



# Public Outreach Summary for the 2023-2024 Budget

## Public Engagement

The 2023-2024 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 biennially 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 2021 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 2023-2024 budget to provide stakeholders multiple opportunities to officially comment on the operating and capital budgets. Two public hearings, one in May and the other in August, 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 May, August, 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 2022.

### 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 <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/city-clerks-office/boards-and-commissions>.

- 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)

May 23, 2022 (source: adopted Council Meeting Minutes)

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo said the legal notice of the public hearing was published on May 9 and May 16. She said the Council received four written comments, which are provided in the desk packet.

The following individuals provided public comment:

1. Debbie Lacy, Founder and Executive Director of Eastside For All, thanked Mayor Robinson and the Council for their work in support of the feasibility study for the crosscultural center. She encouraged the Council to support the next steps recommended in the Phase 3 feasibility study report. She said it is important for the community to work together in creating a center for the present and for future generations. She said the built environment and community spaces should reflect everyone's contributions. She said the center can provide a space for members of the community to explore mutual goals, exchange knowledge, history and resources, and to welcome newcomers. She encouraged the Council to provide funding to continue moving forward with the cross-cultural center. Ms. Lacy requested an investment in capacity building support for local communitybased organizations. While they are grateful for the funding support from the City, many nonprofit organizations have been challenged during the pandemic and are in need of capacity support to continue to be effective.

2. April Stevens, an alumni of the Bellevue Essentials class, thanked the Council for all they do. She encouraged the addition of staff and other resources to expedite the implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She said the plan was approved by the Council 2.5 years ago. She said the actions in the plan have been only partially enacted or have not yet been addressed. Ms. Stevens said approximately 30 percent of the plan has been implemented and she is concerned about reaching the 2030 goals. She thanked the City's hard-working staff and encouraged additional funding and staff.

3. Barbara Braun said the residents of Bellevue appreciate the City's recent efforts to advance the 2020 Environmental Stewardship Plan and applaud the inclusion of climate change and environmental issues as top priorities. However, she expressed concern that Bellevue is falling behind other cities in its investments to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030. She thanked the City for its commitment to reviewing the tree codes. However, she said trees do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions. She said most emissions are generated by buildings and transportation activity. She encouraged the Council to increase funding and staffing to expedite the implementation of the plan. She suggested eight full-time staff and an annual budget of at least \$2 million. She encouraged the City to take advantage of grants and



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other monies available to accelerate climate actions.

City Clerk Arredondo invited the public to submit comments to [Council@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:Council@bellevuewa.gov).

### August 1, 2022 (source: adopted Council Meeting Minutes)

City Clerk Arredondo noted that written comments were included in the Council's desk packet.

The following individuals provided public comment:

1. Barbara Braun expressed concern about climate change and urged the City to be more aggressive in implementing its Environmental Stewardship Plan. She asked the Council to provide resources in the budget to add 6-10 staff positions dedicated to addressing climate change impacts. She commented on the importance of trees. She noted, however, that they do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions. She asked the Council to add \$2 million per year in 2023 and 2024 to the environmental stewardship program.
2. Paul Bruno expressed concern about climate change and said that other cities have significantly reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by adding staff and resources to their environmental programs. He said People for Climate Action (PCA) provided the Council a draft outline of the possible responsibilities for those staff.
3. April Stevens encouraged the Council to fund additional staff to implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She noted the increase in temperatures, wildfires and other climate-related events across the country.
4. Kylie Shulman, a student at Newport High School, shared her concerns about the impacts of climate change. She described her involvement with organizations working to address those impacts. She encouraged full funding to implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She noted health conditions related to climate change including asthma. She said it is important to take action now.
5. Curtis Allred asked the Council to increase funding and resources for the environmental stewardship program.
6. Don Marsh encouraged additional staff for implementing the Environmental Stewardship Plan. He encouraged the City to be leaders in addressing climate change. He noted that he is the co-founder of 300 Trees and a board member for Trees 4 Livability. He thanked the City for its tree giveaway events and for addressing its tree codes. He said that neighborhoods without trees can have temperatures as much as 15 degrees higher than areas with tree cover. He noted the importance of protecting natural habitats and our City in a Park.



