

Public Participation Summary

December 2023



King County

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Overview

The process of the 2024 update to the King County Comprehensive Plan (2024 Update) has been rooted in the value of making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive.¹ In support of this value, the 2024 Update included significant public participation efforts to ensure that the County is hearing about and addressing the most pressing long-range planning needs of the community – particularly for those who have been historically underrepresented in the planning process.²

To support early and continuous engagement throughout the 2024 Update process, and as established in the Scope of Work for the 2024 Update,³ Executive staff developed a multi-phase public participation work program, with a focus on:

- **Centering the voices** of those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or refugees, and other intersectional populations, including people who earn less than 80 percent of the area median income, people with disabilities, seniors, LGBTQIA+ people, and/or those who identify as women; and
- **Partnering** with King County equity cabinets⁴ and community-based organizations.

¹ 2024 Update Scope of Work; Motion 16142, Attachment A [\[LINK\]](#)

² Historically underrepresented groups or populations are communities of people whose experiences, opinions, and life outcomes have intentionally or indirectly not been sought out or reflected in planning processes. Historically underrepresented groups often include Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities; immigrants; refugees; people living with low incomes; people speaking a language(s) other than English; women and gender non-conforming individuals; and LGBTQIA+ people.

³ Motion 16142, Attachment A [\[LINK\]](#)

⁴ Climate Equity Community Task Force, Mobility Equity Cabinet, Open Space Equity Cabinet, and King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission

The work program for the 2024 Update strove to meet the "County engages in dialogue" level of community engagement as outlined in the King County Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice Community Engagement Guide,⁵ with:

- two-way channels of communication;
- multiple interactions;
- advancing solutions to complex problems; and
- creating an advisory board and community partnerships.

As required by King County Code 20.18.160, Executive staff posted information online about the Comprehensive Plan and the 2024 update, the update schedule, opportunities for public involvement and ways to provide input, and the range of proposals under consideration by the County. Information and project updates at key milestones were also provided, as appropriate, via a variety of methods, such as the Comprehensive Plan email list, other County email lists, social media, and hard-copy materials at key locations.

Notably, each of these efforts included the use of language access strategies, including but not limited to materials translated into six or more languages, interpretation services, and use of illustration and graphic design for key materials.

Plan Development

The public engagement landscape in King County in January of 2022 was drastically different than the last major Comprehensive Plan Update in 2016. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the channels and gathering places for the general population, as well as the general attitude towards government. While public response rate to land use planning issues had always been based on the subject matter, existing methods of outreach (e.g., zoom meetings, engaging with same people and groups that participated in other recent planning efforts, reusing existing email lists, etc.) were no longer generating the same engagement result.

County demographics have also shifted over the last decade to include more and more people of color, immigrants, refugees, and those who speak English as a second language. While County government had been growing its digital audience through email lists and social media over the last several years to better meet the resident needs, the Comprehensive Plan mailing lists tended to skew towards those who have previously participated in the land use planning process.

Finally, there were also a number of King County public engagement efforts happening concurrent with the 2024 Update – including two subarea planning efforts (Snoqualmie and Vashon), a fair housing survey, and a climate change survey that had the potential to ask overlapping questions from the same audience.

⁵ King County Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice Community Engagement Guide [\[LINK\]](#)

2024 Update Engagement Approach

During early development of the scope of work for the 2024 Update, Executive staff worked with community members to identify the strategies for consulting, informing, and involving the community throughout the entire planning process. A few themes that emerged from those conversations included:

- ✓ Importance of investing in outreach and building relationships
- ✓ Importance of having a mix of strategies for different communities
- ✓ Importance of recognizing that people have time constraints and will need help understanding the materials (beyond just language)
- ✓ Importance of focusing on depth as well as breadth

Process Improvements

Based on this input, as well as further research and analysis, Executive staff revised the process for the 2024 Update in four key ways to make it more collaborative, accessible, and equitable:

