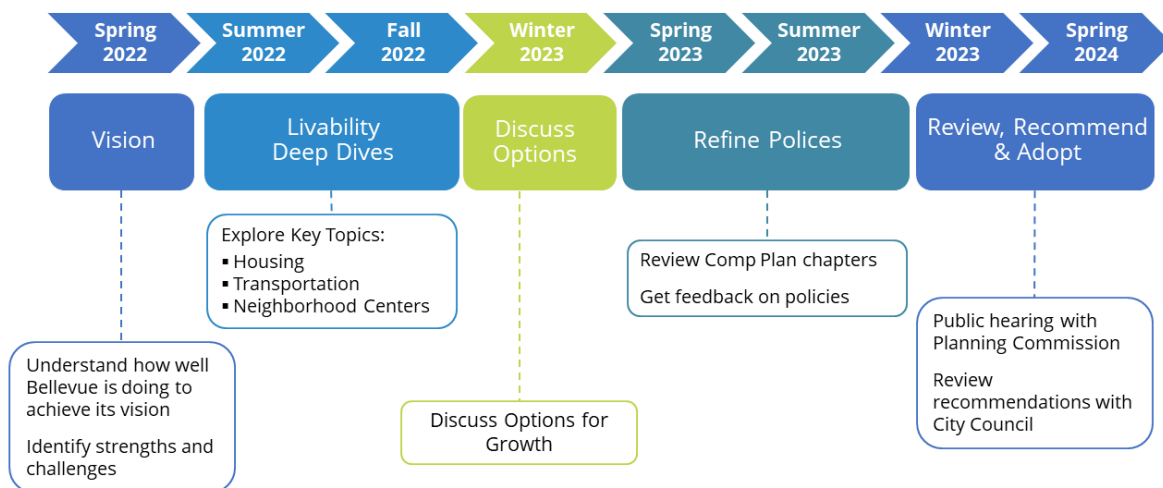


Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is a foundational document used to guide long-range growth and development in the city. It is used by City Council, boards and commissions, and city staff to inform decision making on housing, transportation, land use, infrastructure development, and more. Past updates to Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan have led to the creation of new, mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhoods like BelRed; the adoption of a citywide Environmental Stewardship Plan; and partnerships on affordable housing.

Periodic updates to the Comprehensive Plan happen every ten years and provide an opportunity to step back and look at the city in a holistic way to ensure the city is on the right track and can continue to provide people with a great quality of life.

The update to the Comprehensive Plan launched in February of 2022 and the planning process will continue through 2024. Throughout the process there will be many opportunities for the community to provide input and shape the Comprehensive Plan.



Phase 1: Vision (Spring 2022). Over 3000 people shared their thoughts on the city’s progress towards achieving its vision in our Vision Questionnaire and over 300 people attended one of our presentations or workshops. The [Phase 1 Engagement Report](#) summarizes the input received.

Phase 2: Livability Deep Dives (Summer 2022). Community members had the opportunity to explore issues and discuss key issues related to growth. (Summarized in this document)

Phase 3: Discuss Growth Options (Winter & Spring 2023). People will have the opportunity to discuss various draft growth alternatives and share their feedback. There will also be an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement before selection of a Preferred Growth Alternative.

Phase 4a: Refine Policies (Summer & Fall 2023). The community will review draft policies and provide input before a final draft of the Periodic Update to the Comprehensive Plan is released.

Phase 4b: Legislative Review (Winter 2023 – Spring 2024). Planning Commission will review the draft Comprehensive Plan, hold a public hearing, and make recommendation to City Council. City Council will review and vote on adoption. The public will have an opportunity to comment at each of these steps.

Overview of Outreach Activities

Public Engagement

Phase 2 of community engagement began in mid-June and continued through September. Engagement goals included providing the public with opportunities to learn more about complex topics, consider trade-offs related to key issues, and soliciting feedback to inform several draft growth alternatives. Engagement opportunities centered around a series of in-person Community Deep Dives on key topics and goals for this major update:

- Environment: Green Space and Sustainability.
- Connection: Social and Civic.
- Access: Jobs, Services and Amenities.
- Housing: Diversity & Choice.

Each Deep Dive followed a similar structure with time for attendees to review data boards at their own pace, hear a short presentation from the planning team, ask questions and participate in interactive exercises that fostered dialog and discussion around the topic.

For each Deep Dive topic there was also a corresponding online engagement opportunity at www.engagingbellevue.com/bellevue-2044 for people who were unable to attend an in-person event. The online engagement platform included copies of the presentation, data boards, and places for people to share a comment, ask a question, or provide other input that reflected activities similar to those provided at the live event for community feedback.

In addition to the Community Deep Dives, the planning team continued to work with partners to share information at a variety of community events including:

- Presentation and discussion for the Indian American Community Services seniors group.
- Tabling at the Mid-Autumn Festival for the Chinese community.
- Presentation to faculty at Bellevue College.
- Tabling at Bellevue's Youth Link orientation.
- And other community events and presentations.

Bellevue 2044 Strategy Team

As a foundational document that has wide-ranging impact, Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan must incorporate the voices of the many diverse communities that make up the city. The planning process involves understanding and balancing the needs of many different interests. The planning team has convened a Strategy Team that brings together 52 individuals who represent the business community, developers, non-profit organizations, arts groups, sustainability groups, employers, equity leaders, and neighborhood leaders. The members of the Strategy Team provide a deep understanding of the lived experience of key populations in Bellevue and subject matter expertise that goes beyond that of the typical resident of Bellevue.

The Strategy Team meets monthly, and the topics and agenda closely parallel the topics and agendas of the broader Community Deep Dives. This structure has allowed the planning team to develop an in-depth understanding of concerns and desires of the broader public in parallel with critical insights into technical matters and how decision might impact key stakeholders and diverse community groups.

Overview of Participation

Hearing from the many diverse communities that make up Bellevue is a priority for the city and the planning team has specific direction from City Council to foster inclusive engagement. Intentional efforts were and continue to be made to build relationships, nurture partnerships, and invite people into the planning process. 183 individuals attended one or more in-person Community Deep Dive and 190 individuals provided input through the online engagement portal.

In order to learn more about who is engaging with us and how we can improve our outreach efforts, people are invited to answer optional demographic questions when registering for in-person events. Approximately 75% of all attendees share this information. From those responses we see that¹:

- 25% of attendees were people of color (about half of the city's population are people of color).
- 17% of respondents were renters (about half of households rent in the city).
- 21% of respondents live in multifamily housing (about half of units in the city are multifamily).
- 29% were born after 1980 and are Millennials or Gen Z (that is 42 or younger About 40 percent of the population is between 18 and 44.).

¹ See Appendix A for detailed demographic charts

Attendees were, in general older, whiter, and more likely to be homeowners than the general population of Bellevue. However, employing Cultural Outreach Assistants has resulted in more diverse participation over previous planning projects. Additionally, the use of targeted digital advertising has been effective in increase participation by younger residents.

Communication & Outreach

Participation in the planning process relies on people choosing to engage. To engage, people have to know about the Periodic Update to the Comprehensive Plan (awareness), then they need to understand how this project will impact their life (relevance), and, finally, they need to understand the timeline and the window of opportunity for influencing decisions (urgency). Communications also need to take into account language, culture, and comfort with civic processes.

Having a robust communications and outreach plan can help build awareness and boost participation. To reach as broad an audience as possible, the planning team used both digital and analog methods to inform people about the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and let them know about opportunities to provide input including:

- 16 emails sent to subscribers over the course of the summer.
- Regular posts on all of the city's social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor – that received a total of 500 - 1500 impressions each.
- Monthly updates via Neighborhood News.
- Flyers translated in Bellevue's top six languages.
- Sharing information and flyers with community groups.
- Six posts on WeChat shared information and invited people to participate in events had between 300 – 1500 impressions.

Summary of Input – Deep Dives

At its core, comprehensive planning is about preparing for future growth, so each Deep Dive conversation was framed around looking at issues through three key lenses:

- **Where** we plan for growth
- **What** type of housing we encourage
- **How** do people gather and access what they need

Each Deep Dive followed roughly the same format. The planning team was on hand for a soft start with introductory materials, available to answer questions or discuss the process with participants. The team began the event with a short presentation to introduce the topic for discussion and provide an overview of the planning process. Then attendees had the opportunity to review data in an open house format at their own pace. Finally, attendees were brought back together for small group, facilitated discussions around the exercises. This produced specific feedback to inform staff's work in developing a range of growth alternatives.

Environment: Green Space & Sustainability

Supporting a healthy natural environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are key goals for this periodic update. The planning process provides many opportunities to advance these goals through polices. Using the three lenses of Where, What, and How, the planning team asked participants to consider:

- **Where:** The city could put housing to reduce vehicle emissions.
- **What:** Housing types are most efficient and help to maintain the natural environment and limit per capita emissions.
- **How:** The city could locate people and housing near uses that support gathering, active transportation and access to green spaces.

The small group discussions considered the city's existing sustainability goals and how various approaches to the above questions may impact those goals. These conversations focused on a number of concerns and opportunities. The themes participants noted in those conversations include:

- Ensuring people have access to parks and nature and continuing to enhance the tree canopy are big concerns.
- In general, density has positive sustainability impacts but it's highly dependent on exactly how much growth happens and where that growth goes.
- Growth will increase emissions from traffic, but that growth might make additional transit investments more viable thereby reducing emissions.
- More green building policies incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.
- A lot of exciting potential in supporting more mixed-use neighborhoods and improving existing neighborhood centers:
 - Their compact design supports more walking and biking.
 - Additional density can make increased public transit more viable.
 - They could support more housing options.
 - They provide a good opportunity to integrate parks and trees

Connection: Social & Civic

Planning for vibrant and active neighborhoods that provide access to services, economic opportunity, and spaces to gather and connect is another important goal of this update. Bellevue is home to a variety of distinct neighborhoods and there is interest in continued support for creating more unique experiences throughout the city:

- **Where:** are there opportunities to create new neighborhood centers at different scales.
- **What:** types of housing, services, and amenities do people want to see in and around existing neighborhood centers
- **How:** can neighborhood centers support community connection, sustainability, and support for small businesses.