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7. Putter Bert, representing KidsQuest Museum, requested increased funding and resources for the arts in Bellevue. She said the budget for supporting arts and culture in the community has not increased since 2000. She thanked the City for its ongoing support.

8. Court Olson noted his ongoing concern regarding climate change. He encouraged the City to provide more resources for the environmental stewardship program. He said it is important to act as quickly as possible.

9. Bennyroyce Royon, Co-Chair of the Eastside Culture Coalition (ECC) and the Producing Artistic Director for Bennyroyce Dance, commented regarding the challenges associated with the pandemic that began in March 2020. He described how cultural and arts organizations supported each other over the past couple of years. He said organizations continue to experience budget and staffing reductions. He asked the Council to provide additional funding for arts and culture initiatives and organizations. He noted the need for office and performance space.

10. Jennifer Keller urged the Council to provide full funding for implementing the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She expressed concern about young people and their future. She said the City's current staff is working hard but they need more help to do this essential work. She said cities that have provided more resources to address climate change have experienced greater reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions.

11. Christopher Randels, representing Complete Streets Bellevue, said residents value sustainability, equity, safety and accessibility for everyone. He thanked the Council for its funding of the Vision Zero transportation safety program. He commented on the need to reduce carbon emissions and the need for adequate transit service and bike and pedestrian facilities. He encouraged the Council to increase funding for the Vision Zero program, bike and pedestrian improvement projects, and transit efficiency improvements.

12. Chris Marks urged the Council to increase resources for addressing climate change and implementing the Environmental Stewardship Plan. She said current buildings are producing half of the greenhouse gas emissions in Bellevue. She said residents and businesses need information to understand the community's shared goals and the necessary mitigation actions. She said everyone in the community must work together.

13. Betsi Hummer requested funding to continue the Community Crisis Assistance Team (CCAT) program of the Bellevue Police Department. She said the pilot project was highly effective in helping individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and diverted many of them from jails and hospitals. Under the pilot project, police use of force decreased and the amount of time spent by the CCAT increased. Ms. Hummer noted that the East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC) was recently sunsetted. She suggested reallocating \$4,500 from the EBCC budget to neighborhood associations.



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14. Marlene Meyer expressed concerns regarding climate change and pollution.

15. Ruth Lipscomb asked the Council to consider funding a community mental health response team. She referenced the CCAT pilot project and encouraged the City to research programs in other communities. She noted that the CCAT project did not provide the option of having mental health professionals respond without police officers. She suggested dispatching mental health personnel as first responders in certain situations. stewardship program.

### November 7, 2022 (Anticipated final public hearing date)

City Clerk Arredondo noted that 131 written comments regarding the budget were included in the Council's desk packet.

The following individuals provided public comment:

1. Bill Hetherington thanked the Council for supporting funding in the budget for an apprenticeship utilization program. He thanked the Council for listening to members of the community and the building trades as they advocated for the program. He said the program will provide opportunities for young men and women to begin their careers. He noted joint efforts with the Bellevue School District, including the state-registered preapprenticeship program at Interlake High School. He said the King County Council is expected to approve funding for capital improvements at Interlake High School for the program.

2. Guillermo Rivera said he was speaking on behalf of Eastside for All, a racial equity and social justice organization in East King County. He spoke in favor of recommendations by A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) regarding tenant protections. He noted coordinated efforts to preserve affordable housing and to protect tenants from unreasonable rent increases. He said neighboring cities have adopted ARCH's recommendations, including Burien, Kirkland and Redmond.

3. Ruth Lipscomb asked the City to fund an impartial study of the City's 911 call data by an experienced national partner. She expressed an interest in which response options or combination of options by Police and non-Police units would best fit the needs of our neighbors, especially those experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis. She said the City should fund an objective look at the 911 call data to inform decisions around mental health crisis response. She encouraged a similar independent study of the proposed Police transit unit. She asked the Council to fully fund environmental stewardship program needs.

