



CITY OF BELLEVUE

In Partnership with the
University of Washington

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

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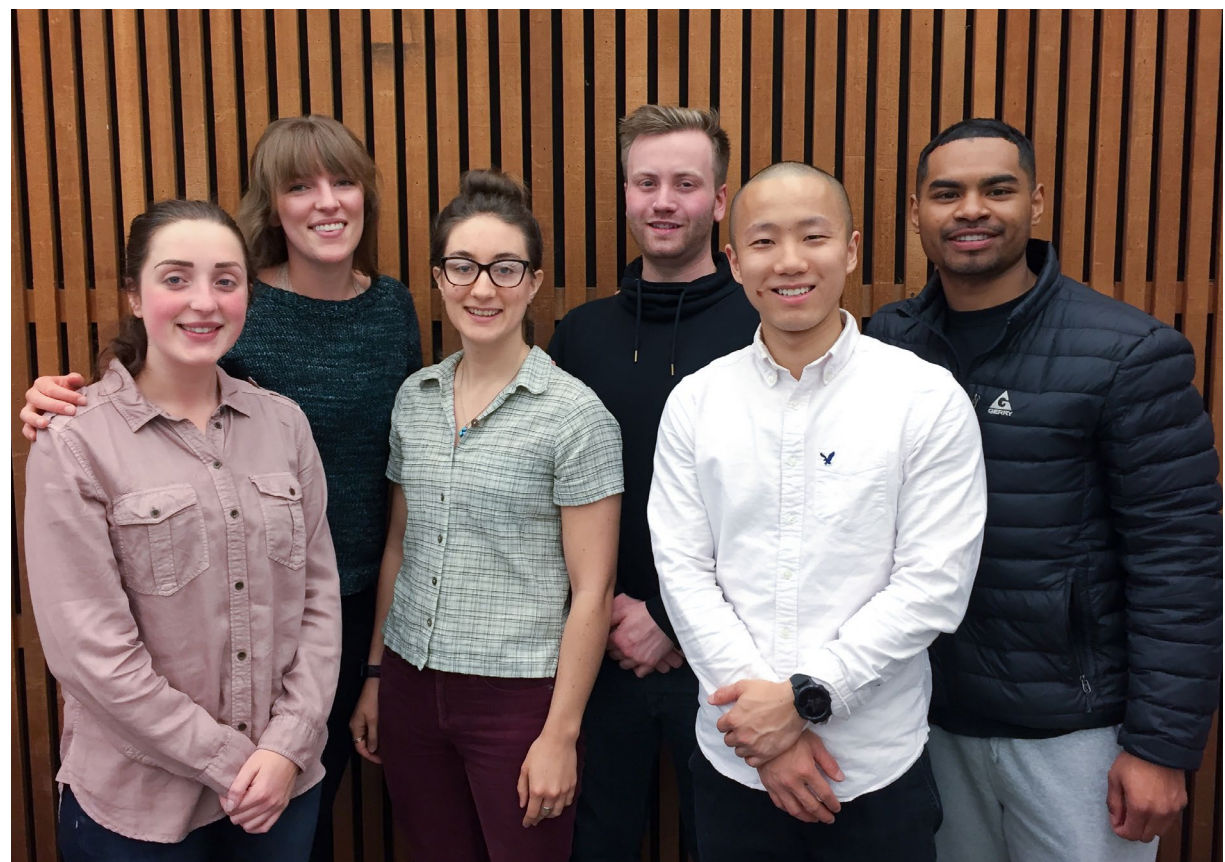


Livable City Year 2018–2019
in partnership with
City of Bellevue

Fall 2018



Livable City Year 2018–2019
in partnership with
City of Bellevue
www.washington.edu/livable-city-year/



Students researchers for CEP 460, Planning in Context. From left to right: Jamie Carlson, Grace Arsenault, Sophia Cassam, Thomas Paine, Carl Xiao, and Myles Long. LCY STUDENT TEAM

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ABOUT LIVABLE CITY YEAR

The University of Washington's Livable City Year (LCY) initiative is a partnership between the university and one local government for one academic year. The program engages UW faculty and students across a broad range of disciplines to work on city-defined projects that promote local sustainability and livability goals. Each year hundreds of students work on high-priority projects, creating momentum on real-world challenges while serving and learning from communities. Partner cities benefit directly from bold and applied ideas that propel fresh thinking, improve livability for residents, and invigorate city staff. Focus areas include environmental sustainability; economic viability; population health; and social equity, inclusion and access. The program's 2018–2019 partner is the City of Bellevue; this follows partnerships with the City of Tacoma (2017–2018) and the City of Auburn (2016–2017).

LCY is modeled after the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program, and is a member of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), an international network of institutions that have successfully adopted this new model for community innovation and change. For more information, contact the program at uwlcy@uw.edu.



ABOUT CITY OF BELLEVUE

Bellevue is the fifth largest city in Washington, with a population of more than 140,000. It's the high-tech and retail center of King County's Eastside, with more than 150,000 jobs and a skyline of gleaming high-rises. While business booms downtown, much of Bellevue retains a small-town feel, with thriving, woodsy neighborhoods and a vast network of green spaces, miles and miles of nature trails, public parks, and swim beaches. The community is known for its beautiful parks, top schools, and a vibrant economy. Bellevue is routinely ranked among the best mid-sized cities in the country.

The city spans more than 33 square miles between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish and is a short drive from the Cascade Mountains. Bellevue prides itself on its diversity. Thirty-seven percent of its residents were born outside of the US and more than 50 percent of residents are people of color, making the city one of the most diverse in Washington state.

Bellevue is an emerging global city, home to some of the world's most innovative technology companies. It attracts top talent makers such as the University of Washington-Tsinghua University Global Innovation Exchange. Retail options abound in Bellevue and artists from around the country enter striking new works in the Bellwether arts festival. Bellevue's agrarian traditions are celebrated at popular seasonal fairs at the Kelsey Creek Farm Park.

Bellevue 2035, the City Council's 20-year vision for the city, outlines the city's commitment to its vision: "Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength. We embrace the future while respecting our past." Each project completed under the Livable City Year partnership ties to one of the plan's strategic areas and many directly support the three-year priorities identified by the council in 2018.



BELLEVUE 2035: THE CITY WHERE YOU WANT TO BE



Best Practices for Neighborhood Planning supports the High Quality Built And Natural Environment target area of the Bellevue City Council Vision Priorities and was sponsored by the Department of Community Development.



HIGH QUALITY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Bellevue has it all. From a livable high-rise urban environment to large wooded lots in an equestrian setting, people can find exactly where they want to live and work in Bellevue. The diverse and well-balanced mix of business and commercial properties and wide variety of housing types attract workers and families who desire a safe, sustainable, and accessible community.

Bellevue has an abundance of parks and natural open space. Known as a “city in a park,” our park system is one of the best in the nation due to its high park acreage-to-population ratio. From neighborhood walking paths and forested trails to a regional waterfront park, we enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities within walking distance of our homes and businesses. Bellevue is a “Smart City” with a clean, high-quality environment and excellent, reliable infrastructure that supports our vibrant and growing city, including high-tech connectivity. The city has a connected multi-modal transportation system that blends seamlessly with its buildings, plazas, and parks.

Whether it's an urban high rise, a classic Bellevue Rambler, or a historic resource, the constant is our people. Our neighborhoods and businesses transcend age, ethnicity, and culture to create safe, welcoming places to live and work.

BELLEVUE 2035: THE CITY WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

*Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength.
We embrace the future while respecting our past.*

The seven strategic target areas identified in the Bellevue City Council Vision Priorities are:



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bellevue business is global and local.



TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Transportation is both reliable and predictable. Mode choices are abundant and safe.



HIGH QUALITY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

From a livable high-rise urban environment to large wooded lots in an equestrian setting, people can find exactly where they want to live and work.



BELLEVUE: GREAT PLACES WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

Bellevue is a place to be inspired by culture, entertainment, and nature.



REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Bellevue will lead, catalyze, and partner with our neighbors throughout the region.



ACHIEVING HUMAN POTENTIAL

Bellevue is caring community where all residents enjoy a high quality life.



HIGH PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT

People are attracted to live here because they see that city government is well managed.

For more information please visit: <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/city-council/council-vision>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Neighborhood Planning report provides community outreach and engagement recommendations to the City of Bellevue. The Department of Community Development in Bellevue seeks to develop and apply more inclusive neighborhood planning practices in order to expand its reach across a broader range of communities. The City asked six students completing the Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) undergraduate major at the University of Washington (UW), to research and develop engagement strategies for the City to reach Generations X, Y, and Z, which include individuals born between 1965-1980, 1981-1996, and 1997-2012, respectively (Dimock 2019). The recommendations of this report are based on case studies from various cities, literature reviews, individual research on new technology, and a creativity session carried out by our team.

Some forms of outreach and engagement work better for different populations. Platforms, like public meetings and forums, for sharing information and engaging with community members about planning processes, as well as documents produced to inform community members about future projects and events, should be accessible to everyone. We have identified several different recommendations to help accommodate and reach the diverse populations represented by Generations X, Y, and Z. The central findings of this report are broken down into four categories: Social Media, Interpersonal, Technology, and Creativity Session. Within each category, we offer a set of recommendations for the City to consider. Many of these recommendations build upon what has already been done before by the City of Bellevue; some incorporate ideas that have been used elsewhere; and others are new to the field of planning.