1. **Increased opportunities for public input during the development of Plan proposals.** Executive staff created two additional opportunities for public input during the development of Plan proposals. The Update was the first time that the County offered the option of a survey to share input on the direction of the proposals after the scope was approved by the Council. It was also the first time that the general public received an early concept of draft proposals for review and input, prior to the release of the full Public Review Draft. The early concepts proposal document was translated into eight different languages and circulated to multiple County email lists that included hundreds of thousands of recipients.
2. **Diversified and more accessible methods of participation.** To lower barriers to participation, Executive staff used surveys, virtual meetings, an open house meeting with all ages activities and language interpretation, and partnership with community-based partners for creating awareness of and gaining public input on the Plan.
3. **Incorporation of community engagement in addition to public engagement.** To encourage ongoing two-way dialogue, build capacity through multiple interactions on complex topics, and center community input in development of the Plan, Executive staff formed the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Equity Work Group (Equity Work Group), which is an advisory body of community leaders who represent communities historically underrepresented in comprehensive planning processes, to collaborate on development of the Update.
4. **Continuous equity impact reviews** through different stages of Plan development.

To better navigate these changes with new target audiences, Executive staff took an iterative and data-driven approach to piloting new strategies. For example, Executive staff regularly monitored demographic data provided by survey respondents throughout the process to evaluate how effective certain engagement strategies were in reaching priority populations

and to tweak outreach methods to better engage populations with lower response rates. This resulted in Executive staff building a robust strategy around a proven method (email and townhall meetings) while also investing in small pilot projects and partnerships to better explore the contours of the post-COVID public engagement landscape.

Key Milestones

This section provides a summary of the resulting activities to date during the first three phases of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update, and a brief overview of what to expect in the fourth and final phase.

Phase 1: Scoping

During the scoping phase of the 2024 Update in early 2022, the County shared information about comprehensive planning and the 2024 Update and requested public input through the Docket.⁶ Based on the aforementioned guidance from community members during the shaping of engagement strategies for the 2024 Update, the scope was further informed by review of:

- Input from the Skyway-West Hill and North Highline subarea planning processes from 2018 through 2022; and
- Recommendations from the King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission, Mobility Equity Cabinet, Open Space Equity Cabinet, and Climate Equity Community Task Force.

Public engagement on the scope of the environmental review for the 2024 Update also occurred in Summer 2022.

Phase 2: Development of the Proposals

Throughout the development of the Executive Public Review Draft during mid-2022 through mid-2023, Executive staff engaged community through a number of methods, including the creation the Equity Work Group. Comprised of 15 individuals representing communities and places historically underrepresented in King County's comprehensive planning efforts, this group worked closely with Executive staff to incorporate equity considerations into the 2024 Update. The Group's work included: participating in educational sessions to expand their knowledge base; reviewing and providing input on housing proposals; and co-development and review of the equity impact review⁷ process for the 2024 Update. Additionally, the Equity Work Group was instrumental for shaping the community engagement methods for the 2024 Update, as well as identifying the groups that should be included in the engagement process.

Executive staff also created opportunities for the general public to stay informed and provide input to the work via website, social media, newsletters, emails, surveys, town hall meetings,

⁶ As required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.470, the Docket is the method for members of the public to formally request changes to the Comprehensive Plan, land use designations and zoning classifications, and development regulations. [LINK](#)

⁷ An equity impact review is a process to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact - both positive and negative - of a policy or program on equity.

and ethnic media. Partnerships with local businesses and community-based organizations were also utilized at key project milestones to expand the reach of engagement with priority populations.

- After the scope was approved by the Council,⁸ Executive staff implemented a large-scale public awareness campaign in September and October 2022. This effort was centered around an opportunity for the public to provide input on the three main theme areas for the 2024 Update (equity, housing, and climate change). It included use of a partnership with a community-based organization that specializes in outreach to priority populations by trusted community leaders. This group organized place-based outreach at a local community BBQ, Little League games in the Skyway and White Center area, and partnerships with local barbershops to encourage residents to provide input while waiting in line.
- During February 2023, the Executive shared draft early conceptual proposals with the public and invited engagement with the County through a variety of channels about the concepts in the draft, including incentivized input survey and virtual town halls. Example of this effort was a partnership with a local bakery to provide incentives for those who participated in the survey, and a place-based outreach effort conducted in partnership with the members of the Equity Work Group and other community-based organizations such as the Silent Taskforce, Utopia Washington, and White Center Community Development Association to meet people where they were.