4. Villette Nolon, Executive Director for the Bellevue Police Foundation, said she lives in the Somerset neighborhood. She expressed support for the proposed Police



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Department and Fire Department budgets. She thanked the Council for their hard work and for listening to the community. She expressed support for the proposed Police transit unit and the Community Crisis Assistance Team (CCAT). She noted the need for additional officers to address retail and residential theft.

5. Betsi Hummer said people in Bellevue deserve to be safe and to feel safe. She asked the Council to fund a minimum of 19 Police officers, including the CCAT program, East Link transit unit and other resources. She commented on the significant growth in population and workers in Bellevue in recent years and noted a 37 percent increase in public safety calls for service since 2012. She said there has been a 19 percent increase in crime over the past five years. However, the number of Police officers increased by only 3.3 percent.

6. Craig Spiegle continued Ms. Hummer's presentation. He said the City of Bellevue has responded very effectively to priority 1 calls within an average of 3.5 minutes, while King County's average response time is more than 13 minutes. He expressed support for the proposed Police transit unit. He said many studies indicate that crime increases with the introduction of transit services. He encouraged the Council to consider eliminating non-essential programs to avoid excess taxes.

7. Anne Coughlin urged the Council to hire at least 21 Police officers, noting the increase in crime since 2017. She expressed support for funding the Police transit unit. She suggested the adoption of standards to address increasing litter on streets and in green spaces. She suggested that the Council approve an ordinance to address graffiti.

8. Alexa Rehrl said she lives in downtown Bellevue and is a current member of the Bellevue Police Department's Citizens Academy. She expressed support for adding officers to keep pace with the significant growth in recent years, including the addition of the Police transit unit.

9. Paul Clark expressed support for the proposed Police transit unit, which he believes is necessary to make light rail a success. He lives and works in downtown Bellevue. He expressed concern about the increase in crime and anti-social behavior and expressed support for the CCAT program. He encouraged Bellevue to uphold its tradition of strong public safety.

10. James Fulop spoke in opposition to the proposal to create a Police transit unit. He said the armed officers at transit stations in New York City made him nervous and he does not want to create that kind of atmosphere in Bellevue. He asked why a special transit unit is needed versus using regular officers.



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At 7:23 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at approximately 7:41 p.m.

11. Lorraine Stewart, an Issaquah resident, said she often rides, walks and runs in Bellevue. She expressed concern regarding the increase in serious accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. She said she was the victim of one of those accidents in 2016, which has left her with permanent injuries. She asked the Council to increase funding for the Vision Zero program to the original proposed amount of \$500,000 per year.

12. Alecia Sebastian expressed concerns regarding the impacts of climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. She encouraged the community to work together to achieve the City's goals. She urged the Council to fully fund staff and other resources to expedite the implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

13. Pamela Johnston talked about being intentional about the community and its values. She said Bellevue tries to do that but sometimes we go beyond our borders and forget what is special about Bellevue. She asked the Council to consider first responders a top priority. She noted her interest in tree regulations, sign codes, Airbnb units and other issues. She spoke to the importance of trust and having a caring, competent and honest government. She encouraged continued collaboration with the community.

14. Katie Wilson, General Secretary of the Transit Riders Union, expressed concern regarding the budget proposal to create a Police transit unit. She said the union is not convinced that this is the best use of resources. She said many studies have failed to find an increase in crime due to the opening of transit facilities. She commented regarding police use of force and racial equity. She suggested using the funds proposed for the Police transit unit to increase funding for human services and affordable housing.

15. Lara Gardner, a Lake Hills resident, expressed support for the City's healthy streets program, noting that she lives on one of the designated healthy streets. She expressed concern, however, regarding high traffic speeds on residential streets. She said it would be helpful to have a safe pedestrian and bike connection to the Crossroads shopping area one mile from her home. She asked the Council to increase funding for the Vision Zero program to \$500,000 per year.

16. Maryanne Halverson, a Bridle Trails resident, said her family has been following the Comprehensive Plan and Budget processes remotely over the past year. She thanked City Manager Brad Miyake and staff for their work. She expressed support for the Police Department's proposed budget given the increase in crime.