Each section includes relevant findings from our research that helped us develop the list of recommendations. Included within each section is a matrix that helps identify which recommendation is best suited for a desired outcome, such as broadcasting information to the public or facilitating community discussions. The last section of this report is titled "Implementation." In this section, we analyze recommendations and offer suggestions for pairing certain recommendations.

FIVE KEY FINDINGS

1. Tailoring engagement strategies to suit communities is an imperative step toward planning for healthy, thriving neighborhoods.
2. The City of Bellevue can expand its use of social media to not only broadcast information, but also to engage community members in conversation and data collection.
3. Integrating technological devices can make in-person engagement activities more efficient and meaningful, and it can increase visioning capacities.
4. Engaging students at age-appropriate programs where they have opportunities to "solve" real-world problems is one way the City can learn from youth perspectives; this may also inspire a lifetime of civic engagement for youth and young adult community members.
5. The City of Bellevue can use these recommendations to create a suite of engagement strategies that will allow planners to hear from a broader range of community members and yield greater results from their engagement efforts.

Tailoring engagement strategies to suit communities is an imperative step toward planning for healthy, thriving neighborhoods.



Engagement brings the best out of Bellevue's great neighborhoods! CITY OF BELLEVUE

INTRODUCTION

ESTABLISHING A CITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP FOR THIS PROJECT

Our client for this project is the City of Bellevue's Community Development department. The department's goal for this project has been to learn more about methods of community engagement and outreach that would encourage greater participation from underrepresented residents, specifically those who represent the generations X, Y, and Z and who live in Northwest and Northeast Bellevue neighborhoods. Bellevue commissioned this task to students in the Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) major at the University of Washington (UW) who were enrolled in CEP 460: Planning in Context. The UW's CEP program offered students opportunities to participate in a variety of hands-on projects with real clients as part of Livable City Year (LCY) during the Fall Quarter of 2018. Students bring a variety of backgrounds and experiences to the table, and opted for projects that reflect their interests and career paths. Our team offers a variety of recommendations to the City of Bellevue to apply to its resident engagement and outreach practices. Some of our recommendations can be paired together strategically and all can be applied collectively.

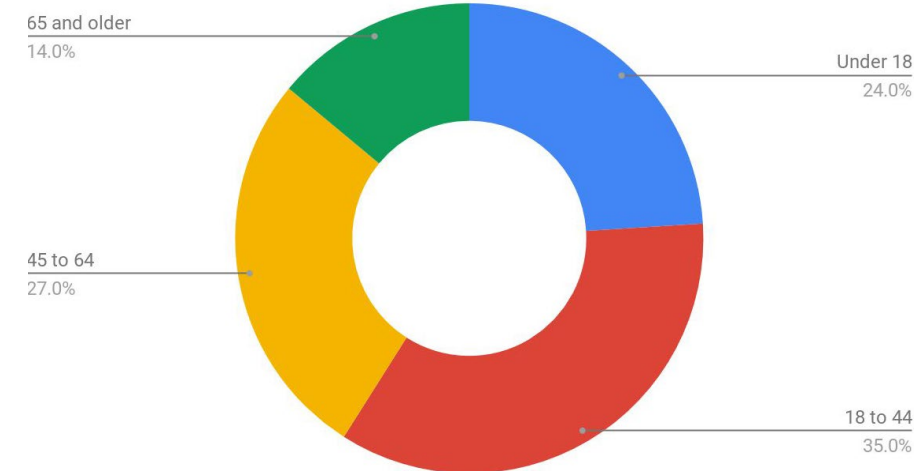
Nobody knows more about a community's unique needs and hopes than residents themselves.

COMMUNITY INPUT IN EQUITABLE PLANNING

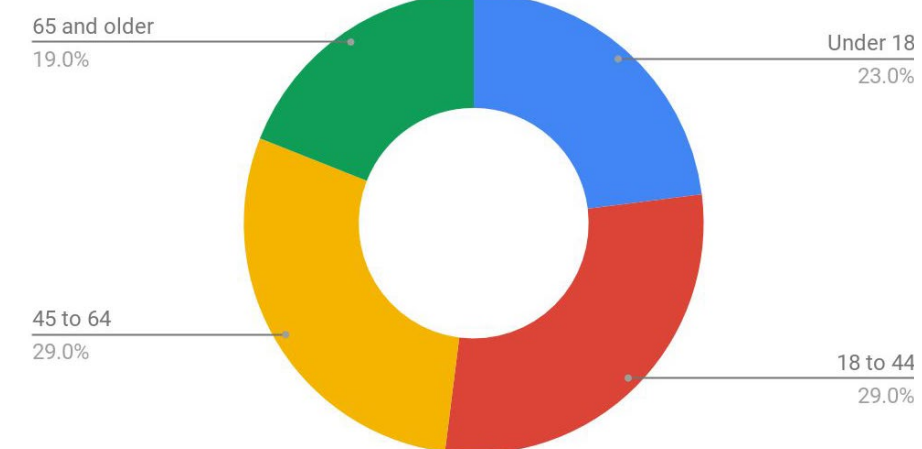
Community input is vital when it comes to decision-making to affect the quality of life of a community. This is true because nobody knows more about a community's unique needs and aspirations than residents themselves. Determining what issues a neighborhood or city has requires engaging all of the residents who experience those issues first hand. It is important for those community members who are typically underrepresented in and excluded from planning processes (e.g., younger generations, and minority racial populations) to become active participants in conversations about how to make planning processes more equitable and inclusive. Encouraging all residents to participate requires a variety of different approaches, some of which may be used in concert with others. These understandings guided the students involved in this project.



AGE DISTRIBUTION NW BELLEVUE



AGE DISTRIBUTION NE BELLEVUE



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO DEMOCRACY

Recently, there is a renewed focus on creating dialogue between local governments and citizens, with hopes of revitalizing civic engagement and strengthening our nation's democratic values. Social capital, defined as the features of social organization and the range of benefits those features bring "...seems to be a precondition for economic development as well as for effective government" (Putnam 1993). In other words, the strengthening of community ties through engagement may lead to a more representative and better functioning local government. Civic engagement among residents can lead to positive outcomes and, with good communication and coordination, can be self-reinforcing while increasing the quality of life for residents of an area (Putnam 1993). Civic engagement plays a critical role in our government; and increasing the rate of participation can be achieved by innovating and applying new strategies to engage citizens.



The Northeast Bellevue neighborhood
CITY OF BELLEVUE

TWO BELLEVUE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Northwest Bellevue neighborhood (NW Bellevue) is home to 9,000 residents, of which 60% report to feel some sense, if not a strong sense, of community where they live. The City of Bellevue wishes to increase engagement of residents younger than age 75. This accounts for 86% of NW Bellevue's resident base. NW Bellevue has a high educational attainment rate, with 75% of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The Northeast Bellevue neighborhood (NE Bellevue) is home to a slightly larger population, of 10,500 residents. Similar to the NW Bellevue, close to 80% of residents are younger than age 65 and 59% percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher

Bellevue's goal, to increase engagement with Generations X, Y, and Z, poses an opportunity with the NW and NE Bellevue neighborhoods. Both neighborhoods have a high percentage of residents who are 54 years old or younger, an age range which corresponds to the City's target generations: X, Y, and Z. With this age range in mind, we explored strategies involving technologies these age groups typically utilize. The recommendations provided in this report can be applied by the City to improve outreach and increase engagement with younger residents of these neighborhoods.



The Northwest Bellevue neighborhood
CITY OF BELLEVUE

METHODS

This project involved a three-step process.

1. Examine and analyze best practices in community outreach and engagement.
2. Synthesize initial findings and organize them as a menu of engagement options.
3. Develop a report for the City of Bellevue, proposing potential strategies for the City to utilize to connect with target communities (members of Generations X, Y, and Z) of NW and NE Bellevue neighborhoods.

Early on in our process we decided to divide our research into our four categories: Social Media, Interpersonal Strategies, Technology, and Creativity Session. We worked in pairs to research and develop ideas for each of the first three categories (social media, interpersonal strategies, technology). We all took part in the development of the ideas presented in the Creativity Session section of this document.

STEP ONE

We began this project by identifying and evaluating outreach and engagement strategies currently practiced by the City of Bellevue. We explored ways to enhance these methods. During our research phase, we were inspired by practices other public, private, and non-profit entities employ to engage their target audiences. Ultimately, we compiled a list of potential strategies and recommendations for the City of Bellevue to improve its civic current outreach and engagement practices.

STEP TWO

We focused on developing and refining a set of recommendations for the City of Bellevue to put into practice. During this part of our process, we searched for new ideas related to technologies not already used by the City of Bellevue. In order to create a list of recommendations for the City to use, we looked into the feasibility of the strategies that we recommended with regard to availability of financial resources, time, and human capital. Additionally, we used a matrix to compare strategies based upon their purpose (engagement vs. outreach), context (in-person vs. remote), target population (age group), and desired outcome (soliciting feedback vs. visioning vs. facilitating conversation).

STEP THREE

Finally, we compiled our findings and recommendations as a final report to present to the City of Bellevue.