During the open-house portion of the Deep Dive, participants were invited to provide feedback on what “vibes” they’d like to see more of, and there was overwhelming support for two particular categories of vibe – one focusing on **activity and entertainment** (“Quirky and Active” and “Vibrant and Youthful”), the other focused on **small scale businesses set within residential** areas (“Useful and Relaxed” and “Accessible and Local”).

During the small group discussion participants broke into groups by neighborhood area and talked about existing neighborhood centers and opportunities for new ones. Useful feedback unique to each neighborhood area was provided, but several themes emerged across all areas. Feedback focused on the following points:

- People are interested in having more options for biking and walking, but safety and lack of infrastructure is a barrier.
- Some trips, particularly to grocery stores, will still require a car.
- People spoke highly of local restaurants or unique uses (Asian market, record store, etc.) they may not find elsewhere
- People want more entertainment – things to do, bars to frequent, theaters to visit etc.
- There is general excitement about adding small businesses within a walkable distance of homes
- People would like to see more art, pocket parks, coffee shops
- There is high interest in incorporating senior and affordable housing around neighborhood centers
- Some concern was expressed about the balance between quality and quantity of neighborhood centers. It’s important to focus on the quality of existing neighborhood centers and ensure that any new ones are of high quality.



Photo of board with dots indicating support for different vibes.

Access: Jobs, Services & Amenities

The past few years have brought significant investments and changes to transportation in Bellevue. Six new light rail stations will open in the next couple of years bringing new opportunities to connect people to housing, jobs, services and amenities. The city also adopted a new framework for looking at transportation planning called “multimodal concurrency” which takes into consideration all forms of transportation – cars, bikes, transit, walking, etc. – when planning for transportation capacity. This session looked at the location and future of jobs and the trips people make to get to employment and other destinations:

- **Where** are good opportunities for clustering housing, jobs, services and/or amenities.
- **What** methods of transportation are used for which types of trips.
- **How** do we balance the transportation needs of a growing city and ensure that people have safe, convenient, and sustainable transportation options.

For this Deep Dive staff asked people to consider the places they need to go to – work, school, doctor’s office, errands, etc. – during a typical week and the challenges they faced in getting there. People then reviewed various data boards about Bellevue’s transportation network. Finally, the descriptions from the first exercise were exchanged, allowing people to come back together to discuss possible transportation or land use solutions to the challenges that were identified by others. Those challenges and solutions highlighted the following trends. People wanted:

- More biking, especially to neighborhood centers, but lack of protected bike lanes or bike parking at destinations is a barrier.
- More pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, more signalized crosswalks, and traffic calming measures.
- To use transit more often, but it is not frequent or close enough to make it a viable option.
- Enough demand/ridership to make transit feasible. They discussed whether we add density before the transit comes to give the demand to make that transit viable or do we only densify around existing transit.
- Focus multi-modal improvements around neighborhood centers and other key destinations.
- In addition, there will always be some trips that are better suited for a car – picking up groceries, running multiple errands, longer trips or trips involving challenging topography.

Housing: Diversity & Choice

Finding housing that is affordable for a range of income levels and meets the needs of people at different stages of life is a top priority for community members. This in-person Deep Dive had the highest attendance and also generated significant online engagement. Housing prices in Bellevue are rising much faster than income, creating a significant affordability gap with nearly 30% of all households paying more than 1/3 of their income on housing. Through this planning process the city is considering:

- **Where** we can increase our capacity for housing while balancing other needs like sustainability, connection, and access to jobs, transit and other amenities.
- **What** kind of housing we need more of, like duplexes, cottage housing, small apartments, etc. that can meet the needs of households across the economic spectrum
- **How** we can support vibrant and welcoming neighborhoods where people can live, work, and play.

To help facilitate good dialog and provide a variety of opportunities for input, this event had a slightly different structure. Attendees were able to review data at their own pace and hear a presentation from the planning team. Instead of small group discussions, attendees were invited to visit stations where they could share feedback related to housing affordability, density, housing typologies, and more.

Station 1: Where Should New Housing Be Built.² The exercise at this station focused on density. Using different colors to represent different levels of density, participants filled in a map of Bellevue to indicate where new housing growth should go. Results of this exercise show that attendees thought nearly all of Bellevue’s neighborhoods could accommodate some additional growth. Existing growth centers like Downtown, BelRed, Wilburton, and Eastgate are right for the highest density levels. Parts of Crossroads, Factoria, Lake Hills, Newport, West Bellevue, and Wilburton could be good areas for more moderate density. In other residential areas of Bellevue are best suited for modest or gentle increases in homes.

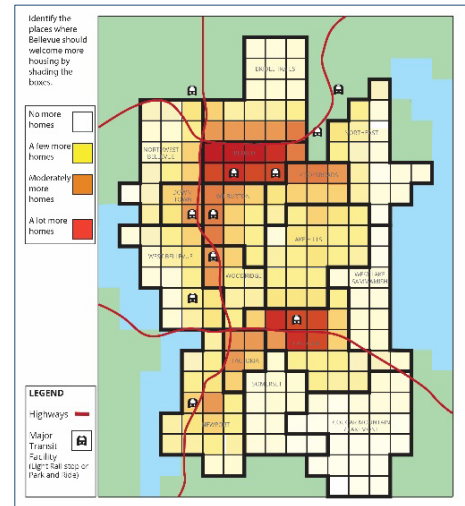
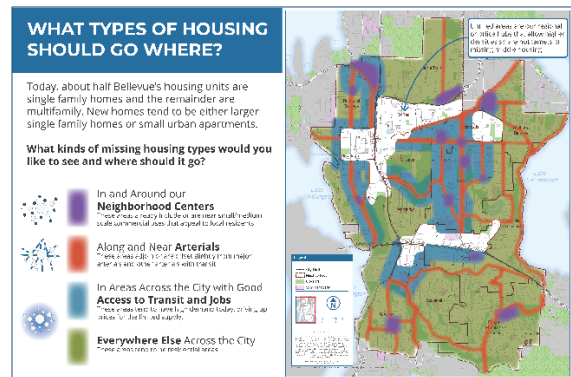


Image of heatmap showing preferred densities in Bellevue.

Station 2: What Type of Housing Where. During Phase 1 of engagement, the community expressed a strong interest in creating opportunities for more housing choice in Bellevue. First time home buyers, young families, older people looking to downsize, all need more options in more areas of the city. At this station participants chose up to four tokens that represented different housing types and had the option to take one “no change” token. Then participants “voted” on where those housing types should be allowed by placing tokens in buckets that represented different areas of the city.

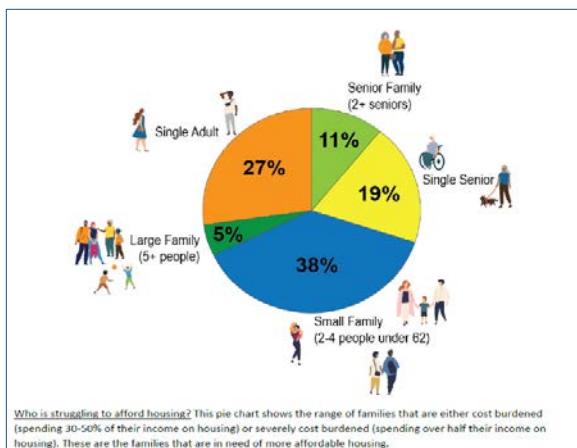


Map of different areas in the city where we might consider additional housing types.

Participants expressed interest in having a variety of housing options in all parts of the city. In the more residential areas of the city people expressed the most interest in smaller scale options like backyard cottages, duplexes, triplexes, or cottage housing. While in neighborhood centers, areas with good access to jobs and transit people expressed interest in more medium scale options like small two to four story apartments, courtyard apartments, and townhomes. Only a few participants indicated that they wanted no change.

² See Appendix B for detailed exercise results

Station 3: What Types of Affordable Housing are Needed. When identifying how to meet our housing needs, we must balance the needs of the potential tenants (size of unit, amenities available, location, etc.) with how much subsidy is required to make the units affordable to those tenants. In this exercise, people were asked to consider how expensive various housing types are to subsidize and what the most common needs are for households that are struggling to afford housing today.



Example of exercise sheet

Unit Type	#Bed-rooms	Typical* monthly subsidy required	Write priority level (Low/Medium/High)
Large Homes: Single family or Townhome	3-4	\$1000 - \$1900	
Low Scale Homes: ADU/Cottages/Cottage	1-3	\$100 - \$900	
Microunits: very small stacked studios	0	\$0 - \$500	
Typical Apartments: 4+ stories	0-1	\$500 - \$800	
Family-focused Apartments: 4+ stories	2-3	\$700 - \$1200	

* The monthly subsidy is based on ~40% AMI (eg. teacher supporting their child, worker living above or two construction workers supporting their children)

In the highest priority category people were most interested in focusing on the following housing types (in descending order of interest):

- Family-focused apartments with 2 or more bedrooms per unit.
- Low scale homes like backyard cottages, duplexes, and cottage homes.
- Typical apartments that tend to be predominantly studios and 1-bedroom units.
- Larger homes like a single-family house or townhome.
- Small apartments made up of micro-units.

Station 4: What Types of Housing to Meet Our Goal. Bellevue must plan for at least 35,000 new housing units by 2044. The city may choose to set even higher housing targets as we consider how to achieve other housing goals related to affordability and housing types. In this exercise, participants were invited to consider our baseline goal of 35,000 additional housing units and distribute that amongst various housing types, including those permitted today and potential new types.

What type of housing should we be creating in Bellevue?

Bellevue must plan for at least 35,000 additional housing units by 2044. Bellevue's existing 65,000 housing units are about half single family houses and half multi-family units. What kind of housing would you like to see added to the city? What kind of outdoor space or amenities like gyms do different housing types provide?