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17. Matt Jack, representing the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), thanked the City for its public engagement process related to the budget. He said the budget is transparent about the proposed tax increases and how the funds will be used. He said the budget maintains services to match the increasing demands of a growing city and builds on prior investments by advancing capital projects with lasting public benefits. He expressed support for the multimodal network improvements, funding for long-term planning initiatives, funding for partnerships in placemaking and arts programming, park funding, intentional public safety programs, increased funding for implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy, and commitments to enhance efficiencies in resources for development review and permitting.

18. Wendy Tyner, representing Wintergrass Music Festival, thanked Councilmembers for their ongoing support over the past 12 years. She noted a decrease in the City's contribution over the past year while the festival budget almost doubled to \$729,500. She asked the Council to boldly increase funding for the arts grants budget. She described the significant economic impact of arts and cultural facilities within the community. She encouraged everyone to come to Wintergrass in late February.

19. Al Rosenthal expressed support for an increase in the number of police officers. He expressed concerns regarding the low-barrier housing project in the Eastgate area and overall crime and public safety. He noted the need for more officers in the Factoria and Eastgate retail areas. He said crime has increased significantly in downtown Redmond as the number of people experiencing homelessness has grown. He expressed concern about rampant shoplifting and theft.

20. Vishnu Mangipudi, a freshman in high school, said he is the co-chair of the Bellevue Youth Link Climate Action Team. He spoke to the importance of advocating for a cleaner and more sustainable future. He thanked the Council for approving and providing funding to implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan. However, he encouraged additional funding to achieve climate goals. He suggested a focus on the building and transportation sectors, where approximately 85 percent of Bellevue's current emissions are produced. He urged the Council to fully fund the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

21. Allison Howes encouraged the Council to strongly consider funding a mental health crisis team that does not rely on a police response when one is not warranted. She said such an approach has been found to be overwhelmingly safe. She said the arrival of police officers can increase the trauma of an already difficult situation. She noted the importance of 911 dispatch protocols and training. In some cases, clinicians are part of the dispatch team. She urged the Council to fund a community response team as part of the CCAT program.



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22. Sally Fouche expressed support for the People for Climate Action group. She noted her background in technology and education and expressed concern regarding the need for mental health services for youth. She asked the Council to set aside money for a national consultant to conduct a data analysis of Bellevue's 911 data to prepare to pilot and implement community responder teams in addition to CCAT program teams. She said the use of community responders can help free up time for police officers to focus on their core work.

23. Michael Moberly said he recently retired as the Director of Programs and Services for Congregations for the Homeless. He asked the Council to support the budget for emergency services including the Bellevue Police Department CCAT program. He said the presence of uniformed officers can increase the distress of someone experiencing a mental health crisis. He said pairing a social worker or mental health professional with a police officer who is not in uniform has proven to be an effective approach.

24. Heather Kelley expressed support for the CCAT program. However, she questioned whether it is the best way to meet the needs of individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. She encouraged the City to fund a community responder pilot program involving mental health professionals who respond to calls without police officers.

25. Chris Marks, representing People for Climate Action (PCA), commended the increased budget for the Environmental Stewardship Program in 2023-2024. She recalled City staff talking in the past about the impacts of the transportation and building sectors on greenhouse gas emissions and noted that PCA shares their concerns. Ms. Marks encouraged more funding for community wide efforts, versus City organization efforts, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. She said Bellevue is not on track to meet its goal of reducing community wide emissions by 50 percent by 2031.

26. Barbara Braun continued Ms. Marks' presentation. She said nearly a quarter of Bellevue's greenhouse gas emissions are generated by commercial buildings, residential buildings and the transportation system. She said the state's Clean Building Act is addressing energy performance standards in commercial buildings with more than 20,000 square feet. However, cities are left to address existing residential buildings and commercial buildings with less than 20,000 square feet. Ms. Braun referred to the King County wedge analysis provided in the meeting packet. She said a consultant was hired to provide free assistance to large commercial building owners to help them comply with the state performance standards. She said building programs should be launched in 2023 to reach the 2031 goal.