Bellevue City Hall CITY OF BELLEVUE

FINDINGS

We have compiled a variety of outreach and engagement strategies and created a list of recommendations for the City of Bellevue. This section is broken down into four parts, each composed of an introduction to the subject, case studies, and recommendations. Sections are titled: Social Media, Interpersonal, Technology, and Creativity Session. The last section, Creativity Session, refers to ideas we developed as a team.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be used as a powerful tool for communicating messages to large groups of people quickly. In the context of this project, we analyzed several different social media platforms and considered their effectiveness at community outreach and engagement. Pew Research Center conducted a study to evaluate social media use in 2018. We have condensed some of the findings from this study to show age demographics of account-holders of each platform. It is worth mentioning that Facebook has the highest percentage of account holders across all age groups, compared to Instagram and Snapchat. The study provides evidence for how Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat could be points of access for the City to communicate with diverse age ranges. This may be especially the case if the different platforms are used in concert with each other (Pew 2018).

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION MAKING USE OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS			
AGE RANGE	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	SNAPCHAT
18-29	81	64	68
30-49	78	40	26
50-64	65	21	10
65+	41	10	3

SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN 2018 

Local government agencies, like the City of Bellevue, may use social media to open dialogue with the communities they are formed to represent and serve. Utilization of social media for conversational engagement allows residents to provide feedback on decisions that could impact public programs and policies. Additionally, use of two-way communication can facilitate collaboration on local projects and public services among City staff and community members, including those who represent Generations X, Y, and Z, of central interest to this project. This way, the City can crowdsource solutions and invite the public to innovate ideas for the planning process. Social media, when used as a tool to increase public access to local government and information, can also enhance people's understanding of their local government's role in everyday life (Bertot 2012). Cities should be using social media platforms to engage with, and not just broadcast information to, younger generations. This is especially true for Generations Y and Z, both of which use social media to access information and communicate.

CASE STUDIES

Cities that use various social media platforms often do so for purposes of sharing information about certain programs, advertising City-sponsored events, informing residents of current planning and development projects, asking residents for their input and opinions, and sharing images with community members. We conducted a review of cities that are comparable in size to the City of Bellevue, looking at their use of social media platforms and the type of engagement they accomplish through their use of social media. One city, in particular, stands out for its skill in managing social media profiles: Vancouver, Washington.

Vancouver, Washington, located just north of Portland, Oregon, is a growing city with an active following on several social media accounts. With a population of nearly 180,000 people, Vancouver is comparable in size to the City of Bellevue. Like Bellevue, Vancouver is located nearby a larger city. Also similar to Bellevue, Vancouver uses Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and Twitter. Vancouver uses these accounts to publish original content which it maintains consistent across all platforms. Content varies from images of Vancouver, to information about upcoming events, to invitations to the public to comment on upcoming plans and projects. The City posts on Instagram on a daily basis and has close to 4,500 followers. The City uses Instagram's "story" function to share short video clips, photos, infographics, and polls. All of these are saved to the public page.

Local government agencies can use social media to open dialogue with the communities they are formed to represent and serve.

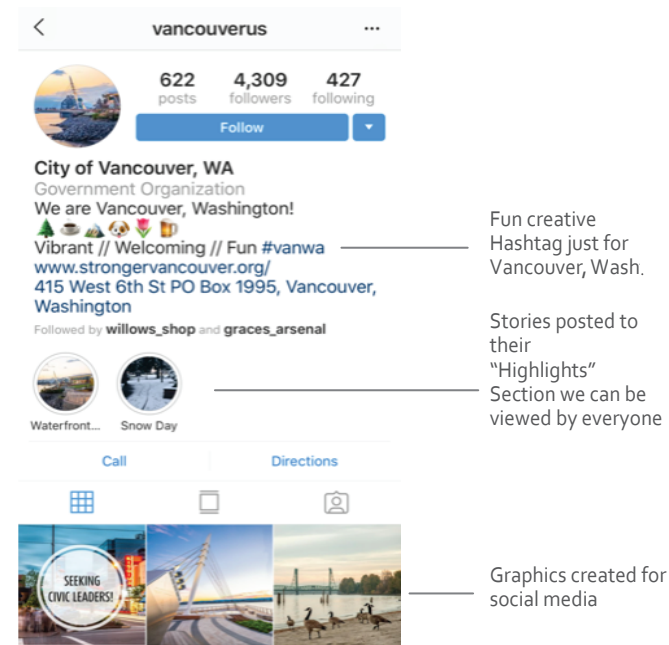
Social media, when used as a tool to increase public access to local government and information, can also enhance people's understanding of their local government's role in everyday life.



RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend increasing two-way communications between the City of Bellevue and residents of Bellevue through the intentional use of social media platforms already in frequent use by Generations X, Y, and Z. This is a shift away from using social media exclusively for purposes of public service announcements, in which the City merely passes information along to the public, toward actively engaging with community members about plans and projects that will impact them, their neighborhoods, and the city. Whereas bringing new audiences to community meetings has presented challenges for the City, social media platforms can reach people where they already are, including audiences who are less likely to attend a public forum. In particular, leveraging social media as a method for engagement may address the City of Bellevue's struggles to reach younger community members, renters, and people who experience a language barrier. Engaging with people on social media that already have large followings on different platforms may also enable the City of Bellevue to disseminate its messages to a broader audience over time (Barrett 2013). We recommend increasing the City's presence on Facebook and Instagram, plus developing a presence on Snapchat and beginning to use a social media-tracking platform.

We recommend increasing two-way communications between the City of Bellevue and residents of Bellevue through the intentional use of social media platforms already in frequent use by Generations X, Y, and Z.



Fun creative Hashtag just for Vancouver, Wash.

Stories posted to their "Highlights" Section we can be viewed by everyone

Graphics created for social media

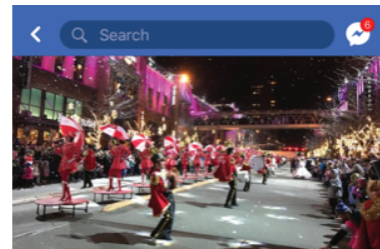
A question for the public to respond to

Eye catching graphics

Use of a geotag in story, tying a location to the image



The City of Vancouver's Instagram page is polished, up-to-date, and fosters two-way communication with residents.



How to use tags when creating a facebook shared event:

- Step 1: Create Shared event
- Make it public
- Add Tags to help categorize event

Snowflake Lane
Public · Recurring event by Bellevue Square and 2 others

Interested Share More

42.7K interested including Jenna, Matt and 3 others

Nov 23 - Dec 24

DEC 11 Tue 7:00 PM DEC 12 Wed 7:00 PM +13

Snowflake Lane
Bellevue Way, Bellevue, Was

Details

Experience the wonder of falling snow, dazzling lights, festive music, toy drummers and dancers, and see all your favorite characters! Celebrate the season at Snowflake Lane - the region's most festive holiday scene.

Join us for the complimentary parade on the sidewalks between Bellevue Square and Lincoln Square from NE 4th to NE 8th Streets every n... See More

Tags will appear in the details of the event

Kid Friendly

Events Create

Home Calendar 7 Hosting

Find Events by Category

Music Art Food Comedy Causes Theater

Use of tags such as these can help the event be found by other users interested in those categories

Use of Facebook event tags can help disseminate information to a range of people.

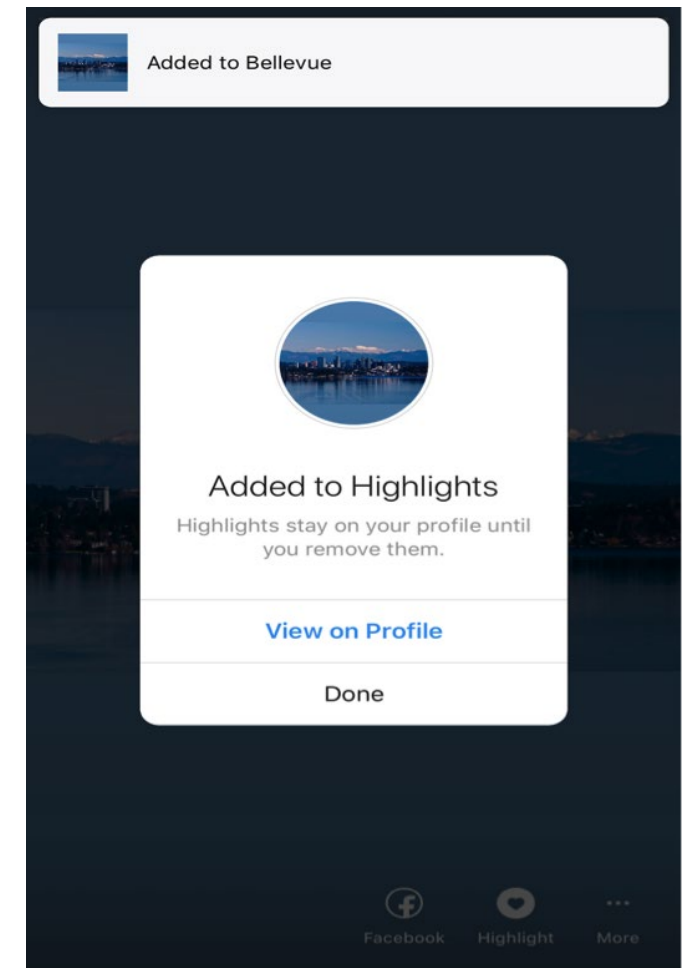
Facebook Facebook has a variety of functions that can be utilized by the City to increase engagement with community members. The City has already successfully used this platform to connect and share information with residents, and we believe that the City can expand its outreach and engagement practices by applying additional measures.