Phase 3: Public Review Draft Plan

The third phase of engagement began after the Public Review Draft of the 2024 Update was released on June 1 for a 45-day public review and comment period. The Public Review Draft was posted online; circulated to multiple County email lists that included hundreds of thousands of recipients; advertised in print, radio, and social media; and noticed on posters and handouts at key community locations. A summary of the proposals was also translated into eight languages. Engagement during this time to encourage public awareness of and input on the Public Review Draft included an open house at the Southgate Roller Rink in White Center, three virtual town halls, tabling at community-led events, working with ethnic media outlets and BIPOC social media micro-influencers, and partnering with community centers in neighborhoods that have been historically underrepresented in the planning process.

Phase 4: Council Review and Adoption

Following completion of the public comment period on the Public Review Draft, Executive staff reviewed public comments, evaluated in them in the context of the draft proposals, and made adjustments to the proposals to reflect public input, where appropriate. The Executive recommended plan was then finalized and submitted to the County Council in December 2023.

⁸ Motion 16142, Attachment A [\[LINK\]](#)

The Council’s review, refinement, and adoption process throughout 2024 will include further public outreach and opportunities as part of its decision-making process. The Council’s process will include the ability to submit written feedback, opportunities for verbal public comment, a formal public hearing before the Council, a 30-day notice of the public hearing date and a formal comment period, emailed notices of key milestones and opportunities for input, and a mailed notice to properties near proposed land use and/or zoning changes. The Council may also add additional opportunities as it sees fit to do.

Outcomes

The 2024 update built upon the relationship-building work of previous planning efforts, worked with community partners, increased the opportunities for public input, and diversified the methods for public input. As a result, the County had a more than of 1,500,000 "early and continuous"⁹ quantifiable points of engagement to and from the public throughout the first three phases of the 2024 Update process. Some of the key groups that were consulted and informed during this time include: Indian tribes, community-based organizations, County commissions and committees, other jurisdictions, and unincorporated area councils.

Public Input and Participation

The County received over 10,000 written comments from the public during the development of proposals phase, and over 700 written comments during the Public Review Draft public comment period. Over 550 residents attended the five virtual and in-person events throughout the 2024 Update. Public comments are quantified in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Public Participants by Plan Phase

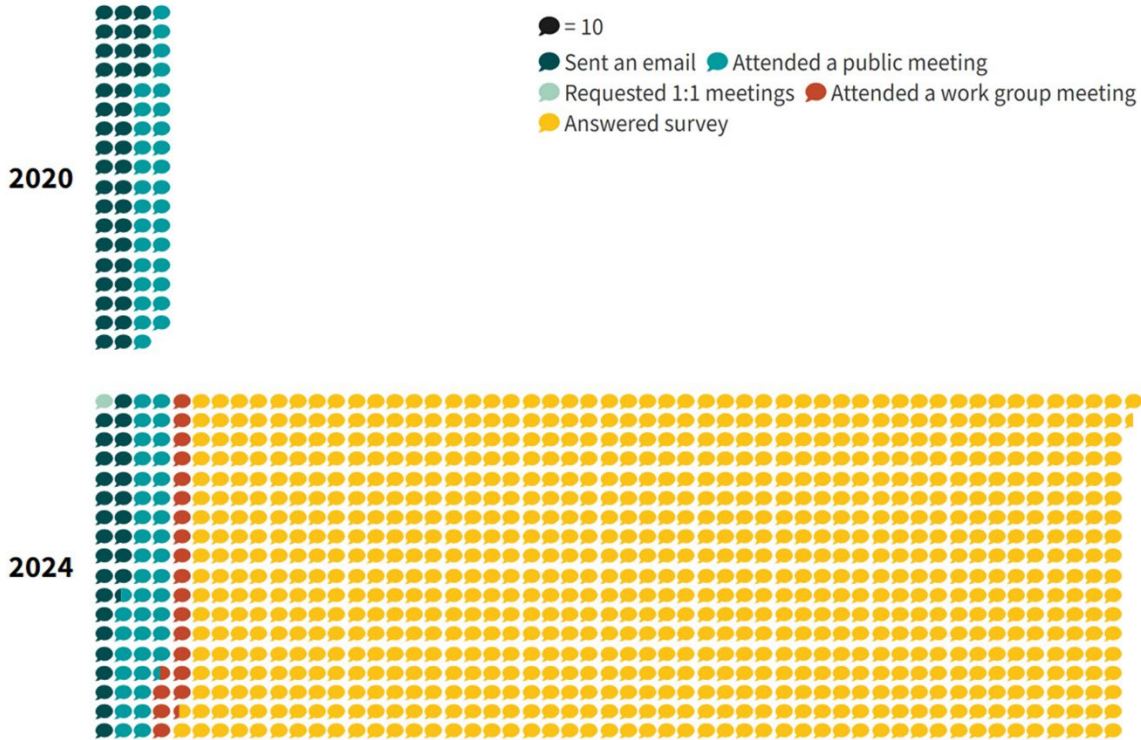
Phase	Public Participants
Development of the Proposals (June 2022 – May 2023)	10,000+ public participants 3,300+ unique participants (fall survey) 1,900+ unique participants (Early Concepts) 150+ participants (in-person and virtual events) 50+ hours of Equity Work Group meetings
Public Review Draft (June – July 2023)	740+ public participants 3,300+ unique participants (Public Review Draft survey) 400+ participants (in-person and virtual events) 20+ hours of Equity Work Group meetings