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27. Court Olson added to Ms. Braun’s comments. He said PCA has been coordinating with City staff regarding the budget proposals and has researched how other cities have reduced greenhouse gas emissions. He said PCA developed a plan for amending the allocations to fill the emissions gap not covered by Washington state law. He suggested that the City spend at least \$7.3 million on community wide efforts to reduce emissions. He said a larger portion of the budget supports the City’s efforts to reduce its own emissions. He thanked the Council for the increased funding for the Environmental Stewardship Initiative. He said, however, that more needs to be done.

28. Mary Pat Byrne referred to the recommendations of the Arts Commission for the annual grant funding to artists and arts groups working in Bellevue. She recalled that she worked as the arts manager for the City for 28 years and retired in 2015. She said it is exciting to see the increase in the number and diversity of arts organizations applying for funding. She expressed concern that arts funding has not kept pace with growth. She commented on the benefits of the arts for the community and encouraged an increase in arts funding.

29. Heidi Dean referred to the comments made earlier by Craig Spiezle and Betsi Hummer regarding crime. Ms. Dean expressed support for a Police transit unit. She commented on recent crimes, including a serious attack at the Bellevue Transit Center. She thanked the individuals advocating for the City to establish a trades apprenticeship program.

30. Sam Basta said he owns commercial property next to Bannerwood Park. He applauded the City for its role in developing the Eastgate men’s shelter and for supporting transit services. He said both will bring changes to the community and it is vital to support police officers while also helping those in need.

31. Kylie Shulman, a sophomore at Newport High School, described how climate change is affecting every aspect of our lives. She said she is happy to see more funding allocated to the Environmental Stewardship Initiative. However, she encouraged increased funding. She said the City needs to work toward lowering energy costs, implementing easier and more successful ways to move around the city and ensuring cleaner air for people with health conditions such as asthma.

32. Christopher Randels, speaking on behalf of Complete Streets Bellevue, commented regarding safety and data-informed decisions. He urged the Council to increase funding for the Vision Zero program to \$500,000 per year. He spoke against the proposal for a Police transit unit. He cited studies indicating no increase in crime rates around transit stations in other cities.

33. Matt Gleason spoke in opposition to the proposed Police transit unit. He expressed concern about the arrest of shoplifters instead of exploring their



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underlying issues. He noted that arresting people, including the organized retail rings, does not stop shoplifting. He encouraged funding for mental health services and affordable housing.

34. Angelica Graham, representing Eastside for All, said their position as a community response organizer focuses on increasing a stronger sense of belonging for Black and Brown community members in East King County. Referring to the CCAT program, they encouraged the City to allow more time for information gathering. They said the CCAT program does not properly address the impacts or efficacy of its crisis response model on Black and Brown community members. They said the stakeholders consulted during the CCAT pilot program did not include community-based leaders in Black, Brown and immigrant communities. They said the CCAT program did not mention culturally responsive approaches or linguistic access despite the fact that 40 percent of Bellevue residents were born outside of the United States. They encouraged the City to gather input from community members with lived experiences to involve them in the community and to ensure their needs are being properly addressed. They encouraged a 911 data analysis to compare the need for a police response versus a mental health professional response. They encouraged the Council to consider a community response model instead of the CCAT model in which social workers respond with Police and/or Fire personnel.

35. Joy Randall said she is a community volunteer for a number of mutual aid groups that support the unhoused and low-income community members in the region. She asked the Council to not invest in the proposed Police transit unit. She said a number of studies have demonstrated that transit service does not increase crime. She expressed concern regarding the number of Black and Brown individuals arrested in Bellevue.

36. Marlene Meyer thanked the Council for listening to everyone tonight. She described incidents involving her son and police officers, who were helpful but suggested she needed to learn how to be a better parent. She said her son has graduated and is now managing special needs programs. She expressed support for both police and mental health responses in the community. Ms. Meyer urged the City to more aggressively address greenhouse gas emissions related to buildings and the transportation system.

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