Facebook Shared Events Facebook can be used as a tool for promoting and sharing information related to public events. There are a variety of ways to broadcast events to reach beyond the people who regularly follow the City's page.

When creating a shared event, "tags" help link the event to other relevant pages. For example, if the City were to plan an event to take place at a farmers market, the City could use tags like "Food," "Kid-Friendly," and "Live Music," making the event appear on the feeds of those who are interested in events that involve those things. Thus, tags offer a way for Facebook account holders, like the City of Bellevue, to share information about their events with people who might not otherwise happen upon them in their regular newsfeed. Tags also make it possible for the City to reach residents who may not already follow the City's Facebook page.

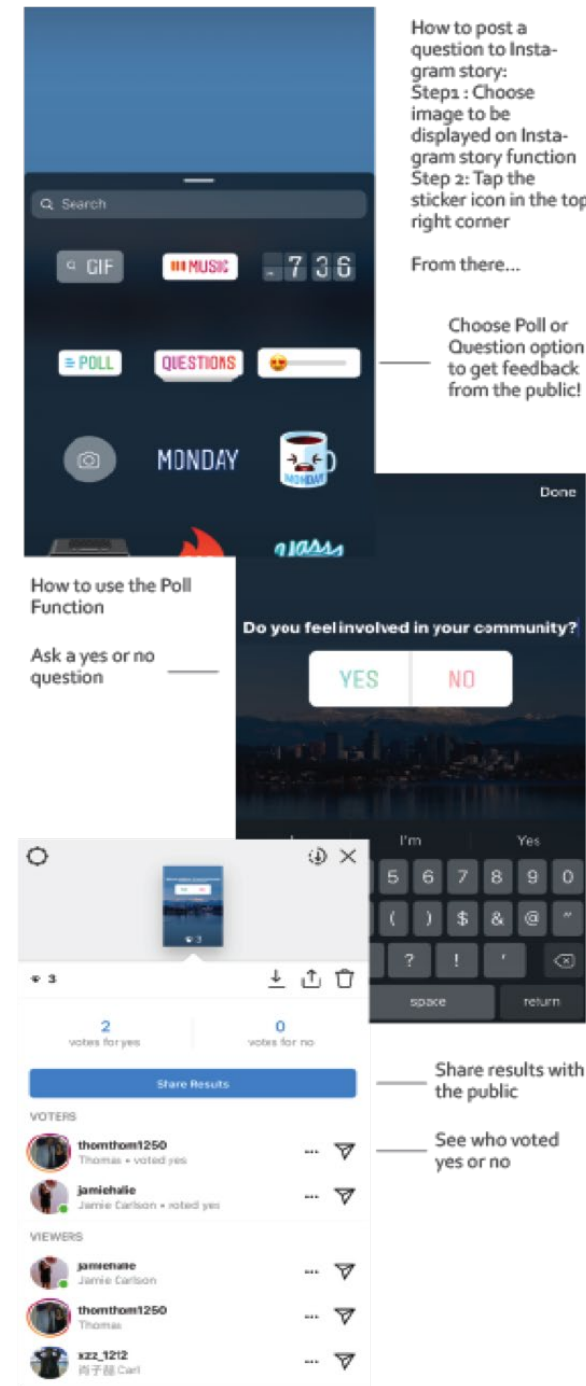
Instagram The City of Bellevue's current Instagram account is used to share pictures of sites around the city and to inform community members of important events and solicit their feedback. We believe that the City can utilize many of the functions provided by Instagram to reach and engage with a broader, more diverse range of Bellevue residents, to include Generations X, Y, and Z.

Instagram Stories Tailored to Individual Neighborhoods Instagram lets people post pictures to their own "Instagram Story." Once accepted by a moderator, these stories become public. Making a story public allows people in the area, including people who do not already follow the account, to view the posts. Each post can be added to a "Highlight" section of the user's account, a section managed by the user. Using these tools, the City of Bellevue can publish content-specific posts pertaining to individual neighborhoods. Such posts can be labeled according to neighborhood or project.



Instagram highlights allow for post categorization by neighborhood.

Instagram Stories to Poll Residents Instagram also allows users to create polls and ask questions using the “Story” function referred to previously. This function can be used to ask residents for their input on specific questions framed by the City. The use of Instagram stories to create polls and ask questions is one way for the City to reach and engage with younger generations, many of whom use Instagram. The results of Instagram polling functions can be recorded as well and shared with the public on social media; as well, results can be compiled and recorded more formally, and presented to the public in another way deemed more appropriate by the City.



How to post a question to Instagram story:
Step 1: Choose image to be displayed on Instagram story function
Step 2: Tap the sticker icon in the top right corner

From there...

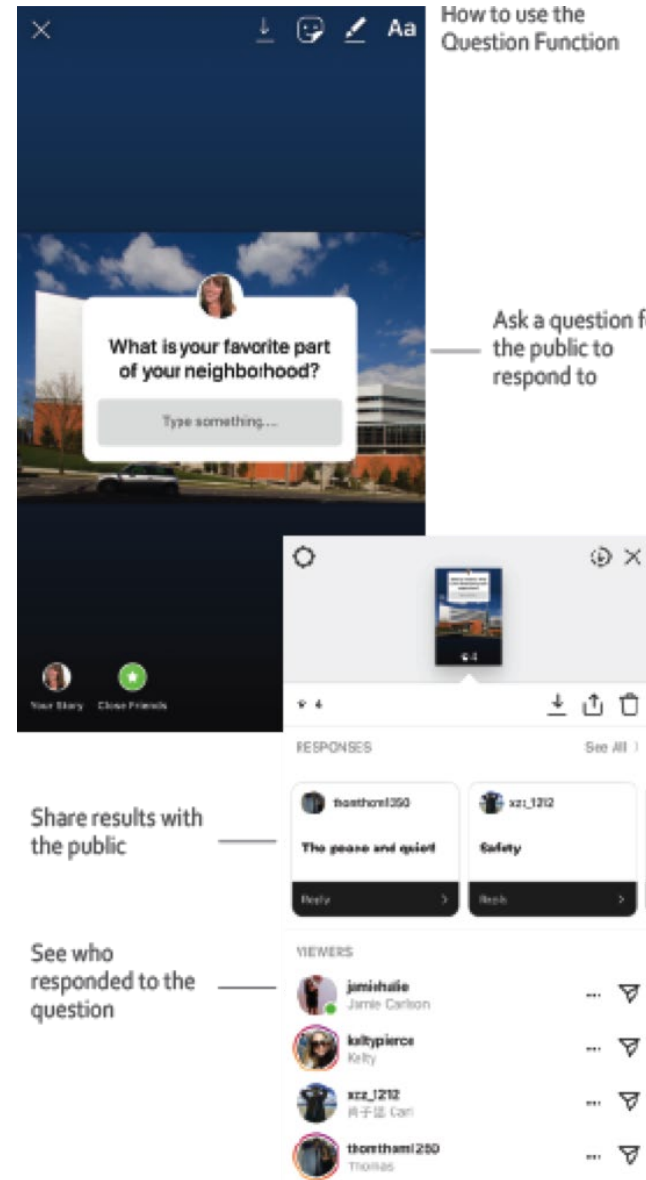
Choose Poll or Question option to get feedback from the public!

How to use the Poll Function

Ask a yes or no question

Do you feel involved in your community?

YES NO



How to use the Question Function

Ask a question for the public to respond to

Share results with the public

See who responded to the question

In addition to polling, Instagram stories are a platform the City can use to gather and display responses to open-ended questions.

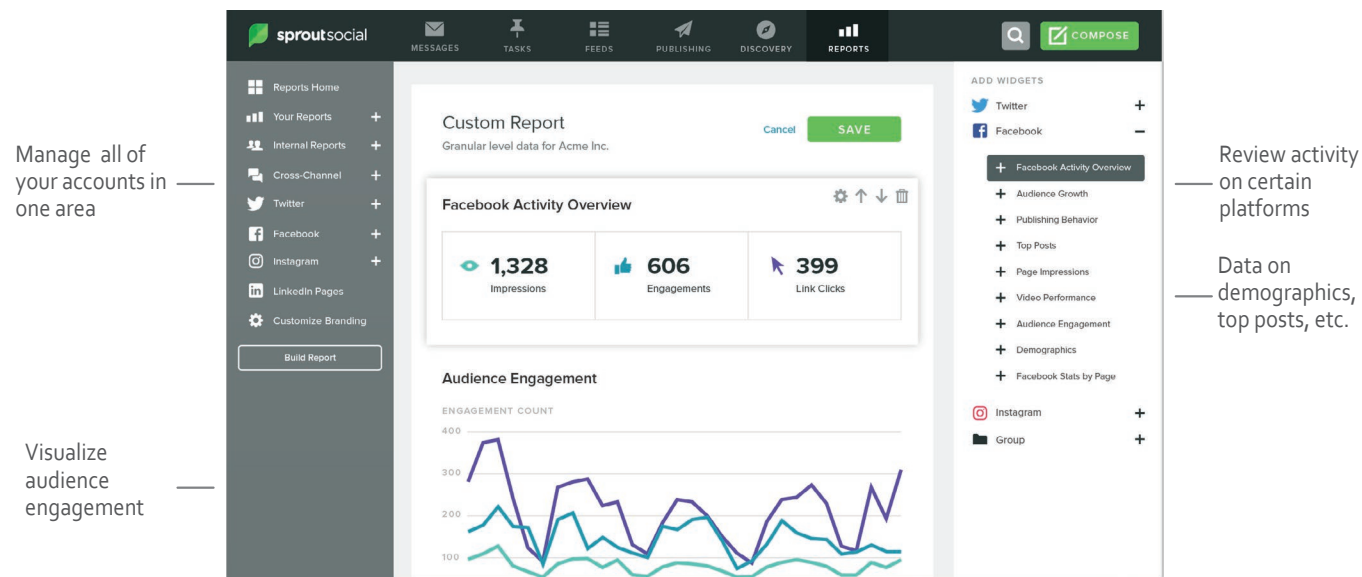
Social Media Management Using a social media management platform such as Sprout Social or Buffer can make managing and tracking social media posts easier for account holders. These resources help individuals, organizations, and public agencies to maintain consistency of content across a range of social media platforms, and they aid users in evaluating levels of engagement they achieve through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Management platforms also allow account holders to manage various social media accounts from one dashboard. Some of the functions include the ability to create posts and set a date in the future for the content to be posted. This means that even on days when City government is closed, staff can continue to post on all of their social media accounts if they have planned and scheduled posts in advance.