The Figure 2 shows approximately how the amount of public input differed between the 2024 Update and the 2020 Update. One of the most impactful changes was the addition of short surveys as an alternative to attending a meeting or drafting an email to provide input. While similar numbers of meeting attendees and emailed comments were received in both updates, the surveys greatly increased written comment received by the County. Survey responses accounted for 92 percent of all written comments and provided a means for staff to identify

¹⁰ King County Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice Community Engagement Guide [\[LINK\]](#)

comments from priority populations to center their input, as a series of optional demographics questions was included at the end of each survey.

Figure 2: Estimated Public Participation during the 2020 and 2024 Updates



Source: King County Regional Planning (2022-2023, 2020)

Throughout the course of these efforts, the County strove to ensure a demographically representative proportion of responses from the historically underrepresented priority populations to best center their needs in the Update process. The demographic data provided by survey respondents allowed Executive staff to disaggregate survey results by race, income, gender, location, language, and other factors to contextualize responses and understand patterns. Weekly review of response data and results also helped Executive staff to monitor demographic participation and adjust outreach methods to ensure representative proportions of responses from priority populations. Throughout each engagement period, adjustments were made to the engagement strategies to better engage populations with lower response rates.

Demographics

Figure 3 shows the demographics of all survey participants who chose to share their demographic information, compared to the overall King County (KC) and unincorporated King County (UKC) population. Some of the categories are marked “N/A” for “not available” because there is no comparable census data available.

Figure 3: Public Comments by Race, Gender, Income, Migration, Disability

Demographic Categories	Percent of Population		
	Survey	KC	UKC
Race			
White, Caucasian (of European descent)	68%	54%	64%
Black/African American	6%	7%	5%
Latino/ Latino/ Latinx or Hispanic	7%	11%	9%
Asian/ Asian American	8%	20%	13%
South Asian/ South Asian American	2%	<i>included in Asian</i>	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	1%	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4%	1%	1%
Middle Eastern or North African	2%	N/A	N/A
Biracial/Multiracial	2%	7%	7%
Gender			
Woman	50%	50%	50%
Man	37%	50%	50%
Prefer not to say	9%	N/A	N/A
Non-binary/Genderqueer/Gender Fluid	3%	N/A	N/A
Transman	0.4%	N/A	N/A
Transwoman	0.4%	N/A	N/A
Write in	1%	N/A	N/A
Income			
\$200k or more	20%	17%	20%
\$150-199k	11%	11%	13%
\$100-149K	24%	19%	21%
\$75-99k	15%	12%	12%
\$50-74k	13%	14%	13%
\$35-49K	8%	9%	8%
\$25-34k	4%	5%	5%
\$15-24k	3%	5%	4%
\$10-14k	1%	3%	2%
Less than \$10k	2%	4%	3%
Migration*			
Our people are from this land for time immemorial/ many generations	67%	77%	82%
I and/or my family came to this county in the last 70 years	26%	23%	18%
None of the above	8%	N/A	N/A
Disability**			
Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs	21%	5%	4%
Deaf, hard of hearing, or have serious difficulty hearing	16%	3%	3%
Physical, mental, or emotional condition that causes serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions	20%	4%	4%
Physical, mental, or emotional condition that causes serious difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping	13%	4%	4%
Blind, low vision, or have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses	5%	2%	2%
Difficulty dressing or bathing	3%	2%	2%
Other Disability	22%	N/A	N/A

*The survey questions asked did not correspond precisely to standard reporting categories for foreign born population. Survey responses designed to identify individuals and households born outside of the United States are compared to Census data for the population born outside of the United States.