Consider these questions and add dots to each housing type (in "typology") below. A "+" indicates that 1,000 of those 35,000+ additional units should be of that housing typology, while a "-" indicates that 1,000 should be, use your whole sheet, which adds up to 35,000 additional units.

Housing Typology/Type
Add a dot to the image of this housing typology

Example image of this housing typology

+1

+2

+3

+4

+5

+6

+7

+8

+9

+10

+11

+12

+13

+14

+15

+16

+17

+18

+19

+20

+21

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+41

+42

+43

+44

+45

+46

+47

+48

+49

+50

Key

Typical # of bedrooms (example = 2.3). The grey bed indicates a room that is sometimes included.

Add dots to the image of this type to add housing (in 1000s). Use your whole sheet.

Single Family Homes
1 unit per parcel. Little added capacity possible.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
2-3 units per parcel (1 room unit + 1-2 beds) (single units)

No dots may be placed here.
Single Family Homes generally require existing homes on lots to not increase of units.

Duplex/Triples/Quadruplex
2-4 units per parcel

Cottage Homes
#1 unit per parcel

Townhomes
Cluster of attached and detached units. 1-3 stories

Courtyard Apartments
2-3 stories
Mid-rise units, enter at ground level, shared outdoor space

Small Apartment Buildings
2-3 stories
Shared outdoor space, other amenity

Stacked Micro-unit Buildings
4+ stories
Very small units, shared bathroom

Stacked Apartment Buildings
4+ stories
Shared outdoor space and shared outdoor amenity

Stacked Family Unit Buildings
4+ stories
Other amenity, separate, shared outdoor amenity

Example of exercise sheet

In general, the vast majority of participants would like to see a broader range of housing types created in Bellevue. Almost half of all participants wanted all nine types of housing to be possible and less than 10% wanted four or fewer types. The most popular housing types identified in this exercise were:

- **Townhomes** – are very popular, but under current zoning can only be built in limited areas.
- **Stacked Apartments** – but with varying levels of interest in the different types.
- **Duplexes, Triplexes and Cottage Homes** – housing types that are not permitted today.
- **Family Unit Buildings, Courtyard Apartments and Small Apartment Buildings** – popular, but not financially feasible in most cases today.

Station 5: Share Your Housing Story.³ People are at the heart of this planning process, so while we crunch numbers and analyze housing data, it's also critical to understand the lived experience of people who are looking for housing, worried about staying in their current home, or thinking about what opportunities their children or grandchildren will have to live in Bellevue. At this station people were invited to share their personal stories related to housing. People shared a range of experiences, but nearly all the stories spoke to the wonderful opportunities Bellevue offers and a fear that those opportunities are becoming less and less accessible.

...I was a student at Bellevue College, where I also had a part time job...**I was unhoused** for a brief amount of time...This reality drove me to seek work and housing in Seattle late 2021, where at least more programs exist to help people in need. With my own ears I have heard Bellevue citizens brag about the fact that you don't see as many homeless folks in Bellevue, **as if the lack of support the city has to offer is something to be proud of.** It makes me sick.

...I'm a young 72 year-old woman **living in a 55 and over subsidized apartment building** in West Bellevue. I love Bellevue...I never imagine I could ever live here, because of high cost of housing. **This is the only way I can live here comfortably.**

...I've been in an apartment, in Bellevue, 650 sq. ft., \$1725/month + \$335/month storage. I've retired from the UofW, but have had to take on an Amazon job, as a Grocer Associate, to make ends meet. I'm afraid I've been priced out of the market...**I'd like to stay in Bellevue. It is home. But, I'm not sure where I'll find housing.**

...I am a healthcare professional who was distanced cloused out of Seattle and chose the eastside rather than move north or south of Seattle...We bought the house in 1995 for 105k. The increase in value is shocking, **on paper I'm more than a millionaire but squeaking by on property taxes.**

³ See Appendix C to read all the housing stories submitted

Station 6: Conversation Cafés. Community engagement events provide an important opportunity to meet neighbors, hear other perspectives, and engage in thoughtful dialog. To make sure attendees had this experience, we also had three tables set up for facilitated discussions on the following questions:

- What opportunities do you see to balance increased density with our need for green space/parks?
- When you picture your neighborhood in the future, what experiences do you want to have? What do you want to be able to do for fun, relaxation, connection, etc.?
- What does it mean to be a welcoming city when it comes to housing? How would our city look and feel?

When it comes to balancing density and green space people suggested incorporating more greenspace into denser development, adding more rooftop gardens, and urban gardens. People mentioned preserving mature trees, increasing street trees, and called for a focus on tree equity.

On the question of neighborhood experiences people spoke a lot about active uses, expanding recreational opportunities, bringing more nightlife to Bellevue, more arts and cultural events. People are also interested in urban design and programming like public plazas, café streets, night markets, and connections between neighborhoods.

Features of a welcoming community include continued investment in affordable housing and housing options; programs to support neighborhood and community events; walkability and proximity to amenities and services; and ensuring safety.

How Community Input Was Used

Input gathered during this phase of engagement was used to help shape [Draft Growth Alternatives](#) for analysis as part of the Environmental Review process. These Draft Growth Alternatives present a range of approaches to distributing the growth that aligns with regional requirements for equity, climate change, and housing, as well as recently adopted vision and priorities by the City Council. Broad themes, concerns, and desires that shaped the Draft Growth Alternatives include:

- **A strong interest in seeing a variety of housing options especially in the middle-housing, range.** All alternatives create the conditions for more diverse housing types.
- **Support for “gentle,” low-scale density increases in all parts of the city.** All draft alternatives would allow for some level of low-scale typologies such as duplexes or backyard cottages across the city.
- **Support for an increase in mid-rise housing in mixed-use centers.** All alternatives increase density in current centers like Bel-Red, Wilburton, Eastgate and Downtown.

- **Proximity to transit is a driving force in where people think density should go.** All of the alternatives use access to transit as a primary factor in where to increase density.
- **Interest in significantly increasing housing capacity.** One alternative increases the housing capacity by 70,000 additional housing units, twice the target increase.
- **A desire for more unique, quirky, active spaces that offer more to do.** All the alternatives focus on creating a variety of spaces to support different experiences.
- **A desire to enhance existing Neighborhood Centers and look at creating new ones without pulling investment from those that already exist.** Two of the draft alternatives focus on Neighborhood Centers, with one focused within them and the other expanding to the areas near them as well. One draft alternative explores encouraging the creation of new centers.
- **Concerns around the impact of growth on traffic.** Focus on distributing growth in smart ways may manage traffic impacts, which are pinned as an essential part of the environmental analysis to be performed.
- **Concerns about the impact of growth on green space and trees.** This continues to be a topic of interest for analysis during Environmental Review, including looking at regional green space impacts of various growth approaches.

Input from this phase of engagement will also be used to help inform updates to existing policies and the development of new policies. That work will continue throughout the rest of 2022 and through much of 2023, when the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on draft policy language.

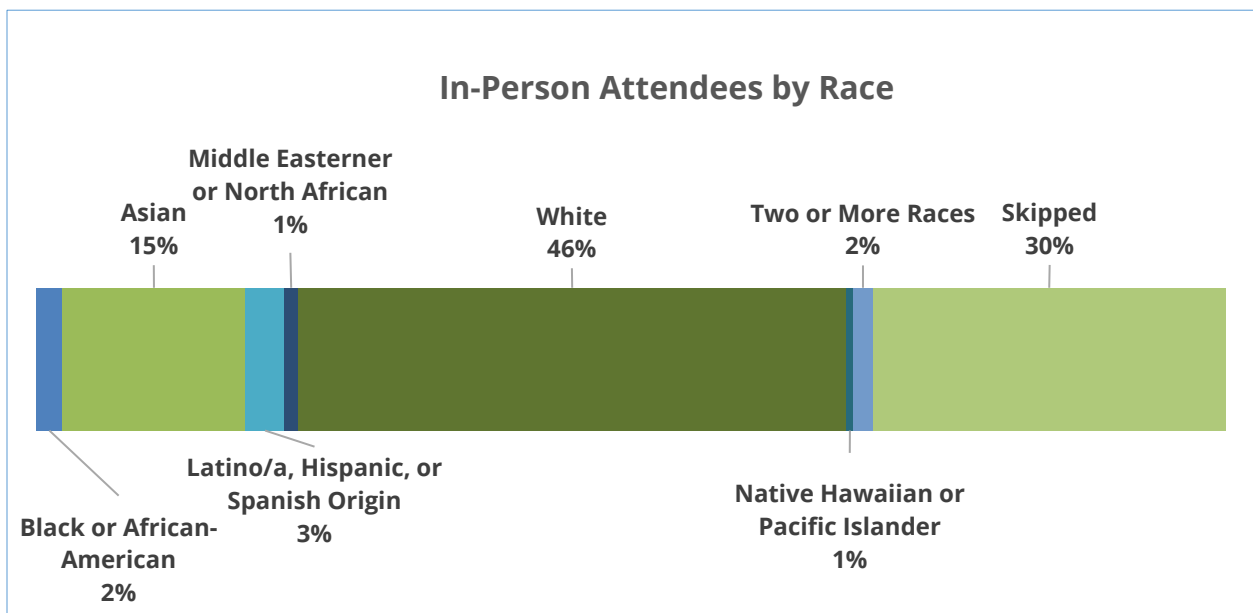
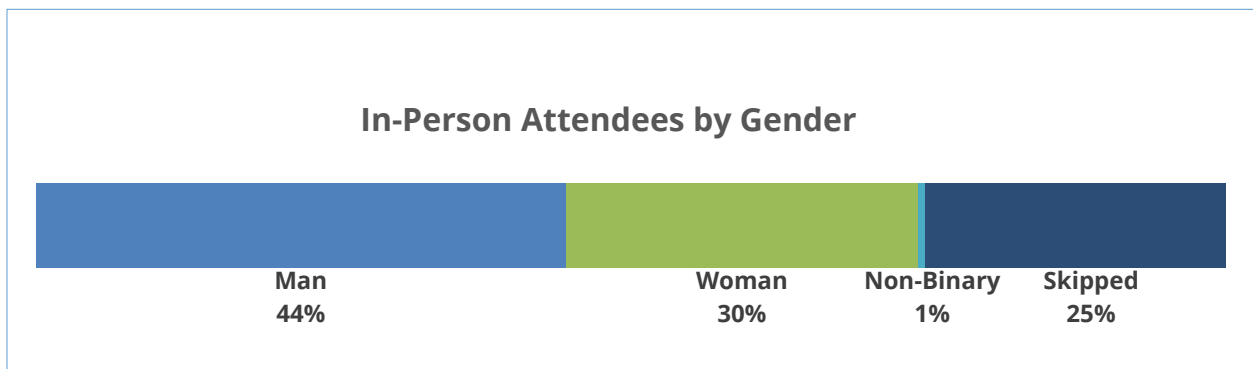
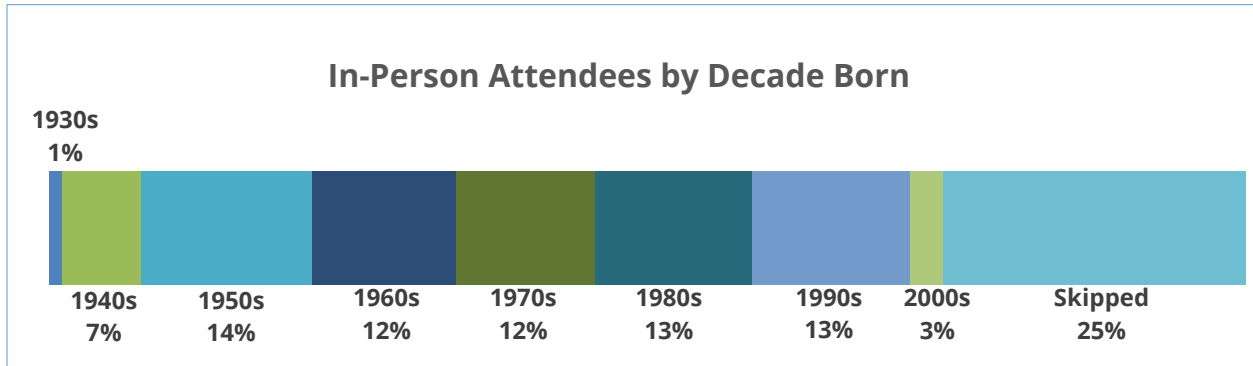
Next Steps