Social media management platforms allow for tracking and analyzing how people interact using social media accounts. Information related to frequency and sort of interaction each post achieves is recorded, so the City would be able to tell who is seeing posts, who is liking posts, and who is commenting on posts. Thus, the City could easily compare the reach of each one of its social media platforms. This data can help the City of Bellevue to identify the kinds of posts that inspire more meaningful and greater quantity of interaction overall. This information can help the City make better use of each social media platform.

Cost Social media management platforms vary in cost, from \$15 to \$399 per month. The cost depends upon the number of social media accounts being managed, the number of scheduled posts, and the number of account operators. Bellevue will likely have a just a handful of operators and relatively few social media accounts, so a smaller monthly plan is likely to fulfill its needs. Simpler plans generally have monthly fees between \$15 and \$99 (Buffer 2018, Sprout Social Inc. 2018).

The City can foster two-way communication using the Instagram stories function, which allows users to create polls and ask questions.

Social media management platforms allow for tracking how people interact using social media accounts.



Social media management platforms streamline the production of posts and measure success rates of different platforms in use. SPROUT SOCIAL

Content and Graphics City governments succeed in using social media platforms to reach and engage residents through content consistency. To ensure that the content of multiple social media accounts presents effective messaging, we recommend the following tips to the City:

1. Publish posts in diverse languages. Make sure that messages are published in diverse languages to reflect the linguistic diversity of an area. The City of Bellevue offers the introductory pages of its website in the five most commonly spoken languages of non-English speaking residents: Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, and Vietnamese. The City's social media posts should follow suit. This increases accessibility and expands outreach and engagement efforts.
2. Pay attention to tone and style consistency: To increase notoriety and recognition among public audiences, consistent tone and style is important. Setting a standard for font types and maintaining a common color theme for graphics produced by the City goes a long way to ensure that viewers easily recognize posts related to City and neighborhood planning.

Uses of Social Media Matrix					
Strategy	Purpose		Context		
Social Media	Engage	Broadcast Information	In-person	Remote	
Instagram	X	X		X	
Facebook	X	X		X	
Sprout Social		X		X	

Population to Engage			Desired Outcome		
Younger	Older	Language Barrier	Get Feedback on Plans & Ideas	Visioning	Facilitate Conversation
X	X	X	X		X
X	X	X	X		X

The ability to foster meaningful relationships and understanding through direct communication is unmatched by any technological means.

INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES

Interpersonal strategies involve face-to-face encounters between City staff and community members. These outreach and engagement methods require someone affiliated with the City of Bellevue to be present and attentive to community members in person. While social media and other technological tools can help make information more accessible to a broader range of residents, these tools do not replace in-person conversations, where eye contact, body language, and tone combine to convey messages more clearly than typed messages and emojis exchanged virtually. Thus, even with the use of new technologies, interpersonal methods remain important for outreach and engagement that occurs between the government and the public.

Improving this type of engagement can be done by accounting for neighborhood assets and capitalizing off resources and opportunities present in communities. Community-based resources and opportunities may form a springboard to new, more human-centered and place-based projects. The ability to foster meaningful relationships and understanding through direct communication is unmatched by any technological means. Promoting and strengthening interpersonal strategies can help residents develop more trust in local government, cultivate a strong sense of community, and empower people to take the reins on planning for events and programs taking shape in their neighborhoods and city.

CASE STUDY

Programs intended to promote civic engagement have been carried out at city and county levels. Programs managed and run by local governments can encourage youth to become more involved in their communities and provide channels for youth input to feed into local government agencies and departments. Clark County offers a compelling example of a civic engagement program for students.

Clark County promotes civic engagement of youth through the Clark County Youth Commission (CCYC). The County uses this program to engage 30 youth (ages 13-18), inviting them to help develop policy proposals alongside County Commissions, facilitate community events, and participate in volunteer opportunities specific to CCYC. Each policy assignment requires youth to conduct research and practice community outreach. In their work, youth develop an understanding of how to access and use resources available via the government. The program also holds public events that celebrate youth in the community, such as the Clark County Youth Achievement Celebration. (Clark County 2018).

Elizabeth Hill, the CCYC Program Coordinator, ensures Youth Commissioners can access government resources. She guides youth through their process of developing reports and organizing community events. Such a program, tied closely to the local government, which involves and empowers youth participants, yields long-lasting relationships between youth audiences and local government entities and encourages civic participation from a young age (Hill 2018). Programs tied to local government that involve and empower youth participants yield long-lasting relationships between youth audiences and local government and encourage civic participation from a young age.

Promoting and strengthening interpersonal strategies can help residents develop more trust in local government, cultivate a strong sense of community, and empower people to take the reins on planning for events and programs taking shape in their neighborhoods and city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing interpersonal engagement methods and approaches, we conclude that it is important for the City to recognize how effective face-to-face approaches are compared to other, less personal and direct approaches, including the use of social media platforms described in the previous section of this report. Bearing this in mind, it is also important to appreciate that community members are busy with their own lives and schedules, and may not show up at community events unless they are made more accessible to them in their neighborhoods. Planning for events to take place in neighborhoods, rather than requiring community members to show up at City Hall, is essential for reaching broader public audiences. It also demonstrates the City's commitment to meeting people where they are.

Planning for events to take place in neighborhoods, rather than requiring community members to show up at City Hall, is essential for reaching broader public audiences.



The Clark County Youth Commission engages young people in civic processes and directs fresh ideas of youth to local government bodies.
CLARK COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

Engagement in the Classroom Talking to students about why civic engagement is important and offering them opportunities to influence projects and programs taking shape where they live are ways to empower youth to become involved in their communities. It also provides them direct insights into how their local government is formed and how it operates. Several schools have classes on civic engagement and government, and these classes hold important opportunities to expose real-world planning practices to students. We recommend that a City staff member visit high school classrooms and talk to students about the planning profession and current projects taking place in their neighborhoods. To deepen students' understandings of planning practices, an in-class activity or project could be designed to encourage students to learn more about their local government. The City can take advantage of classroom interactions as opportunities to learn more about youth values and concerns, as well as their perspectives about living in their neighborhoods. Engaging with the students in this manner can take place in primary and secondary schools, as well as in institutions of higher education. The City can ensure engaging with a broader range of students by extending itself to students of all levels of education.

The City can take advantage of classroom interactions as opportunities to learn more about youth values and concerns, as well as their perspectives about living in their neighborhoods.

Student Program A student program coordinated and run by City staff is another way to engage with youth populations. Programs similar to the Clark County Youth Commission, referred to previously, can provide opportunities for the City of Bellevue to form lasting relationships with youth. A similar program could be managed by a program coordinator from the City of Bellevue; this person would be responsible for creating projects and events to involve students. The projects could revolve around specific planning projects, policy initiatives, neighborhood issues, and/or community engagement events. By providing such opportunities, the City can encourage youth to become active in civic issues and government processes, which may inspire them to remain engaged in their communities and in local government as adults. Such a program could also support youth interested in reaching out and making a difference in their own communities right now. Running such a program would require the program coordinator from the City to organize team meetings with the students on a bi-weekly or monthly basis, with the possibility of students meeting at an additional time each month without the presence of City staff. The program coordinator from the City would work with youth to coordinate events and meetings, and help students acquire resources needed to complete projects.

The following table illustrates how these various interpersonal recommendations can be applied.



Partnerships with local schools and the creation of programs for high school students to engage in planning practices are ways the City can engage directly with Generation Z. CITY OF BELLEVUE

Uses of Interpersonal Strategies Matrix					
Strategy	Purpose		Context		
	Engage	Broadcast Information	In-person	Remote	
Engagement in the Classroom	x		x		
Asset Mapping	x		x	x	
Student Program	x		x		

Population to Engage			Desired Outcome		
Younger	Older	Language Barrier	Get Feedback on Plans & Ideas	Visioning	Facilitate Conversation
x					x
				x	
x			x	x	x

Technology can be used to address inequities and to democratize civic engagement.