** The survey responses in this section reflects whether the individual or anyone in their household identified with any of the following conditions. The census numbers for King County and Unincorporated King County reflects individuals who identify with the following conditions.

Language Access Strategies

In early 2022, Executive staff applied for and received a federal grant to assist with implementing language access strategies for the Update. These language access strategies were critical to successfully hearing from those communities who have been historically excluded from the comprehensive planning process, due to lack of access to information about proposals, or lack of support in reviewing the proposals.

The federal funds were used to ensure the presence of interpreters in six languages at all public meetings (virtual and in-person), as well as the translation of key materials in eight languages. These languages reflected the top six languages spoken in unincorporated King County (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Somali, and Russian), as well as the inclusion of two additional languages (Khmer, Samoan) for surveys and the summary of the proposals, at the suggestion of the Equity Work Group.

In addition, Executive staff worked with graphic designers and public engagement consultants to create friendly, inclusive, and accessible materials for explaining key concepts and inviting community members to participate.

Digital and Media Strategies

Executive staff also sought to inform the general public through email list-servs, social media, newspapers, blogs, and radio stations. Email remained the most effective way to communicate with the public, especially when coupled with engaging graphics and direct links to documents.

Community Partnerships

Figure 4 highlights some of the community partnerships that took place over the course of 2022-2023 to inform the community about the 2024 Update and provide an opportunity for residents to share their input.

Figure 4: Community Partnerships

Date	Community Partnerships
Sep 2022	Community BBQ (Skyway Park)
Sep 2022	Little League Games
Sep 2022	Barbershop Incentive
Feb 2023	Bakery Incentive (Puffy Pandy)
Jun 2023	Juneteenth Celebration (Skyway)
Jun 2023	Southgate Roller Rink (White Center)
July 2023	Community Centers (various)
July 2023	Social media micro-influencers

Outreach Activities

Figure 5 provides an illustrative list of the groups and methods utilized for outreach during 2022 and 2023.

Figure 5: Outreach Activities

Date	Activities	
'22	Jan	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan) Commissions/Committees (Rural Forest) Community members
	Feb	Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Commissions/Committees (Agriculture, Farm Fish Flood) Community members

Date	Activities
<i>Mar</i>	eNews List (Unincorporated Area News) Tribes (Tulalip) Commissions/Committees (King County Equity Work Groups) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Service Area Townhalls (East Renton, Four Creeks) Community Members
<i>Apr</i>	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan, Unincorporated Area, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County Subarea Plan) Commissions/Committees (Immigrant & Refugee, Climate Equity, Open Space Equity) Community Members
<i>May</i>	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan, King County District 4) Commissions/Committees (Metro Transit Equity, King County Equity) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Members
<i>Jun</i>	eNews List (King County District 4) Commissions/Committees (Metro Transit Equity, King County Equity) Indian Tribes (Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Samish, Squaxin, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Tulalip) Cities (Sammamish, Issaquah, Duvall, Skykomish, North Bend) Community Events (Fall City) Community Members
<i>Jul</i>	eNews List (Unincorporated Area News, King County District 3) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Events (Vashon)
<i>Aug</i>	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan, SEPA, King County District 3) Commissions/Committees (King County equity groups) Media (Seattle Times) Cities (Snoqualmie, Carnation) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Events (Vashon)
<i>Sep</i>	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan, Unincorporated Area News, Anti-Displacement and Equitable Development, Businesses in unincorporated King County, OERSJ, Chambers and economic developers, King County Comprehensive Plan, Local Business Help, Local Services Chamber Grants, Local Services Small Business Grant Recipients, Nonprofits Eligible for King County Surplus Property, North Highline CSA Subarea Plan, Skyway-West Hill CSA Subarea Plan, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County Subarea Plan, and Vashon-Maury Island CSA Plan, District 2 news, District 4 news, District 7 news) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group) Media (Seattle Times) Cities (Snoqualmie, Carnation, Issaquah) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Events (Skyway/White Center) Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, Twitter)
<i>Oct</i>	eNews List (Anti-Displacement and Equitable Development, North Highline CSA Subarea Plan, Skyway-West Hill CSA Subarea Plan, Nonprofits Eligible for King County Surplus Property, Vashon-Maury Island) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group) Cities (Snoqualmie, Seattle) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Groups (Mountains to Sound, Snoqualmie Valley Hospital) Community Members
<i>Nov</i>	Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group) Community Members
<i>Dec</i>	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group)
'23	<i>Jan</i> eNews List (Anti-Displacement and Equitable Development, Businesses in unincorporated King County, Chambers and economic developers, King County Comprehensive Plan, King County Comprehensive Plan - PublicInput Subscribers, Local Business Help, Local Services Chamber Grants, Local Services Small Business Grant Recipients, Nonprofits Eligible for King County Surplus Property, North Highline CSA Subarea Plan, Skyway-West Hill CSA Subarea Plan, Vashon-Maury Island CSA Plan, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County Subarea Plan) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Members
<i>Feb</i>	eNews List (Comprehensive Plan, Unincorporated Area News, Anti-Displacement and Equitable Development, Businesses in unincorporated King County, OERSJ, Chambers and economic developers, King County Comprehensive Plan, Local Business Help, Local Services Chamber Grants, Local Services Small Business Grant Recipients, Nonprofits Eligible for King County Surplus Property, North Highline CSA Subarea Plan, Skyway-West Hill CSA Subarea Plan, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County Subarea