The next step in the planning process is conducting a variety of technical analyses including the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement with various environmental analyses, an equity analysis, a climate vulnerability assessment, and other reviews. The results of these analyses and other parallel efforts like the Housing Needs Assessment will be shared with the public, and the community will have the opportunity to discuss the Draft Growth Alternatives with this additional context.

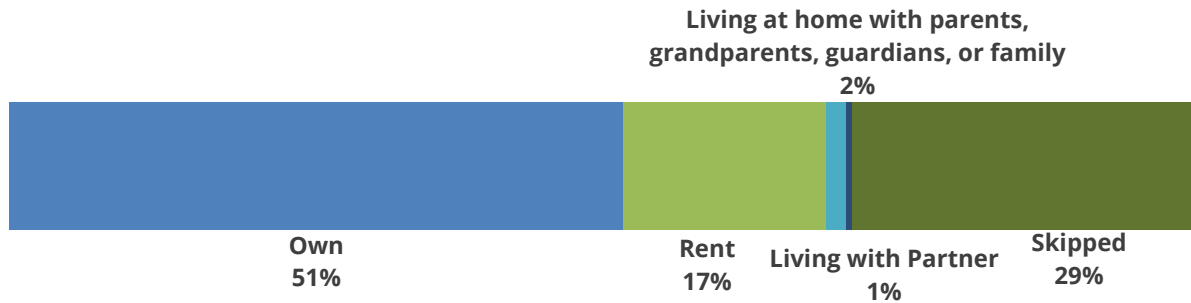
Additionally, a statistically valid community survey will be conducted to better understand resident views on key issues related to planning for the future of Bellevue.

Appendix A: Demographic Charts

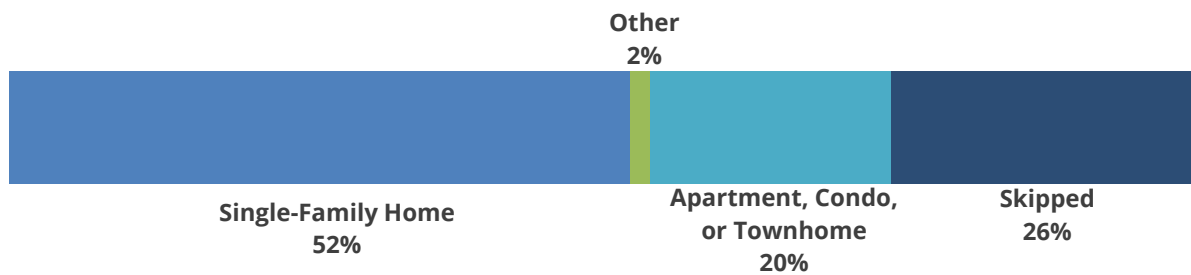
Participants at the Community Deep Dives were invited to answer optional demographic questions during registration and approximately 70-75% of participants did share information.