TECHNOLOGY

Disclaimer: In the context of this report, technology refers to existing digital devices, software, and apps that cities and citizens can use to engage in planning processes. Technology, in this case, excludes social media, discussed earlier in this report.

By way of granting access to more and varied engagement options, technology is a means for the City of Bellevue to address existing participation disparities. Rather than reinforcing inequities by carrying out the same practices of the past, technology can be used to address social inequities and to democratize civic engagement. Technology can be used to address inequities and democratize civic engagement. Its use requires precise planning and recurrent evaluation. When used correctly, technology can increase access and include and empower a broader range of community members, effectively closing the engagement gap. While technological forms of engagement should not replace traditional public fora, technology can provide additional strategies for planners to engender inclusion and participation (Goodspeed 2008).

Virtual Reality (VR) is quickly becoming a central technology used by architects and planners to display their concepts and designs. Whereas two-dimensional plans can be difficult for viewers to fully understand, VR immerses people in planning materials. Other three-dimensional models made from hard materials, such as cardboard or wood, are generally difficult to manipulate; thus, they typically inspire less feedback from those who view them. Furthermore, when the scale of such models is fixed, an aerial view becomes the only way to visualize the plan. VR provides new ways to view models as well as opportunities for viewers to adjust the scale and perspective of models in real-time. Given the right programs are used, VR can also allow viewers to manipulate the model in ways that allow them to envision possible outcomes. VR is one way that computer aided design (CAD) programs are revolutionizing methods for urban planning and design.

CASE STUDIES

CommunityVis CommunityVis allows participants to recreate real world scenarios and consider the potential long-term outcomes and consequences of urban planning and design decisions. The program, created by City Explained Incorporated, was used by a group of high

school and college aged students to engage them in the community planning process. The students were asked to consider a range of elements (e.g., traffic, pollution, and land uses) and use the program to imagine redevelopment of a site. They were provided with a range of options, from land use and building typologies to street amenities. Once students input their design elements into the program, they could see a rendering of the space they created. Along with the 3D visual of their work, CommunityVis offers projections of other potential outcomes of design decisions made by students, including costs, benefits, and design shortcomings. By repeating the design process using this program, students could compare their designs with a range of alternatives and optimize their design (City Explained Inc. 2018)

Students were able to imagine new designs for their community using CommunityVis. Their practice using the program instilled in them a sense of ownership over the places they conceived of and designed. This technology offers a meaningful way to engage young people who are often absent during planning processes and whose visions may subsequently not be reflected in outcomes of urban planning and design. Whereas planning often involves abstract concepts that are difficult to grasp and envision, CommunityVis provides an accessible, visual process, and provides immediate feedback to participants.

Webinar Software Webinar software can be used not only to upload recordings of presentations for public viewing, but also to track attendance, accept real-time feedback and questions, and track approximate participant location. RainWise, a contractor with Seattle Public Utilities, uses the webinar platform GoToWebinar to engage with homeowners. GoToWebinar features different webinar plans, with varied features and pricing options. The least expensive 'Lite' plan features basic services for \$49 per month, with a cap of 100 attendees and webcast-only mode. More expensive 'Pro' plans cost \$199 per month and include features like increased webinar attendance, source tracking, and the ability to record webinar sessions (Plans and Pricing 2018).

RainWise, as a result of its need to record and track attendance, uses the GoToWebinar 'Pro' plan (Taylor 2018). While attending webinars, people can submit questions and be responded to in real-time, on the air. This makes the webinar method resemble an in-person meeting much more so than comments sections that accompany social media posts. Not only

do webinar participants receive real-time responses to their questions, but the answers to their questions can be heard by all attending the webinar. The implementation section of this report details more about how webinars increase the effectiveness of outreach and engagement methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Online Community Meeting/Webinar By organizing and hosting online community webinars and by enabling people to access recordings of them, the City of Bellevue can make public meetings more accessible to a broader range of community members. Webinar platforms address mobility and hearing barriers. They also make meetings more accessible for those who experience scheduling conflicts, transportation barriers, and for those who would require childcare in order to attend a meeting. Webinar recordings could also help accommodate people who have language barriers, or who process information slowly.

How an Online Webinar Works Online webinars allow people to tune into a seminar from the comfort of their homes. Such programs can enable City planners to disperse information about new plans and garner real-time feedback from the members of the public. To access a webinar, community members must have an internet-connected device, such as a laptop or smartphone. Webinars may be posted to a public website where they can be accessed and listened to live; webinar recordings may also be shared publicly. Though people who access webinars via recordings will not benefit from the opportunity to use the direct feedback feature, they would be able to pause or slow down the recording and they could still send questions and comments to City staff after listening.

Webinar platforms address mobility and hearing barriers. They also make meetings more accessible for those who experience scheduling conflicts, transportation barriers, and for those who would require childcare in order to attend a meeting.

Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies can benefit the City of Bellevue in neighborhood planning efforts. AR and VR can take abstract concepts and enable people to visualize their surroundings according to different potential outcomes of planning and design, which allows them to provide more accurate feedback to the City. AR refers to a participant's real-life view becoming enhanced by digital visuals. In a VR experience, the participant is shut off from reality and sees only what is displayed to them digitally. People experiencing AR and VR typically wear headsets that allow them to interact with the visual display while they move about. The City of Bellevue can use this technology as a means for allowing community members to "experience" design plans prior to giving feedback and asking questions. There are different levels at which virtual reality can be used, from less immersive screen viewing options to fully immersive, surround-viewing options (Thompson 2006). The flexibility in immersion level provides the viewer and designer options based on their preferences. For example, AR may be more appealing to viewers who are uncomfortable with a fully immersive experience; this is why it is advantageous to offer access to both types.



Using VR technology, participants can be immersed in a cityscape that exists only in plans.
MARC LEE

AR/VR FEASIBILITY

The City of Bellevue may assess that AR and VR require high-level design programs and cost more than other methods for sharing plans with the public. However, these are currently the most immersive means on the market for sharing plans and designs through digital means. Utilizing virtual reality for the purposes of planning also requires coordination among multiple parties, including the City, a designer, a programmer, and an AR/VR hardware developer. If the City plans to redevelop a space, and wants to use AR and/or VR, it will need a designer to create a three-dimensional model, a partner to convert their model to AR/VR formats, as well as the necessary hardware viewing devices. Costs for the conversion of traditional 3D models to AR/VR vary widely, depending upon the scale of the viewable model and the design's intricacy (Day 2018). Depending on desired outcomes and on the amount of additional content needed, project costs are likely to range between \$25,000 and \$100,000 (Schou 2018).

Tablets When integrated with planning activities thoughtfully, tablets can be very useful for engaging with community members in more meaningful ways. If the City had its own set of tablets to bring to meetings and events, participants could use them to draw and write out ideas, annotate maps and diagrams, and respond to polls. Activities involving tablets could be performed by small groups or by individuals, and the results of activities could be displayed on a large screen for a larger audience. All notes and drawings created on tablets could be saved as digital files, which would be easy for the City to access at a later time (storing information this way reduces the risk of losing data while also eliminating paper waste and cutting back on need for physical filing space). At more casual public events, such as farmers markets, planners can be equipped with tablets as a tool for engaging with passersby, asking them to complete a short poll or survey. Tablets can also be used to display video-clips and information about plans and upcoming projects. The Apple iPad and the Microsoft Surface are both well-regarded tablet options.

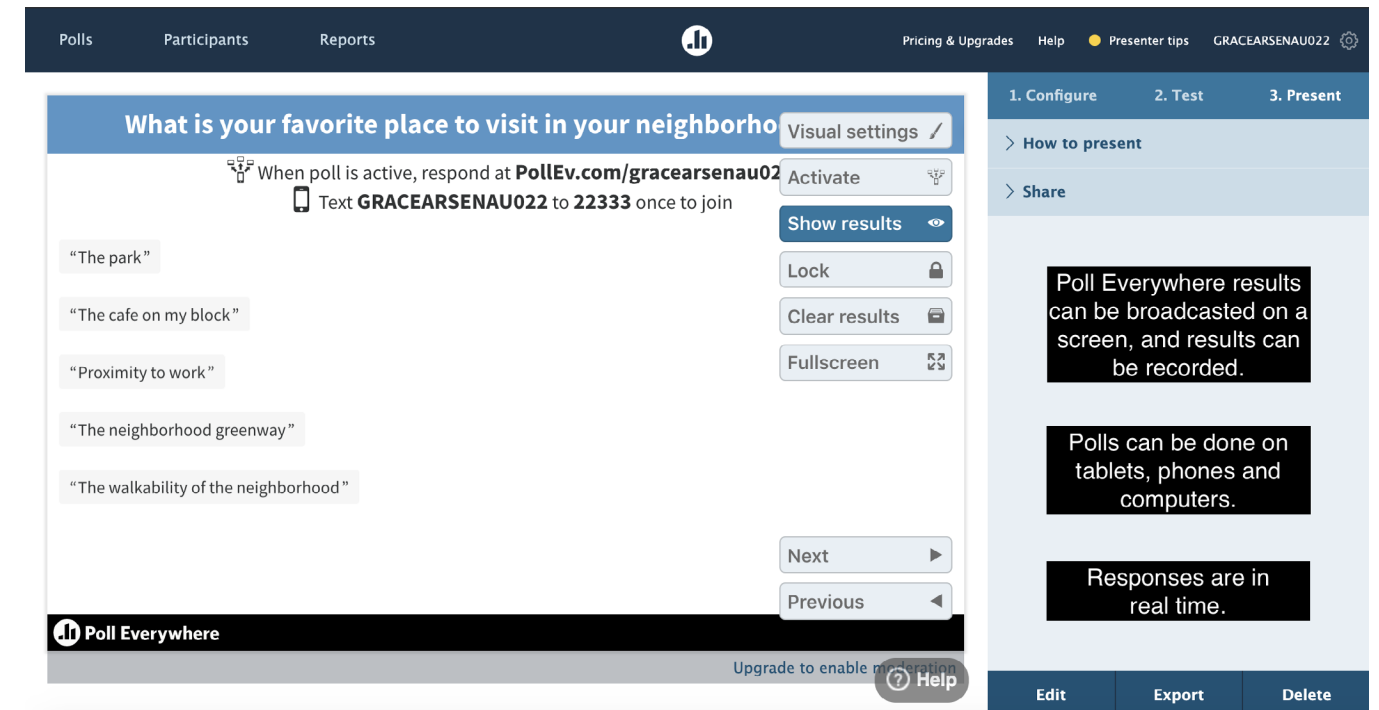
If the City had its own set of tablets to bring to meetings and events, participants could use them to draw and write out ideas, annotate maps and diagrams, and respond to polls.