Date	Activities
	Plan, and Vashon-Maury Island CSA Plan, District 3 news, District 4 news, District 6 news, District 7 news) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group) Townhalls & Focus Groups (Comprehensive Plan, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County) Cities (Snoqualmie, Carnation, Issaquah) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Events (Skyway/White Center) Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, Twitter) Media (Radio El Rey) Community Members
<i>Mar</i>	Cities (Carnation) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group, Washington Association of Water and Sewer Districts, Puget Sound Energy) Tribes (Tulalip, Snoqualmie, Suquamish) General Public
<i>Apr</i>	Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group) Tribes (Snoqualmie, Suquamish) Community Members
<i>May</i>	Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group, Building Industry) Media (Vashon Beachcomber)
<i>Jun</i>	eNews List (Anti-Displacement and Equitable Development, Businesses in unincorporated King County, Chambers and economic developers, King County Comprehensive Plan, King County Comprehensive Plan - PublicInput Subscribers, Local Business Help, Local Services Chamber Grants, Local Services Small Business Grant Recipients, North Highline Subarea Plan, Skyway-West Hill Subarea Plan, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County Subarea Plan, Unincorporated Area News, Vashon-Maury Island Subarea Plan, District 2 news, District 3 news, District 4 news, District 6 news, District 7 news, District 8 news, District 9 news) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group, Rural Forest Commission) Townhalls & Focus Groups (Comprehensive Plan Virtual, Comprehensive Plan Open House, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County) Cities (Snoqualmie, Carnation, Issaquah) Tribes (Muckleshoot) Joint Rural Area Team (UACs) Community Events/Meetings (Fall City Community Association, Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coalition, Skyway Juneteenth Event) Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, Twitter) Media (Radio El Rey, Vashon Beachcomber, Renton Reporter, Kent Reporter, Covington Reporter, Snoqualmie Valley Record) Community Members
<i>Jul</i>	eNews List (King County District 9, Vashon-Maury Island subarea plan) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group, Agriculture Commission) Townhalls & Focus Groups (Vashon-Maury Island) Community Events/Meetings (Skyway Nia Festival, West Hill Community Association, Northshore Senior Center, North Bellevue Community Center) Social Media (Facebook)
<i>Aug</i>	eNews List (White Center Community Development Association) Commissions/Committees (Equity Work Group, Agriculture Commission, Boundary Review Board)

Equity Work Group

The engagement process improvements netted levels of public interest, engagement, and input that vastly superseded previous Updates. To reach the community engagement goal of “County engages in dialogue,” the Update process required instituting a means for sustained conversation with community to support the “advancement of solutions to complex problems,” as called for in the Community Engagement Continuum.¹⁰ The formation of the Equity Work Group was driven by the need for deeper and broader engagement with

¹⁰ King County Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice Community Engagement Guide [\[LINK\]](#)

historically underrepresented communities on their needs while building understanding and awareness of comprehensive planning more generally.