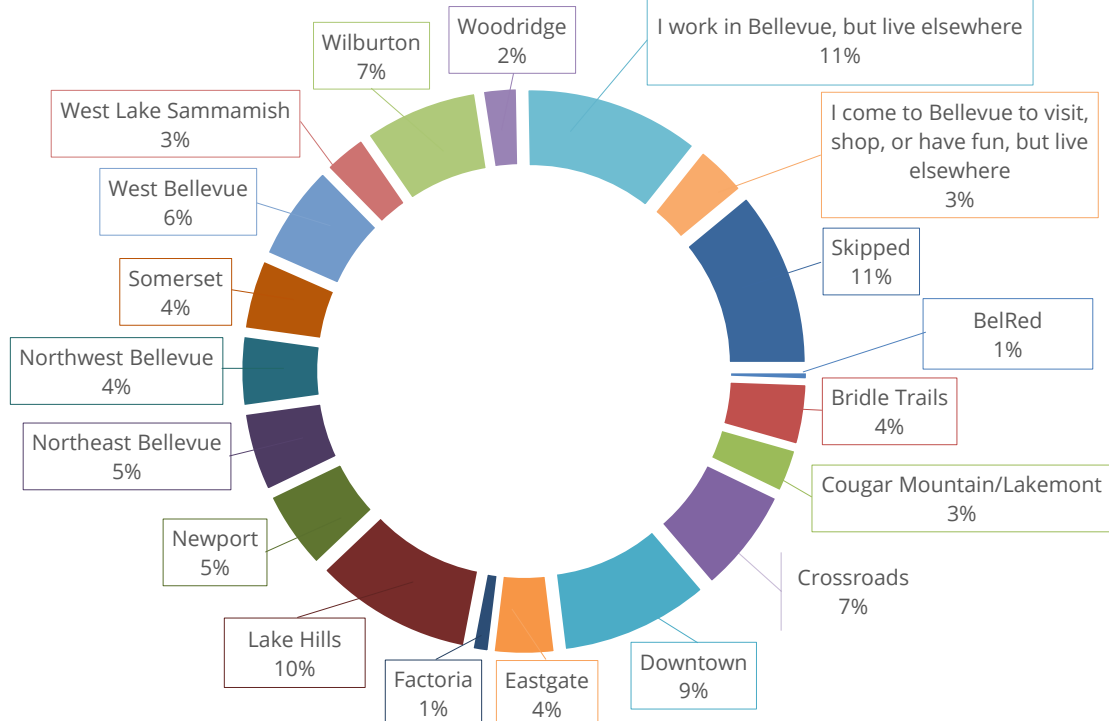
In-Person Attendees by Homeowner Status



In-Person Attendees by Housing Type

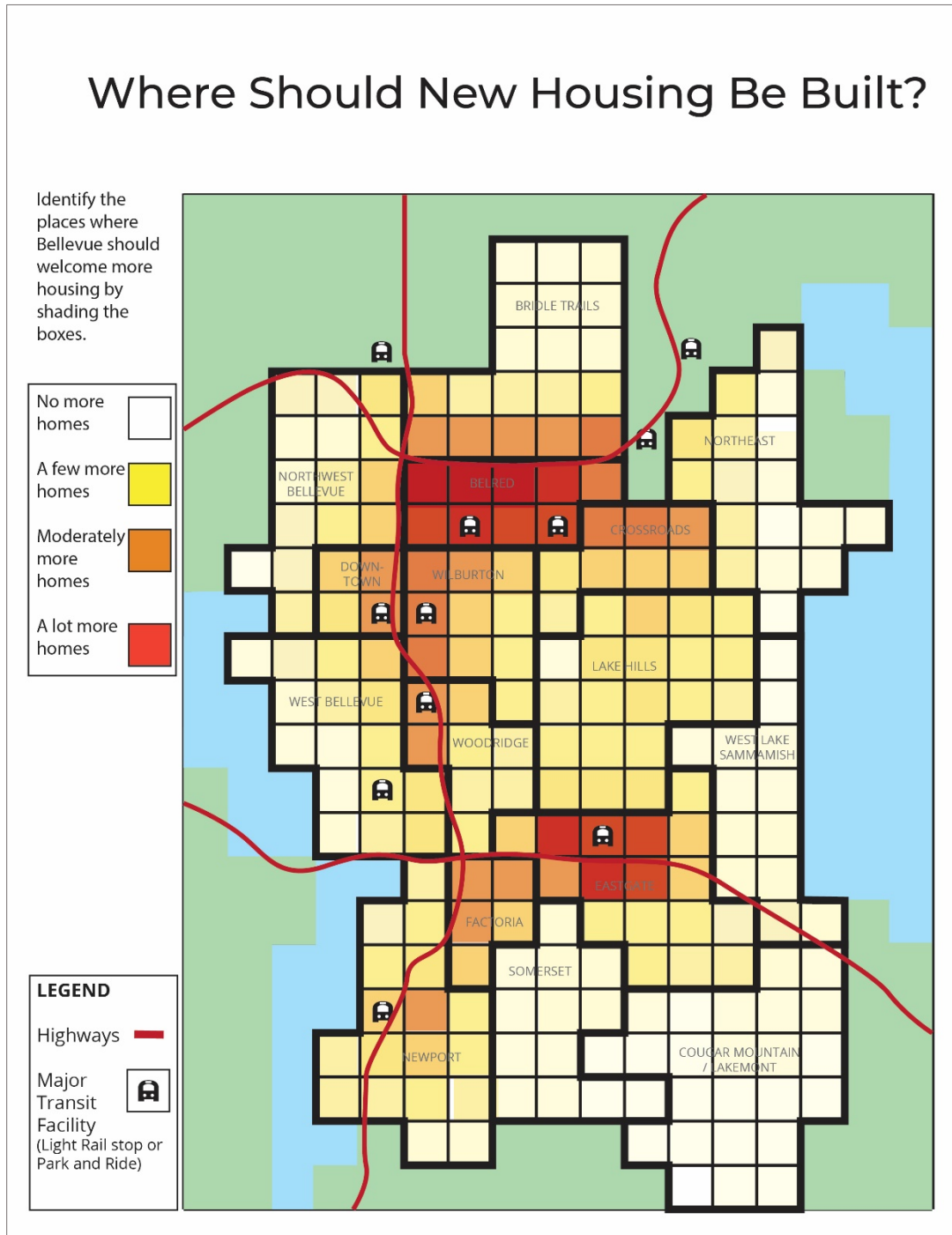


In-Person Attendees by Neighborhood Area



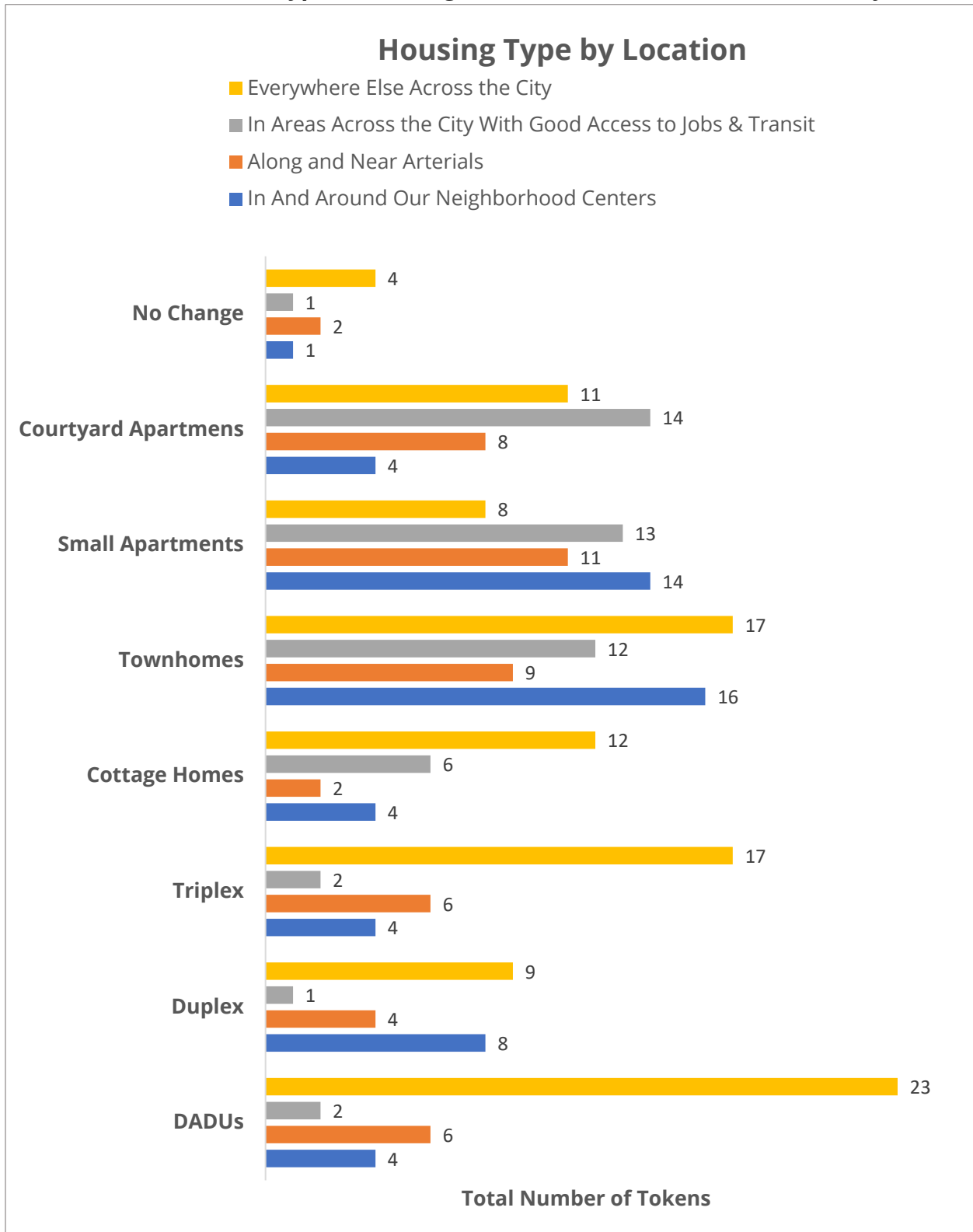
Appendix B Charts from Housing Deep Dive Exercises

Station 1: Where Should New Housing Be Built



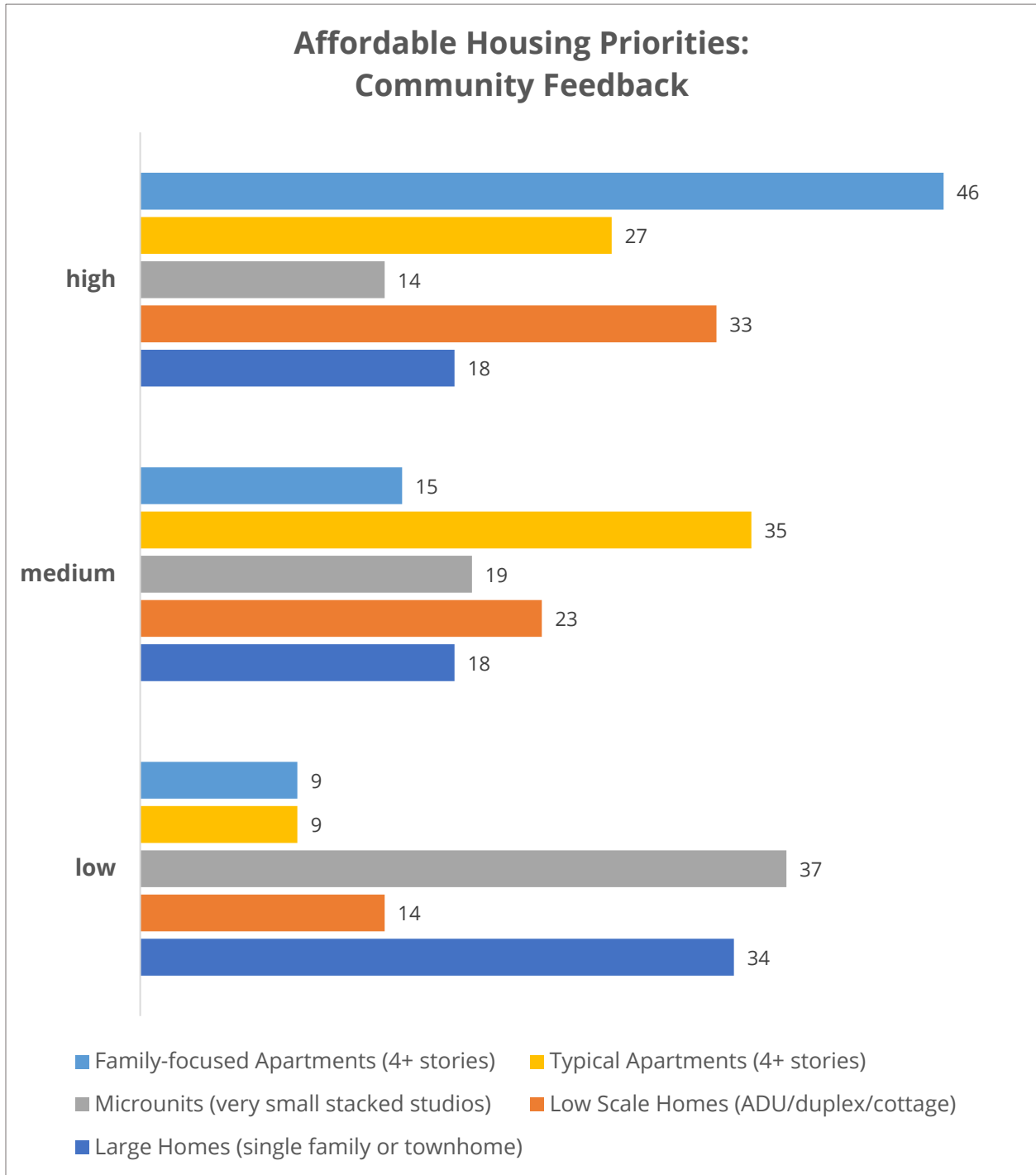
The heatmap reflects the average amount of growth that people who returned the sheet gave each square from no additional units to additional units.

Station 2: What Type of Housing Fits Best in Different Parts of the City



This chart shows the total number of housing type tokens placed in the area type buckets.

