to study police use of force. She urged the City to collect and analyze data to identify the areas in need of attention and improvement. She noted that data enables people to focus on facts instead of personal opinions. She asked the Council to use the budget as a vehicle for creating an equitable community for all.

12. John Bagge thanked Councilmembers for their work and for their support of the Police Department and the public safety budget. He asked staff to follow up with him regarding the per capita spending reflected by the Police Department's budget.

13. Cynthia Cole thanked the City for maintaining full funding for the Police Department and for keeping Bellevue safe. She noted that many protests in other cities resulted in the destruction of minority owned businesses. She thanked the City



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for its commitment to public safety and racial diversity. She said it is important for minority owned businesses to feel safe in Bellevue.

14. Jared Axelrod, Amazon, said they will be moving 25,000 employees to Bellevue over the next few years. He thanked the City for increasing its human services funding in response to the impacts of the pandemic. He encouraged support for transportation projects and programs to keep pace with growth and to provide multimodal travel options. He expressed support for the City's work on affordable housing and encouraged incentives to address affordability and livability. He expressed support for addressing racial equity. He thanked the Council and staff for the thoughtfulness and pragmatism reflected in the budget.

15. JD Yu, a Somerset resident, said he is president of the Seattle Chinese Cultural Theater. He expressed support for the cross-cultural center and noted the need for facilities and programming to bring the community together. He thanked the Council for funding the cross-cultural center feasibility study and encouraged them to provide funds for additional conceptual design work. He thanked the Council for continuing to support and fund the Police Department.

16. Dennis Curran, Vice President of Administrative Services, Bellevue College, expressed support for the Bellevue College Connection project. He said Bellevue College, King County Metro, and the City of Bellevue have worked together over the past two years to develop a strong partnership. He said the project will greatly enhance transit service for the college. He urged the Council to provide funding to help the college and Metro achieve 100-percent design of the project.

17. Valeriy Goloborodko said he is an immigrant from Ukraine. He described his extensive involvement in the local and regional Ukraine community, including serving as Honorary Consul of Ukraine. He was a co-founder of the Pacific Ukrainian Society, which started the annual Northwest Ukrainian International Festival. Until this year, that event was held in Crossroads Park and became the largest Ukrainian cultural event on the West Coast with last year's attendance of more than 15,000 people. He expressed support for the cross-cultural center. While he believes that performances and exhibits are important, he would like the center to also provide space for cultural organizations to work together on projects and events.

18. Ngaya Swai, a college student, advocated for the creation of a community court in Bellevue for alternative problem solving that is meant to identify and address the underlying issues that are causing criminal activity. The court could handle many misdemeanor crimes that are often committed out of survival or due to mental



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health issues, such as sleeping in a park or disorderly conduct. He said community courts address the causes of criminal activity and they have been shown to reduce recidivism, resulting in lower jail costs. He noted that there are community courts in Shoreline and Redmond.

19. Marrene Franich, a teacher in Bellevue School District, expressed support for funding a racial equity task force. She encouraged the City to collect data on race and policing in Bellevue. She suggested moving funds from the School Resource Officer (SRO) program, which she feels is problematic, to support the establishment of the task force. She expressed concern that the SRO program is generally unfavorable to students of color. She encouraged a task force of City employees, Councilmembers, local racial equity groups, youth organizations, and others.

20. David Allen asked the Council to increase funding for safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure. He expressed support for improving the Mountains to Sound Greenway and the bicycle network. He described his work with companies and universities and their bike commute programs. He said that Amazon, Facebook, and T-Mobile are interested in efforts to encourage bike commuting.

21. Mark Berejka, Director of Government and Community Affairs, REI Co-op, expressed support for the Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan, especially the Vision Zero Action Plan and other bike and pedestrian safety projects. He expressed support for an extensive bicycle network from Main Street to the Spring District

22. Al Rosenthal expressed support for fully funding the Police Department. He expressed concern regarding housing and services for the homeless. He wondered whether having individuals living in homelessness will attract more homeless individuals. He opined that drug addiction is the problem, not the lack of housing. He urged the Council to not waste money on addressing climate change because he does not believe it is a threat to the human race.

23. Margaret Li encouraged the Bellevue Police Department to hire a mental health correspondent to assist police officers in the field. She said the correspondents program has been successful in a number of cities in Washington. She suggested that having trained counselors will improve communication, defuse tension, and avoid detainment in certain situations. She encouraged additional training for police officers