

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
COMMUNITIES OF COLOR COORDINATING (CCC) TEAM
Meeting Minutes**

April 24, 2025
5:30 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-120
Bellevue City Hall

ATTENDEES: Lauren Chase
Tulika Dugar
Ruhi Gadde
Regina Glenn
Dr. Elba Moise
Tina Morales
Dr. Randy Nunez
Ricardo Perezchica

ABSENT:

STAFF: Sara Boyle, Equity and Inclusion Outreach Administrator, City Manager's Office
Dr. Linda Whitehead, Chief DEI Officer, City Manager's Office
Erik Mercado, Equity Coordinator, City Manager's Office

CONSULTANT: Tanya Ranchigoda

BDAN LIAISON: None.

MINUTES WRITER: Kelly Wilson, City Clerk's Office

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. and everyone introduced themselves.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

3. WELCOME

Tanya Ranchigoda said the group is in the forming stage where everyone is getting to know one another. She encouraged everyone to be polite and to feel free to speak their truth. She acknowledged that there will likely be discomfort during certain conversations. She encouraged listening for understanding and being willing to take risks. She said it is important to

acknowledge that sometimes discussion of an issue will end without closure or majority agreement.

Ms. Ranchigoda said that as discussions move forward, staff will keep a “parking lot” list of issues that are raised for future study and/or discussion.

A committee member suggested adding to the mission statement the issue of reviewing the City’s contracting policies and contract opportunities for diverse communities and businesses.

Ms. Ranchigoda read the mission statement: “The CCC supports a three-tiered community approach by developing trust and awareness through dialogue, building racial literacy and skills through education and training, co-creating recommendations and actions that will advance racial equity in the community, and to transform the city of Bellevue into a community that values and commits to racial equity and eliminates systemic barriers to civic participation for people of color.”

4. STUDY SESSION

(a) Diversity Advantage Plan 2035

Ms. Boyle said the Diversity Advantage Program’s work is closely connected to implementing many of the values of the City. The program was initiated in 2014 to formalize and build on existing practices and guidelines used throughout the organization. She said staff is working to develop the updated Diversity Advantage Plan 2035. She said the CCC’s work hosting community dialogues informed the drafting of the plan, and the community input and data served as the foundation of the plan update.

Ms. Boyle said she has worked on the DEI team for approximately 3-1/2 years. Prior to that she worked in the nonprofit sector, most recently with an organization that assisted undocumented Latino families. She taught English as a second language to adults and worked with young Head Start students. She said that working with direct service providers inspired her to work at the government level to address systemic barriers and discrimination.

Ms. Boyle said the City’s first diversity program began in 1993 in the Parks and Community Services Department with one staff position. She said Bellevue’s population began growing and diversifying by 2014. In response, Bellevue’s policies and practices increasingly began referencing and addressing diversity issues and needs. Ms. Boyle said the City Council’s Vision Statement is: Bellevue welcomes the world; diversity is our strength. She said the City has diversity liaisons to work with the community and diversity plans have been developed by departments. She said there was extensive public engagement at the beginning of the 2014 Diversity Advantage Initiative, which resulted in 16 recommendations.

Ms. Boyle said the current Diversity Advantage Plan reflects a broad range of actions. In 2021, the Council convened the Centering Communities of Color Initiative and the CCC team began meeting. In 2024, the City added “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” as the City’s sixth core value. Ms. Boyle said the CCC team collected significant public input during multiple community

dialogues. She said staff worked with the City Council to establish the expectation that DEI principles will be embedded into the City's strategic target areas (STAs), which guide all of the City's work.

Ms. Boyle said the City has four DEI staff positions. She said approximately 107 languages are spoken in Bellevue. She said staff will be updating their department DEI plans this year. She described the new budget equity toolkit used for the first time by the City for the last budget cycle. She said the City sponsors and co-sponsors a number of cultural events and programs.

Ms. Boyle highlighted the economic disparities by race in the community. She said the Diversity Advantage Plan 2035 includes a set of guiding principles and 41 equity objectives. She said the CCC community dialogue input informed the creation of the equity objectives. She said staff plans to create 1-2 year action plans to focus on the steps and tasks required to achieve the objectives and measure outcomes.

Dr. Randy Nunez described the community dialogue process and the CCC team's work with the consultant and the community.

Ms. Gadde said the community dialogues were welcoming and inviting and included families and people of all ages and walks of life. She said the dialogue was relaxed and authentic and provided valuable input. She said some of the community dialogue participants were City employees, including police officers. She suggested holding more community dialogues in the future.

Ms. Boyle said staff and the CCC collected more than 1,000 public comments, ideas and suggestions over the past couple of years. She said the input has informed the plan's equity objectives, Council priorities and STAs, the 2024 update to the Comprehensive Plan and the language in the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Key themes and topics reflected in the community input were belonging, affordability, community engagement, accountability, how to define and measure success, and how to communicate between all stakeholders.