Station 3: Affordable Housing Priorities by Housing Types



This chart shows how participants which types of housing should be prioritized for affordability

Appendix C: Housing Stories

Tech Salary Doesn't Cut It

Even with a tech salary, DINK budget - There has been very limited availability on the market in our price range that was liveable without significant improvements. I work full time in person in downtown Bellevue and my partner works halftime in person in Redmond so we were hoping to find something in the Bellevue area where we rented for many years. However, we ultimately settled on buying a house in N. Seattle because it was just unattainable unless we wanted to keep renting an overpriced apartment. It seems to be an issue that even with a sizeable budget - it's difficult to find an affordable, convenient place to live.

Raising rent running us out of Bellevue

Been renting a home in the Sunset Ranch neighborhood since 2016. Rent has increased 35% during that time and is now over 35% of our monthly income. From data on Zillow, I can see that our landlord purchased the house in 2005 for \$280,000 and is now valued at over \$1.1 million. The house is run down, the landlord is not very responsive to fixing repairs and we pay \$3,200 a month.

When we look around to find somewhere else, there is very little availability and it would cost more. We are stuck and now are looking to move out of Bellevue.

Concerned about increasing property taxes as valuations soar

My husband and I bought our home in 2013. We love living in Bellevue but we could not afford to buy the home we are living in if we had to buy it today. Each year our property valuation increases and last year the valuation increased by over \$500,000. I am really concerned that as we retire and live on a fixed income that we won't be able to afford to continue to live here. I love our neighborhood as we can walk to parks and many services such as a grocery store and restaurants.

Bellevue Lifer

I was born in Bellevue in the 60s to parents who were heavily involved in church life and city planning meetings to first ensure our family was not negatively impacted by changing city policy and also to lend their opinions to how Bellevue should grow - school boundaries were a big conversation back then. My mom served as a teacher in the Bellevue School District for 45 years. My dad had a business that employed neighbors and other Bellevue people. Bellevue has been an exclusive neighborhood for as long as I can remember.

My parents borrowed money from my grandfather to buy their home for \$25K that they lived in from 1956 - 2007. I purchased a home in 2000 for \$450k which is now worth \$2.7M. The cost of housing has kept pace with both supply and the demand to "move to the

eastside" and out of Seattle. My brother, by contrast, is disabled and lives in low income housing in Issaquah as there was none available in Bellevue, but he also didn't NEED to be in Bellevue.

I have seen Bellevue grow, build relentlessly and with little attention to infrastructure. This leads me to wonder if City of Bellevue places income from property and business above the real livability of the city. At some point, we need to slow or end development. If we don't there will only be skyscrapers and high rises in Bellevue - the beauty of the Northwest will be gone along with the culture of the city. I am very concerned that we are developing too fast and with little concern for the quality of life you can have living in Bellevue - will we just be the next Seattle? Trees are taken down daily and not replanted. There's more and more concrete everyday.

Housing in Bellevue should be, for the most part, supply and demand. Gov't should not get overly involved in subsidizing an unnatural economic situation.

That said, it's sad that people like my mom who contribute to Bellevue (e.g. school teachers, firemen, policemen and women, grocery workers) cannot afford to live in Bellevue. I'd like to see the people who are contributing to Bellevue be able to live here.

My First Grader's Teacher

I met with my first grader's teacher at the end of the year to find out what plans she has for summer and beyond. She is newly married and I was hoping to hear how the young couple is going to settle down close to school or at least in the city. Both of them are educators and couldn't afford to buy a home in the city. They settled for a home by Lake Stevens. I looked up the place and it is at least a 45min to an hour commute to the school. I was sad to learn that because these fabulous educators investing their time in our kids lives are unable to participate in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity.

I won't be able to afford a home here, even with all the work we're doing tonight.

It's honestly just pure math. My boyfriend and I live together, want to start a family as we're nearing our thirties. Combined, we make 50% of AMI and aren't in positions where our earning potential will greatly increase, but we love our jobs and both contribute to our community. However, there are just absolutely no ownership opportunities available to people making our level of income. Because this all takes so long, even if Bellevue goes absolutely boldest (which we still absolutely should, i.e. exceed 35,000 units, go up to 70,000 units and more, upzone everywhere, create more 0-30% AMI units, increase ownership opportunities, create walkable, affordable communities, etc.) it's not going to happen by the time that my boyfriend and I will want to start our family. We already know we're likely going to have to leave in a few years' time, we're just trying to make an impact while we're still here.

Young Person Looking to Live

I moved to Bellevue 4 years ago, and it was a wonderful city. But this city is getting increasingly unaffordable. Especially for youth who are moving to the area and don't have many assets, saddled with burdensome student debt. I and my friends all spend increasing amounts of money on our living situations, and are less able to commute due to expensive vehicles.

We need a city that looks out for its younger citizens. We want to live in an amazing city, we want to have higher density so it's a closer 10-minute walk to our friends, rather than a 20 minute drive. We want access to jobs around the area, where we don't have to base a job decision based off location in the same area due to rough commutes.

We need density, transportation, and amenities.

Worried My Generation Can't Comfortably Set Down Roots Here

I would be considered a transplant, having come to Bellevue from out-of-state, right out of college, for work. I was born in 1998, so many of us (millenials/zillennials/Gen-Z) have been working for a few years, but not enough to build a foundation to own a home around here for our (current/future) families, especially around good school districts.

But most of us won't have the means of purchasing a house for many more years, in which the market makes it very discouraging for us since we feel that we won't have a chance to compete. Either we continue renting or move further and further out. That wouldn't be a problem if we invest in more transportation, which Washington seems to be doing. So some of us are also waiting and seeing. But it's with policies that happen now that'll allow us to hope for our futures.

Born here, live elsewhere

I was born and raised in Eastgate, attended Bellevue public schools K-12, and have fond memories walking the trails through Cougar Mountain throughout my youth. My parents moved to Bellevue in the late 80s and could afford a modest, mid-century house on a Boeing Engineer's salary supporting a family of 4. Their investment in housing in Bellevue was extremely profitable and they likely would have been strong voices against development of middle house. After college, I moved back to the eastside and worked for a nonprofit. Rents quickly started to rise dramatically in the mid-2010s and I've since moved to a more affordable King County community. I still work in Bellevue, but couldn't afford even to rent here, let alone buy. What's most frustrating is not just that housing is out of reach, but that Bellevue has had such lacking investment in public transit that my best option to commute is a 70 minute bus ride that would take only 20-30 minutes in a car. I doubt this housing will ever be accessible to me, but I hope others can enjoy the community I grew up in.

Living in Diverse Communities and With Our Generation

I moved here in 1981 in the diverse Crossroads area. We lived there for 26 years and had two children. We moved to a few places in Bellevue. My husband retired and died a few months later. I rented for a while and then looked to buy but couldn't afford anything I wanted. I care about sustainability and was looking for quality and things like solar panels that aren't available to people who rent.

I wanted to be able to live somewhere where my family could still visit, but there is not availability in my home town. We have to keep looking because the population will keep changing. I don't know how to do this. I think a community with a mix like cottage communities that are a better price. Or community land trusts would help people live together in our generations.

Bellevue by accident

I am a healthcare professional who was distance cloused out of Seattle and chose the eastside rather than move north or south of Seattle. I answered an ad on the PCC Kirkland bulliten board to become a house maid in Wilberton in 1991. We bought the house in 1995 for 105k. The increase in value is shocking, on paper I'm more than a millionaire but squeaking by on property taxes. I recently made the decision to stay in Bellevue and am hoping to be able to do so because of the cost of living. I've look for years for somewhere to move to and there is nowhere that I would rather be. I live in Wilburton and don't like the density in Bel-Red, it should be spread out over the City.

Finally settling in Downtown Bellevue

After many years of renting downtown, my wife and I had a daughter and we began searching for a more permanent place to live. After running into many, many multiple-offer situations (30+) we finally got close on a townhouse, but still did not "win."

Fortunately, we the lead offer caused a lot of friction with the seller, and the deal subsequently fell through. The seller then chose us (second-place works sometimes!) and we proceeded with the purchase.

Very grateful this worked out, but we can definitely sympathize with folks who did not have such a fortunate experience trying to secure a home here.

Great place to live and let's keep it that way

Bellevue native here. From Somerset to Odle to Interlake to UW to working Downtown, I have called Bellevue home for the majority of my life. So many people are unhappy with the housing situation, but it doesn't need to be so negative.

My wife and I are in our late 20's and happily bought a house in Newport Hills last year after 3 weeks of searching and adjusting our budget to be more realistic. We love our neighbors, community, and the environment that we have here and appreciate how the city has maintained a high standard of life for those who live here.

Bellevue is certainly not a cheap place to live but do we really want to turn it into another Seattle? A high threshold for cost of living helps keep the city free of many unpleasanties and prevents many of the issues that we see Seattle face.

I was unable to purchase a condo in Bellevue

I was unable to attend the in-person meeting because I was busy closing on a condo in Renton. My job is in Bellevue, and for years I had been searching for an affordable condo in Bellevue in order to avoid using 405 for commuting while not shoving thousands of dollars into rent, but finding an affordable 2-bedroom condo in Bellevue was impossible, while the instant I expanded to Renton I found something. The existing public transportation options between Renton and Bellevue are not good, unfortunately, but there's talk of expansion.

What I'm specifically worried about for the future of Bellevue is that it's going to meet its housing requirements through rental properties in high-rises, instead of medium-density purchasable properties. Owning property is one of the main ways that low-income families can accumulate wealth, but right now the city doesn't really have any affordable properties, because so much of it is million dollar+ single-family detached housing. A 3-story condo building or a line of townhomes is massively denser than detached housing, while being much cheaper to construct per unit than a high-rise, thus allowing for lower-income families to own their own homes instead of sinking their paycheck into rent year after year.

The Consequences

As I also participate in an Advisory Council for the Bellevue Police Department, I see the challenge our officers are facing as they can't afford to live in Bellevue and face long commutes. This has been the case for the majority of the people who keep us safe and healthy in Bellevue.

When I became a homeowner in Bellevue more than 20 years ago, one of the decision factors was the availability of the best public services one could find in the Country. Now, as "affordable housing" in Bellevue becomes a fiction, the quality of our services is decreasing as the people we need the most can't afford to live here.