Creation of the Equity Work Group envisioned the opportunity for members to experience the evolving Update process to build understanding of comprehensive planning topics, and to provide direct input to shape the direction and content of equity impact review, plan proposals, and engagement efforts. The Equity Work Group's experience could also inform future efforts to move Plan engagement up the community engagement continuum and increase process equity.

Composition

The Equity Work Group was comprised of 15 individuals representing communities and places historically underrepresented in King County's comprehensive planning efforts. All Equity Work Group members were members of BIPOC communities, and many members lived or worked in geographic communities within unincorporated King County, including North Highline, Skyway-West Hill, and East Federal Way. Members were participants of other King County equity cabinets or convened work groups, or by recommendation of community-based groups engaged in King County's equity and racial and social justice work. Members were compensated for their participation at standard compensation rates for 2022-23.

Workplan

The Equity Work Group met 16 times between September 2022 and October 2023. Staff from various County Executive departments (Department staff) attended to better understand the lived experience of community members, participate in more nuanced discussions of community input, and discuss the potential equity impacts of Update proposals.

In December 2022, the Equity Work Group approved a workplan (Figure 6) to outline their efforts and priorities for 2023. The Equity Work Group identified three focus areas to maximize their influence and build upon their interests and strengths: housing proposals, the equity impact review Process, and public engagement efforts.

The Equity Work Group's engagement efforts began with review and advisement on public engagement survey content. Members were also critical in advocating for in person engagement, identifying and attending community events for tabling opportunities, and shaping and attending the Public Review Draft open house.

To support deeper discussion on the housing proposals, the Equity Work Group met for several educational sessions to learn about land use and housing planning and to delve into specifics about affordable housing issues within King County. In conversation, staff from the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Department of Local Services, Regional Planning, and the Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice learned which community hopes, values, fears, and shared experiences were important to ensure equitable outcomes in the housing proposals.

These early conversations also led the Equity Work Group to begin crafting a series of questions to help Department staff evaluate and consider equity implications of Plan proposals as part of the equity impact review of the Update. To further the spirit of two-way channels of communication and multiple interactions, department staff provided responses to

the Equity Work Group’s questions as well as to follow-up questions. This iterative process encouraged both Department staff and Equity Work Group members to collaborate in looking for opportunities and identifying unintended consequences to strengthen the proposals.

Figure 6: Equity Work Group 2023 Workplan

Approved Workplan Component	Approved Workplan Description	Equity Work Group Activities
Public Engagement	Work Group members will have an opportunity to be lead and/or participate in various aspects of the public engagement efforts for the comprehensive plan.	<p>Provided input on scoping and early concepts draft proposal survey questions</p> <p>Provided input and prioritized events and locations for in person engagement on Public Review Draft</p> <p>Hosted Executive staff at community events and centers</p>
Equity Impact Review	The Work Group will provide feedback on current conditions and community context to integrate racially disparate impacts and illuminate missing data to tell a more compelling story about the conditions in unincorporated King County. Members of the Work Group will also develop a set of questions in dialogue with county staff to ensure that plan proposals are centering equity.	<p>Provided input on current conditions report content</p> <p>Developed standard Equity Analysis Question and guiding prompts</p> <p>Provided review of and input on Department staff equity analysis</p>
Housing Proposals	Work Group members will engage in dialogue with county staff to ensure that the selected proposals for the affordable housing strategies centers equity and community needs. Work Group members will have an opportunity to access additional data, complete background readings, review policy and code language, and provide feedback to staff members throughout the development of affordable housing strategies.	<p>Engaged in initial topic discussions with Department staff subject matter experts</p> <p>Identified community priorities for housing proposal prioritization</p> <p>Provided input on housing proposals in the early concepts and Public Review Draft</p>

Conclusion

The 2024 Update was an opportunity for King County to start a new conversation with members of historically underrepresented communities about how to best work together to plan for the future. The process improvements that were implemented helped to make public engagement on Plan development more collaborative, accessible, and equitable, resulting in more than 1,500,000 points of public engagement and over 10,000 comments received. There is still more work to be done to evaluate, identify, and implement the lessons learned from the 2024 Update and to continue to evolve the engagement process. However, these new diversified engagement strategies, community partnerships, and insights from the Equity Work Group lay a solid foundation for more equitable engagement in future Plan updates.



Photo of County staff and Equity Work Group members from June 2023 Open House at Southgate Roller Rink in White Center