Ms. Boyle said one feature that make DAP 2035 different from the previous plan is designing the plan for accountability and continuous improvement. There is also an interest in evolving the focus of the plan from diversity to equity, and the plan normalizes the use of the term "historically marginalized communities." A new guiding principles references racial equity.

Regarding accountability, Ms. Boyle said performance measures were not established for the first plan in 2014. For DAP 2035, key equity indicators will be established for the objectives and staff will track those measures. Ms. Boyle said staff understands that it is important for the plan to allow the City to be agile and responsive.

Ms. Boyle said the plan wants to challenge staff and the community to think about equity and whether diversity is influencing a person's ability to access services and programs. She said equity is defined as the ability for a community to access, participate and benefit from services,

resources and opportunities that contribute toward a high quality of life, regardless of individual identities. She noted that equity is distinct from equality as equity refers to the unique histories, circumstances and systemic factors and barriers.

Ms. Boyle said the 2014 plan had frequent references to Bellevue's diverse communities. In 2025, the questions have become: Who is diverse? And who gets to decide? She said the new plan steers away from that language and instead focuses on historically marginalized communities. A committee member suggested adding "neurodivergent" to the list of communities. Ms. Boyle said the plan acknowledges the need to learn to talk about race in an effective manner.

Ms. Boyle said she is working with the City's performance management team to develop software for strategic planning and tracking outcomes. She said the updated DAP 2035 will go to the City Council in June for formal adoption. Staff will continue working with performance management staff to develop the metrics and online dashboard before the budget process starts early next year.

A committee member said there should be an interim tracking system and suggested potential metrics. She suggested providing input to the Council early in the budget process. She asked about the CCC's role in the public arena and suggested engaging allies to advocate for policies. She asked whether the CCC's approach should be to continue listening, reviewing and suggesting or whether the CCC should move to demanding data and presence in a public arena.

Ms. Morales suggested that, based on her experience working with undocumented individuals and youth, it would be important to identify the specific historically marginalized communities to provide context.

Dr. Randy Nunez asked how the City is responding to the national trend against DEI work.

At approximately 6:50 p.m., the meeting paused for a brief break. The meeting resumed at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Dugar expressed concern about the lack of affordable space for small businesses and the need for assistance to small businesses regarding business licenses and other requirements. She suggested pop-up art and retail opportunities at City Hall and in transit stations. Ms. Boyle said one role of the CCC is to coordinate with trusted messengers in the community.

A committee member suggested the CCC could be a sounding board for department staff as they implement actions from DAP 2035.

Responding to the committee, Ms. Boyle said the 41 objectives in DAP 2035 fall into six categories aligned with the City's Strategic Target Areas. A committee member suggested that the CCC focus on one of the categories, such as high-performance government. She suggested allowing CCC members to participate in meetings with staff for topics of special interest to them. Ms. Gadde expressed support for the suggestion.

Responding to the committee, Ms. Boyle said each department has a staff person who also serves as the department's diversity liaison, with the guideline of spending approximately eight hours per month collaborating with the Diversity Advantage Team in the City Manager's Office. A committee member suggested working with the diversity liaisons to discuss their key issues to date and to ask them to help identify actions that could be implemented more quickly and/or easily. Ms. Morales said it is important to understand how people are impacted in the community.

Dr. Nunez suggested focusing on identifying new ways to engage the community and facilitate communications with City staff and the Council. He said the CCC team has not reported back to the community dialogue participants regarding the Council's response to the recent presentation of that work.

The committee discussed their perspectives on the role of the CCC team and how it might be able to influence City policies and operations.

Ms. Gadde said her initial understanding of the CCC team was to serve as a partner between the community and the City to facilitate communication regarding issues and priorities. She suggested measuring success in part by tracking the number of community engagement participants at meetings and events. She would like to publicize the CCC team's work on social media, which could initiate more youth involvement.

A committee member encouraged assistance and opportunities for small businesses and noted the efforts of the Startup 425 program.

5. NEXT MEETING

Ms. Boyle said she was hearing comments that fall into four categories: 1) actions and strategies for influencing City policies, 2) metrics for tracking success, 3) working with trusted community messengers, and 4) advocacy and advisory role of the CCC team.

A committee member said it would be helpful to review the 41 goals of DAP 2035 and to compare them to the input gathered through the community dialogues.

Ms. Boyle noted that staff is conducting an inventory of departments to identify all of the current work related to equity objectives.

Ms. Boyle said staff proposes two community information sessions, May 21 and May 29, with the option for virtual participation. She said it would be helpful to have some CCC members participate in telling the story of the community dialogues and how priorities were identified in collaboration with the community.

The next CCC committee is scheduled for May 22.

6. CLOSING

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

/kaw