With the aid of tablets, traditional engagement practices, such as rendering design visions on paper (shown here), can be stored and transferred digitally. CITY OF BELLEVUE

Digital Polling Polling apps can be used to “transform one-sided presentations into two-way conversations with audiences” (Poll Everywhere 2018). They can do so by encouraging active participation of community members, rather than passive listening. There are several polling options that can be used on tablets and smartphones during planning events, community meetings, and webinars. Polling programs allow people to reply to questions, cast votes, and voice their opinions in real-time. Responses to prompts show up on a screen for all participants to view and can be recorded for future reference.

The City of Bellevue can harness the capability of this technology to capture resident input, including input from residents who have traditionally not participated in planning processes. A few popular and well-regarded polling options include Poll Everywhere, Mentimeter, Participoll and Ask the Room. Basic polling options are free to anyone. For an additional monthly fee (ranging from \$15 to \$2,000, depending on desired features and number of responses polls receive), the City can access features like unlimited participation, reporting options, and discussion moderation.



Poll Everywhere is one polling platform capable of collecting data and facilitating dialogue. This technology could be used by the City to engage with residents during community meetings. POLL EVERYWHERE

Uses of Technology Matrix					
Strategy	Purpose		Context		
	Engage	Broadcast Information	In-person	Remote	
AV/VR	x		x		
Tablets	x		x		
Polling	x		x	x	

Population to Engage			Desired Outcome		
Younger	Older	Language Barrier	Get Feedback on Plans & Ideas	Visioning	Facilitate Conversation
x		x	x	x	
x	x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x		x

CREATIVITY SESSION

Our team facilitated a creative brainstorming session with the intent to generate a set of original strategies for engaging neighborhoods in planning processes. We focused on strategies that would engage those who typically do not attend planning meetings, such as children, teens, young adults, and busy parents—nearly all of whom belong to Generations X, Y, and Z. We assumed no limitations for ourselves so that we could be as creative as possible. Using an analog strategy — butcher paper and colored markers — we compiled any and all relevant ideas, hoping for some gems! After our team of six completed a preliminary brainstorm, we crowdsourced additional ideas from the other 23 students enrolled in CEP 460, all of whom were involved in other LCY projects. The ideas we generated as a class range widely, from in-person events, to interactive digital experiences, to new uses of social media.

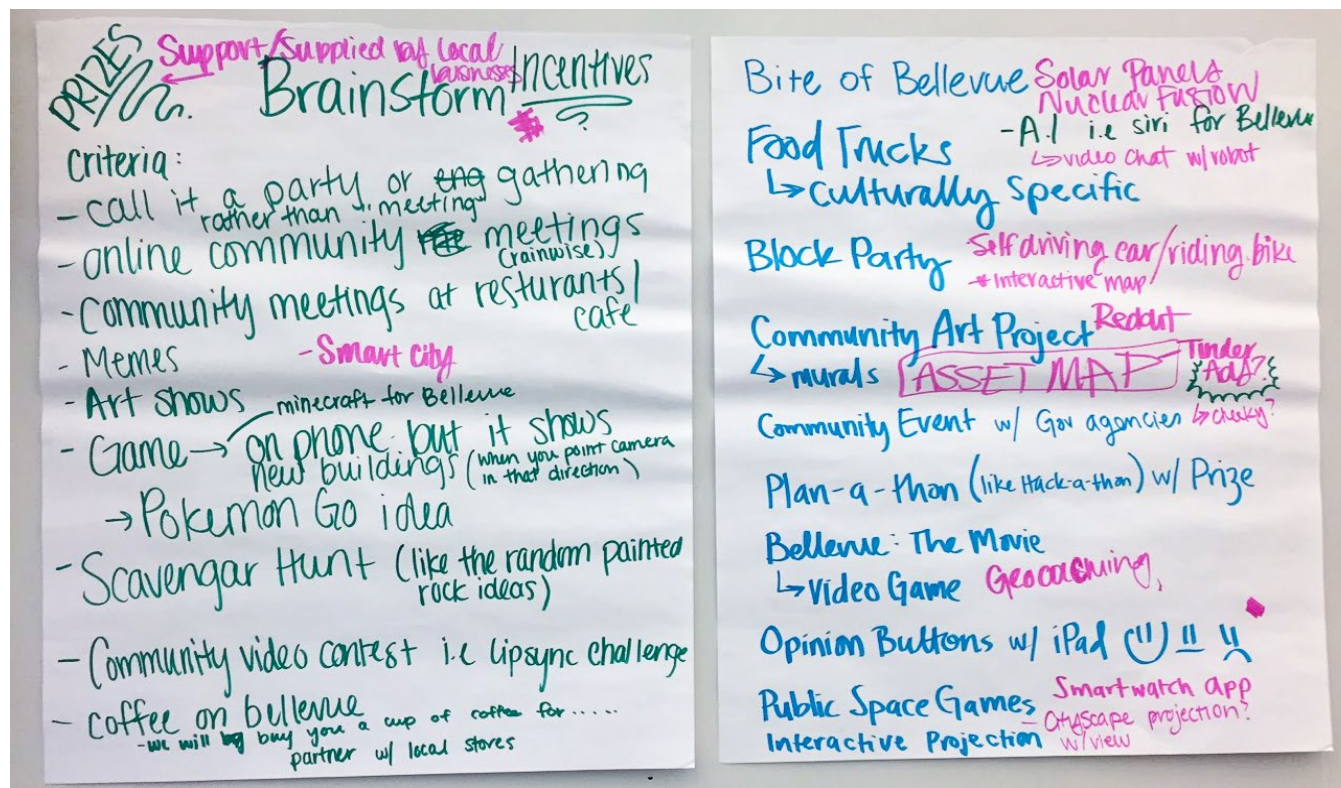
BITE OF BELLEVUE

A combined community meal and neighborhood planning meeting, catered by local restaurants and hosted by the City of Bellevue, could be organized to bring together community members to engage with each other and participate in planning exercises. Contracting with local restaurants to cater the event would cultivate community pride and support local economies. Restaurants could showcase their culinary themes and community members who might not participate in traditional planning events might be more interested in attending this one, motivated by the opportunity to socialize and eat good food. In order to reach the target demographics, the event should be intentionally advertised at spaces frequented by Generations X, Y, and Z: schools, grocery stores, community centers, daycare centers, and other social gathering places.

A combined community meal and neighborhood planning meeting could bring together community members to participate in planning exercises.



Community members may engage with City staff about plans and projects while sharing a meal prepared by chefs from local restaurants. VILLAGE OF WARWICK



Our team generated fresh ideas for community engagement during a free-flowing brainstorm session. LCY STUDENT TEAM

A plan-a-thon creates a high-energy environment that fosters the trading of ideas and collaboration among youth, inspiring them to become more civic-minded.

PLAN-A-THON

A plan-a-thon creates a high-energy environment that fosters the trading of ideas and collaboration among youth, inspiring them to become more civic-minded. Based on the concept of a hackathon, where computer programmers work in teams over a short period of time (often 48 hours) to solve a problem or create a tool and compete for a prize, a plan-a-thon would invite elementary, middle, and/or high school students to participate in an all-day, problem-solving activity. The event could take place at a school gymnasium and would require support from local schools. Student participation could be incentivized through opportunities to win prizes, eat food, and engage in friendly competition with peers. Kicking off the event, the City of Bellevue could present students with a real-life scenario and ask them to come up with creative solutions or courses of action. If a pilot plan-a-thon were a success, additional plan-a-thons could be organized on a recurring basis at schools throughout the City.

PUBLIC SPACE GAMES

The idea of public space games is to engage community members in activities that relate to real-world planning practices. These games are likely to vary in terms of their specific purposes and the devices they would require. To make these games available to all, they should be accessible in public spaces like parks, libraries, and shopping centers. They could also be used to engage community members during public events. However, a less formal approach might appeal to more people, especially to those who do not typically attend public meetings and other events hosted by the City.