It's a struggle to buy and rent increases incredibly fast.

I moved to Bellevue about four years ago after I graduated. I love living in Bellevue, especially near downtown. But the city is getting unaffordable each year. Rent from 2020-2022 in some places increased 30-40%! It's insane.

Housing is not being built at a fast enough place to accommodate and increase supply while making housing costs go down to more affordable levels. We need go to bold, much more than 35k units. Bellevue can be an amazing place to live and more affordable. We need to increase housing density, upzone, invest in transit, and make the city more walkable.

I've looked into buying housing here, but the prices here are insane. If I'd like to buy a home, it simply can't be in Bellevue but much further away, much like most people who work in Bellevue I'd guess. I hope, however, that with these comments those in the future will be able to realize a better Bellevue!

The Opportunity for More

I live in East Bellevue and I walk miles and miles in my neighborhood each day. Every block sports large new-builds on lots where modest ramblers once stood. I am all for development and enabling people to "cash-out" of their properties to move ahead, however it would be a much better use of the space to enable ADUs over the garages, creating 2 living spaces instead of 1. We could provide long-term housing on the existing footprint AND give a revenue opportunity to the people choosing to build in our city.

Single Mom in a 1 bedroom.

I support renter's rights and wish for more affordable housing IN THIS AREA. It's difficult to explain what poverty is to a 6 year old. So I don't, instead I teach her that the best things in life don't cost money. But in all actuality of our life, I am barely making a work on my wage. So With food costs and gas costs and daycare and then RENT everything increasing but my wage. My rent increased by 75 dollars and now I am holding on to a razor's edge. I would love to be able to live in a home where my daughter can have her own room. I work hard. I pay my taxes. I am an essential worker in healthcare, I went to college, and all I want is that my daughter to have a better future. IF that means living in a 1 bedroom that keeps us in the Lake Washington School District, so be it.

I cannot find any apartments in the Bellevue and Kirkland Redmond Issaquah Renton Snohomish Bothell Woodinville area with 2 bedrooms in my ability to pay range. I am scared I will be homeless this time next year. I just want something that I can afford. I don't want a handout. I just don't want my daughter to have to sleep in the living room when she's a teenager. That would be nice. I want a normal life for her. I came here for a reason the schools and resources to help my child. If I were to have to move, I would not have any money for the move in costs. I already live paycheck to paycheck. I lay awake at night worried. Everyday and every night.

Moved out of Bellevue due to cost

I rented in Bellevue in the Crossroads area from 2019 to spring of this year 2022. Since one of my offices is in downtown Bellevue and the other is in Redmond, that location was ideal. However, the apartment complex kept raising rent prices since 2021 and finally I moved

out to Kirkland to reduce my rent. One of my coworkers is considering selling their condo in south Bellevue but I don't think I'll be able to purchase at current market prices.

I don't know the solution but one is more available housing, both for families and singles, for rent and to purchase. Another is better transportation to Bellevue from both the north and the south. I-405 is just not enough.

Bought a family home because that's all that was available to me

Thank goodness I grew up in Bellevue and had grandparents who could sell me their home without it going on the market. I'm hearing more stories like this of long-time families helping their kids/grandkids by selling to them so they can stay local. As time goes on, I'd like to sell or work with a developer of my 1950's home right near Downtown Bellevue to subdivide the property to allow for more dense housing options. I'm so tired of seeing the HUGE homes on the close-in lots when it would make so much more sense to put 3-4 townhomes or cottage homes on that lot instead. Holding out hope I can afford my house payment and property taxes till the city will allow us to upzone. I'm one block from a bus stop and all amenities. A perfect to upzone. Please experiment with me!!

Time to move!

I like many others are considering moving due to what Bellevue has BECOME! A Crime ridden and Traffic problem! LAST THING BELLEVUE NEEDS IS MORE PEOPLE! And Out of the Country INVESTORS buying up property! I've lived here all my life, and thought I would die here, but BELLEVUE now is becoming as bad as Seattle!

The middle class can't compete with cash-buying investment companies for single family housing.

Almost 20 years ago, my family got our first house in Bellevue. We stretched to make it work on a middle class income, but were able to do it. As salaries rose, and interest rates were refinanced down, it wasn't as tight as those first couple of years and was quite comfortable for the last 10 or so. Last year, we decided to sell, having completely remodeled a few years earlier. The family needs changed. However, after paying everything off (including the approximately 10% of the sales price that goes to commissions and the costs associated with sales of a house), the return wasn't enough that we could have bought the same house, had that been what was looking for. As with many houses, there we're many offers. Several of which were cash with no contingencies.

Now as a single income, middle class buyer, with no debt - there's nothing affordable, even with a very nice down payment. The prices of housing has risen so rapidly, that the middle class buyer, looking to actually buy a house to live in, has no chance against the cash buyers who leave the homes empty as the values have been much stronger than the need to have a renter to offset the costs of leaving it empty. Now that, due to rising rates, the middle class is no longer able to compete at all, the cash buyers are going away and the empty houses are being put up for rent.

But even as the housing inventory is up, the sellers are still listing at high prices. The market is starting to level off as there aren't buyers anymore, and the prices are leveling off. However, they are not reasonable for the middle class buyer in search of a SFH. The cash-buying investment companies have pushed out the middle class buyer. In some cases, the few affordable houses in older neighborhoods are being bought by developers. They're tearing down 1200-1600sf houses in 60 year old neighborhoods and replacing them with 3500sf+ houses that have no identity in the neighborhoods where they've been built.

Bellevue is pushing out the middle class who values much of what Bellevue has to offer, but can't afford the price of admission.

Too little, too expensive

I moved to Bellevue in 2016. At the time, I was a student at Bellevue College, where I also had a part time job. On my very small salary, the only housing I could afford in the area was the option of renting out the living room of a 2 bedroom apartment shared with two other people in West Bellevue. And I felt lucky that I was able to find even that, after months of searching and reaching out to housing ads.

I was paying out of pocket for college at that time and did not yet receive financial aid, so I had no outside help to cover my expenses, not even from family. The cost of rent increased steadily year by year. In 2020, I took a job working with Bellevue's Parks department. I still could not afford to even rent a studio apartment on my salary alone. I was unhoused for a brief amount of time when my roommates moved out and I couldn't afford the place on my own.

This reality drove me to seek work and housing in Seattle late 2021, where at least more programs exist to help people in need. With my own ears I have heard Bellevue citizens brag about the fact that you don't see as many homeless folks in Bellevue, as if the lack of support the city has to offer is something to be proud of. It makes me sick.

We basic workers cannot live here

I moved here from NC in December to be near family, who have lived here before prices escalated. I am single and a nurse, and in NC, I could live comfortably in a new home and commute by moped safely to work. I tried applying to rent in this area where I got my new job here (in Bellevue) and would sometimes be 18th in line with a credit score over 700 and no debt and still could find very few places that would even accept my application because of the demand and applicants ahead of me in line. Few, if any, in my wage bracket can buy, so I guess rental demand skyrocketed to the moon. I finally found a place to rent, but at almost \$3000/mo, old, dated, moldy smelling, no a/c, funky, and taking almost half of my take-home pay, I am greatly disheartened that I cannot ever get ahead trying to live in the city I work in. And forget commuting by scooter or bike like I did before. How scary the horrendous traffic is here.

Robinswood

I grew up in Robinswood. My parents bought a 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bathrooms, double garage for \$15,000 in 1955. It was to be my parents' starter home but they ended up living there until the end. I lived with my mother for 12 years, as she declined and died in her home December 2012. It became my adult home too. I love Robinswood Park and walking around Phantom Lake, almost daily. I've been dismayed to watch new people move in and cut down the beautiful Douglas Fir trees. Bellevue really needs stricter tree cutting laws. My mother left the house to my three brothers and I. I tried to buy out my brothers and qualified for a \$360,000 mortgage with 1/4 down, which was a going price in 2013. I worked at the UofW, as an adviser, and only made \$52,000/year. My Construction Management chauvinistic brothers said no, they'd sell the house for more. They put \$10,000 more into the house but only sold it for \$370,000. There are still hard feelings, with them throwing me under the bus. This same house would now go for \$1.2 million. Robinswood has become a tear-down neighborhood. Builders are buying these ramblers for these high prices, tearing them down and then building 5 bedroom 5 bathroom homes and selling them for \$3.4 - 4.5 million. They sell quickly because of the convenient and pretty location. A neighbor sold her rambler for \$725,000 in 2020, they tore it down and built a house to put on the market for \$3,400,000 (but had to come down \$152,000 to \$3,298,000.00). The neighbors across the street have been offered 1.5 million for their four bedroom rambler (a bedroom had been added on). I had bought a condo in Issaquah for \$275,000 in 2013. I sold it in 2020 for \$510,000.00. I was near I-90 and the noise bothered me. But it was two-bedrooms, two-bathrooms and a garage, 1100 sq. ft. I had planned to immediately buy another condo in a quieter place. But COVID hit. So, I've been in an apartment, in Bellevue, 650 sq. ft., \$1725/month + \$335/month storage. I've retired from the UofW, but have had to take on an Amazon job, as a Grocer Associate, to make ends meet. I'm afraid I've been priced out of the market. I'll probably need to find low-income housing, once I can no longer work. I'd like to stay in Bellevue. It is home. But, I'm not sure where I'll find housing.

Amazing opportunity

I'm a young 72 year old woman living in a 55 and over subsidized apartment building in West Bellevue. I love Bellevue. In the 1990's, as a working single Mom, I commuted from Snohomish for 6 years to complete a BA at City University. I always felt at home in Bellevue, but I never imagine I could ever live here, because of high cost of housing. This is the only way I can live here comfortably. I'm in an amazing location, a half a block from Main Street, Old Bellevue. It feels like a miracle! I feel very blessed to be here. I'm not a city girl, but all the lovely green spaces and parks help me to feel like I'm not in the city. From my apartment window all I see is green!. The walk ability of my neighborhood is another bonus. I feel very fortunate, but I know, without help, this is not a place assessable to many people.

The only house you can afford is the one you live in

I moved to Bellevue in 2008 when I married my spouse, who had purchased a modest SFH in NE Bellevue a few years earlier on his tech worker salary. Working in a less lucrative field, I am keenly aware that I would not be able to afford to live in Bellevue if not for being partnered with someone who works in tech. I also find it incredibly sad that as we add all sorts of low-wage jobs in Bellevue, the only housing we seem to be adding is luxury housing that none of those retail, food, and service workers can afford. Shouldn't our teachers, librarians, police officers, firefighters, and healthcare workers be able to work **and** live here?

Since 2008, I have watched our house's value fluctuate both down (during the Great Recession) and then steadily up. Our house is one of the most modest in our neighborhood and, especially since adding a child to our family, we have often dreamed of moving into something slightly bigger and more updated. Unfortunately, we would not be able to afford a nicer home in Bellevue unless we were willing to take on significant additional debt. A house in our neighborhood that was valued at less than \$800K in 2014 recently sold for over \$4.5 million!

It is now rare to see a SFH home in Bellevue listed for sale for under \$1 million. Many of the more affordable homes are purchased, torn down, and replaced with large luxury homes. Not all of us work in tech and not all of us make salaries that allow for that type of spending on a home. We need regulation to prevent wealthy investors and corporations from buying up and flipping all of the available houses or renting them out at inflated prices.

We love living in Bellevue but when we are ready to move on to a new home, we may have to look elsewhere to find something we can afford that meets our needs.

Housing hunting on the eastside

Over six years ago I began search for smaller home to downsize to after my spouse's death. Low inventory for several years and most were expensive fixer uppers so I passed. Even these fixers were being gobbled up by international cash payers at way over price, solely for investment purposes - homes remained unoccupied for a long time when I checked back on them in my area.

Quit looking for three years during Covid but now I see smaller homes being bought up and mowed down to insert mega homes with tiny yards (smaller than even the yards we have now!). Removal of large trees and less bare ground I suspect future drainage problems (rain runoff) between neighbors. City MUST get ahead of the upcoming impacts via permits and proper inspections taking into consideration the whole block/area, much like a major apartment complex that is being developed. That is what these homes truly are.

I have now adjusted my home search for housing outside Bellevue and am looking at senior housing - cottage like or larger condo/apartments with a garage (I hope) but am

angry that I must leave Bellevue to find it. I want a community feel, with families, parks and resources close by. Need energy efficient construction - Kirkland has a new plan (ParkShore) that will include solar panels, HPs, etc in the design. Bellevue doesn't require any in the new condo/apartments going up --- absolutely ridiculous and short sighted in this era. If I am going to invest time and money into a new home, I want it to be environmentally sustainable. I am willing to install these products but prefer that they are already put in. Where can I find it today in Bellevue?

Costly

We decided to live in the footprint of Clyde Hill Elementary. We elected to spend more on the house and use public school. It worked out, but our now adult son can't afford a one-bedroom apartment anywhere in town. He's in a two-bedroom apartment with a roommate. Paying more than 30% of his income for housing.

Property tax increase forcing a move

The massive increase in our property taxes has made staying in our home impossible. Can we ask people who are not primary residents to pay more? Can we tax foreigners who want second homes here? We need housing for residents, not for real estate portfolios.

A landlord's perspective

I am a small landlord with one rental home a few blocks from my own. I maintain the home well and work with my tenants during difficulties.

When I signed my most recent lease, my tenant negotiated a slight increase in rent in exchange for a 2 year lock on the price (I gave 3 years).

I do not feel a need to maximize rent just because the market has gone there. A tenant should have the right to some stability.

While I am now far below current rents, I am fine with that. Where this will become a problem is with the new property valuations. This will surely drive my costs up while my income is prevented from moving with it.

When my 3 year lock expires, catching up will unlikely be a gradual move which I will be discussing with my tenants well in advance.

The issue is when legislation is passed to address the abusive corporate landlords. Some bills usually limit the raise of rent to a percentage without any look-back to determine trends or history for the particular property or landlord.

I am hoping that if Bellevue moves towards restrictions on rent gouging, they take a balanced approach that doesn't leave me forced to sell to the corporate landlords that are creating this nightmare. My perspective, thought I would share a side not often addressed.

affordable housing is possible

We have recently moved from a downtown apartment near the park to Silver Glen off of BelRed road - a co-operative community for those over 55 - independent living. That apartment has heated up tremendously the last two years because of the many buildings to the east that face west and reflect afternoon heat on those to the west. It is becoming intolerable. The city planners have allowed so many building that the city dwellers are having to endure warmer temperatures than more open space would provide.

co-op is a very interesting alternative - prices are held by a limited increase in value allowed each year, making the units very affordable - literally half the price of other comparable residential units. Members participate through committees in the management of the units, although we also have a full-time manager and maintenance staff. The co-op owns and maintains all appliances and provides all needed maintenance. It is a very affordable and supportive option for seniors. Yet it is almost the only one in our state. the concept has taken off in the midwest - Minnesota has more than 85 senior co-ops with a similar structure to ours. Other midwest states are following suit, and many are currently in the works in their areas. The local governments have worked to make these developments attractive to developers. I think it would be an excellent idea for city planners to look into this concept and to think strongly about establishing such co-ops in Bellevue and surrounding areas.

Sandra Grace

Use Stronger trees4livability code recommendations and stricter enforcement. Foreign monies driving up size of homes and disappearance of plants/trees especially our older trees. So larger homes with greater need for power etc and yet no solar panels. Climate concerns, nature/wildlife and affordability should be of utmost importance. Costs to live in Bellevue is driving out our Seniors and our younger families who can't afford to live here-if we want diversity we need to help these groups.

Middle Income Housing Opportunities

One of my concerns is how to maintain housing for our neighbors in the middle. That is those who do not qualify for affordable housing and also have been priced out of the market due to the high-end homes being built.

Aging in place is another category of housing which we need to consider.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Leaving Bellevue behind

My grandparents move to Bellevue in the 1940's when people in Seattle thought they were crazy to move all the way over there to the sticks. Clearly the city is no longer a suburb in the sticks. My grandfather owned a building that housed his jewelry store and a sporting goods store on the property where Lincoln Square now stands. My parents married and, before I was born, moved their expanding family back to Bellevue from Seattle. I have lived

her my whole life until the last 3 days. My parents bought their first home in the neighborhood behind Larsen Lake. Just before my 4th birthday they moved us across Main Street where my mother still lives today. After getting married, my husband and I moved into a house in my original neighborhood and ended up purchasing the house in 1999 for \$155,000. We raised our 2 kids here in a safe and friendly neighborhood where we made great friends with the neighbors. My youngest just graduated from the BSD school district this past spring and we started looking to move. We bought a house up north and are currently prepping the house to sell. Our recent assessment came in the mail 2 days ago and our house/land has jumped in value to 1.5 million dollars, that is an increase of \$500,000 in one year. I am very concerned for the new property tax rates to come out. Bellevue is no longer an affordable place to live and there are not enough smaller houses or condos to downsize into. There is no steppingstone into home ownership because Bellevue dropped the ball over 20 years ago when they stopped planning the need for affordable housing. Now they are scrambling to catch up while letting builders tear down the smaller "affordable" homes to build mega mansions that sell for over 3 million. Bellevue has become greedy and uncaring about its citizens. The tree canopy is more important than the actual residents. Bellevue will be the new Seattle, it has already started with an increase in property crime. All of these reasons are why we chose to sell our home in a city where I spent my whole life. I am that rare unicorn that is an original resident until 3 days ago. So long to my home town where my kids could never afford to live on their own and where fixed income seniors are forced to sell and move because they can't afford to retire and still live here.

Rent increasing by 300 dollars with no improvement to living conditions

My fiancé and I are childless with a pit-boxer. Due to our dog's breed our living possibilities are limited. We've lived in the same apartment complex for more than 2 years and got a notice that our rent is increasing by 300 dollars without any additional investment or improvement into the property. It is frustrating because we so badly want to get into the housing market but we're paying close to mortgage price to stay in Bellevue. It is not sustainable.

There is No Affordable Housing for our Family

We are 40 somethings with a family - soon to put our youngest of three kids in the schools here. This is the area I grew up in, and never expected to find myself wondering if we would soon be priced out of living here. We originally moved back here when our first child was born after spending several years on the East Coast and wanting to escape the skyrocketing costs of living there. We had no idea that we would face much worse housing shortages and astronomical prices on structures valued 1/4th of their selling price moving here. When every family home is priced at 1 million or more, that is a problem! How are so many able to keep buying at that amount? On paper there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to find a home at our income level, yet we cannot fathom buying a 1 million dollar

1500 square foot rambler. Let alone taking on the mortgage of a 1 million dollar home with interest rates where they are - we'd not be able to feed our family with that monthly payment. There are no affordable homes for our family.

We have dreamt of settling down here and raising our family. And now it feels that is unlikely to happen. We've been stuck renting for several years while we search anxiously for an affordable house to purchase for us while our costs of living here just continue to go up and diminish the hope we had for staying in the area. One massive rent increase could be the final nail in the affordability coffin. Aside from having to double our income or leave the area we see few desirable options.

I'm afraid I may not be able to stay in Bellevue

I moved to Bellevue from Renton to be closer to work in early 2020. I live in a rental apartment in a great location close to work, transit options, greenspace and parks, and not too far from downtown. It has been wonderful living here, however with rental prices (housing prices in general) increasing so significantly, I am afraid I may have to move out of Bellevue again, moving further from work.

ARCH recently submitted their recommendations for tenant protections to Eastside cities. Most of the cities in the region have adopted these common-sense tenant protection, however as far as I'm aware, Bellevue has not yet done so. I hope that the city embraces the recommended tenant protections so that the approximately 50% of Bellevue residents who rent, rather than own their homes (including me), can have peace of mind with affordable rents that do not outpace our incomes.