Games could mimic the idea of developing a neighborhood based on the visions of community members. An open area could be displayed and building blocks labeled according to their use (e.g., grocery store, post office, movie theater, school, community garden) could be presented for people to combine to create a space that reflects their ideal neighborhood or city. A game like this invites people to use their imagination to contribute to planning in a fun and casual way that does not require them to attend a meeting or complete a survey, and it helps the City understand what residents would like to see in their neighborhood. Public space games invite people to use their imagination to contribute to planning in a fun and casual way that does not require them to attend a public meeting or complete a survey.

ADVERTISING ON APPS LIKE FACEBOOK, FACEBOOK MESSENGER, AND INSTAGRAM

Rather than primarily using social media platforms to post information, this technology can be used to advertise planning events and encourage resident participation. The City can create paid advertisements and broadcast them through social media platforms for as little as \$20 per day. Facebook allows advertisers to select their audiences, specify objectives, choose ad formats, decide where to run their ads (e.g., Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram), and set a budget. The City could request to broadcast their ads at specific times of day to reduce costs, rather than broadcasting ads at all times. The Facebook ads manager tool helps advertisers track the performance of their ads. We recommend the City use this tool as a method for reaching social media account holders who do not currently follow the City of Bellevue.

GEOCACHING SCAVENGER HUNT

A Geocache-style scavenger hunt that sends community members out on adventures around their neighborhoods is one way the City can encourage people to become more excited about their community and realize the value of participating in planning-related conversations. During a scavenger hunt, people get up-close and personal with their neighborhood and have the chance to engage with each other in an activity that is fun and accessible for all ages. After participants complete their adventure they would reconvene at the starting place for a conversation facilitated by Bellevue planners. For the City, the purpose of this conversation would be to understand community members' perceptions of their neighborhood and to engage in dialogue with them about opportunities to address the challenges their communities face. For example, the City could ask questions such as, "where do you feel the most/least safe in your neighborhood while walking?" or "what places do you find most difficult to access walking?" or "where else should the scavenger hunt have sent the group?"

The City can create paid advertisements and broadcast them through social media platforms for as little as \$20 per day.



Bellevue's current neighborhood walking tours can be modified to become interactive geocache-style scavenger hunts. CITY OF BELLEVUE

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a social media platform that carries great potential for the City of Bellevue to broadcast and receive information from community members. In 2018, 78% of 18-24 year-olds used Snapchat nationwide to share messages, photos, and videos, and to interact with other users through “stories” (Smith 2018). While we have not encountered examples of other cities that currently use Snapchat as a public engagement tool, Snapchat’s younger demographic and geographically-linked public story feature make this social media platform a potentially strong method for engaging late Generation Y and most of Generation Z.

STORIES

Snapchat allows people to post stories — curated sets of photos, videos, polls, and articles. Content can be made publicly-viewable to people of a specific geographic area. When creating a story, the City can set a radius from a point within which the story is available. People on Snapchat typically spend one to three minutes tapping through an individual story and interacting with posted content; therefore, the City should strive to make its posts short, varied, and to-the-point. Snapchat content must also be entertaining to captivate people and motivate them to return to a story in the future. The City of Bellevue can create its own official story where people can see updates and interact with polls that display live results.

GEOTAGS

Snapchat also allows account holders to create Geotags. A Geotag is an electronic tag that lets someone assign a geographical location to a post. The City of Bellevue can create a Geotag that limits viewers to geographical boundaries it sets. The City could set neighborhood-specific geographical boundaries to stories to cater purposefully to residents of certain areas. For example, the City could make Northwest and Northeast Bellevue geotags for stories specifically relevant to each neighborhood. These stories can be used to tell residents about upcoming opportunities and to gather information and feedback from them via polls.

Uses of Creative Strategies Matrix					
Strategy	Purpose		Context		
	Engage	Broadcast Information	In-person	Remote	
Creativity Session					
Bite of Bellevue	x		x		
Plan-a-thon	x		x		
Public Space Games	x		x		
Geocaching/ Scavenger Hunt	x		x		
Snapchat	x	x		x	

Population to Engage			Desired Outcome		
Younger	Older	Language Barrier	Get Feedback on Plans & Ideas	Visioning	Facilitate Conversation
x	x				x
x				x	
x	x	x			x
x	x	x			x
x			x		

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

After devising categories and developing an array of recommendations for the City of Bellevue's Neighborhood Area Planning outreach and engagement for NW and NE Bellevue, we discovered that many of our strategies could work together synergistically. Though each strategy outlined in this report is intended to stand alone, we suggest combining strategies to foster broader-reaching, deeper community engagement.

Though each strategy outlined in this report is intended to stand alone, we suggest combining strategies to foster broader-reaching, deeper community engagement.

TABLETS AND POLLING AT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Many of our strategies can be used with a tablet to increase portability and flexibility. Having a hand-held device allows City staff to take their questions and information from formal community meetings to less formal events and public spaces, such as farmers markets, where community members gather. Tablets could serve as real-time polling stations at public events; one tablet could be reserved for people to offer their opinions, and another could display trends and results recorded over time. Polling combined with use of tablets can also be applied at community meetings; groups can be provided with tablets and asked to use them to respond to prompts. One monitor or projector can display results for all to see in real-time. Tablets with real-time polling applications may ease access to polls because they bypass processes of setting up each participant's personal device. This ease of use may be particularly helpful during public meetings.



Incorporating tablets into outreach practices can help City planners easily transport outreach materials from one event to another. CITY OF BELLEVUE



A PLAN-A-THON OR SCAVENGER HUNT AS A FORM OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The City can increase depth and meaning of engagement by combining strategies, such as an in-class activity and a plan-a-thon. Providing students in a classroom setting with information about a problem their community currently faces in advance of a plan-a-thon will give students time to process the problem and begin to reflect on potential solutions. Not only can this allow for a more in-depth analysis of the problem, but it also provides more time for students to explore opportunities for solutions. With more time spent in class, students will likely have an easier time grasping concepts before splintering off into teams and proposing solutions. These two strategies may also be combined with a program like CommunityVis to give students an opportunity to enact their solutions on a digital device and see the likely outcomes of their work.

MAKE THESE EVENTS PLACE-BASED

A school is typically attended by students who live in or around a common neighborhood, so an activity like a scavenger hunt may be a perfect way for planners to hear the perspectives of young people about their own neighborhood. When students return from their scavenger hunt, they can reconvene in one classroom, debrief the activity, and discuss their ideas further.

ADVERTISE WEBINARS ON MULTIPLE OUTLETS

The RainWise example mentioned in the 'Technology' section of this report utilized broadcasting methods to increase attendance of an upcoming webinar. Such methods included sending out postcards to residents, posting about the webinar on the City's Facebook page, reaching out to target neighborhoods on a platform like NextDoor, and advertising on the local public radio station. When these methods are used in concert with webinars, operators observe increased attendance compared to previous webinar sessions when these outreach methods were not applied (Taylor 2018).



The recommendations of this report can guide the City of Bellevue to serve the people of its Great Neighborhoods. CITY OF BELLEVUE

CONCLUSION

Tailoring engagement strategies to suit communities is an imperative step toward planning for healthy, thriving neighborhoods. The City of Bellevue can expand its current social media practices to focus more on student engagement. The City can incorporate new technologies to foster two-way communication and make planning activities more accessible and interesting. By pairing technology with in-person engagement strategies, the City of Bellevue can expand the range of people it engages to include Generations X, Y, and Z. The City can strive to do so while forging more responsive relationships with communities, and while demonstrating its sincere commitment to each neighborhood's needs and visions.

The City of Bellevue can expand its current social media practices to focus more on student engagement. The City can incorporate new technologies to foster two-way communication and make planning activities more accessible and interesting.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The City of Bellevue can expand its use of social media to not only broadcast information, but also engage community members in conversation about upcoming plans and development projects. We recommend that the City consider two-way communication methods on several different social media platforms to reach the target populations, Generations X, Y, and Z. By using social media management tools, the City of Bellevue can streamline its posts across multiple accounts, simplify the task of managing social media, and compare the effectiveness of various platforms it uses. We recommend the use of social media "stories" on Instagram and Snapchat to reach younger community members. Social media and webinars can be used to engage with those who cannot make meetings because of their schedules and with those who have mobility challenges and language barriers. It is important that digital engagement practices via social media and webinars be used in conjunction with, not in place of, in-person interactions between the City and the communities of Bellevue.

INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES

Engaging students at age-appropriate events where they are given opportunities "solve" real-world problems can give the City insight on parts of neighborhoods often overlooked, and inspire a lifetime of civic engagement for participants. A youth commission program or a plan-a-thon organized for youth are two approaches the City might consider to reach and engage student populations.

TECHNOLOGY

By integrating technological devices, in-person engagement activities can be made more meaningful and efficient, and visioning capacity can be increased. Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality technologies can be used to let the public interact with and be immersed in design plans. Tablets are versatile tools that the City of Bellevue can use in a variety of contexts to efficiently display and collect data. The portability of tablets makes them easy to bring to a variety of events, from community meetings, to farmers markets, to walking tours.

The City of Bellevue can use these recommendations to create a suite of engagement strategies that will help planners hear more from a broader range of community members and gain higher quality results through its outreach and engagement efforts. We believe that the strategies described in this report will aid planners in making communities' visions of their neighborhoods a reality.

It is important that digital engagement practices via social media and webinars be used in conjunction with, not in place of, in-person interactions between the City and the communities of Bellevue.

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