

Budgeting for Equity Framework

The 2023-2024 Budget takes steps toward promoting greater consideration of equity in the City's fiscal decision-making. On March 7, 2022, Bellevue staff requested feedback from Council on development and testing of an equity lens for the budget process.

How does the Budgeting for Equity Framework fit into Bellevue's Broader Ecosystem of Equity-Focused Efforts?

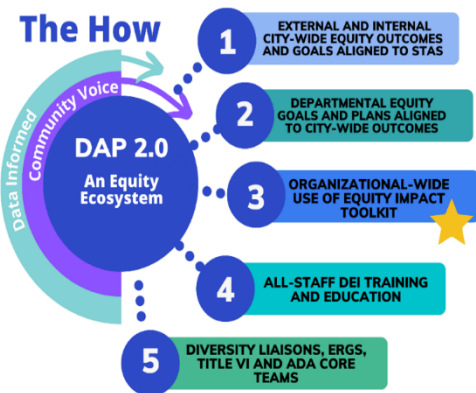
The City Council's vision statement begins,

"Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength." Bellevue's Diversity Advantage Plan (DAP), adopted in 2014 and integrated into Council Priority 15, seeks to make Council's vision a reality, and has informed and fueled a wide range of

Figure 1: Bellevue's Equity Ecosystem

The What

To achieve an equitable City of Bellevue for residents and staff alike. To eliminate disparities in outcomes and to ensure all members of our community can access, participate in and benefit from services, resources, and opportunities that contribute to a high quality of life, regardless of an individual's identities such as race, gender, or ability.



equity-focused efforts citywide. The Diversity Advantage Team (DAT) is currently in the process of creating an update of the DAP that will provide a roadmap to drive toward greater equity within City operations. The Budgeting for Equity Framework is meant to compliment and build upon these other strategic efforts within the City. Figure 1 provides a high-level overview of Bellevue's equity ecosystem and illustrates where the Budgeting for Equity Framework fits into this broader suite of equity-focused efforts.

Current State of Budgeting for Equity

In developing the Budgeting for Equity Framework, the workgroup sought to build on efforts already underway. Currently, there are a variety of efforts at the department level to build equity considerations into fiscal and policy decision making.

Some examples of the City's recent efforts that influenced policy and fiscal decision making for the 23-24 biennium include:

- **Using an Equity Lens in Human Services Funding:** The Bellevue Human Services Commission is responsible for making funding recommendations to City Council and is currently in the process of developing recommendations to allocate resources totaling approximately \$5,000,000 to contracts for the 23-24 biennium. For this current cycle, the Commission has for the first time adopted an equity rubric as a central input into their decision making.
- **Using Equity Considerations to Inform Park Investments:** Parks CIP investments are informed by the Parks and Open Space System Plan (POSSP). The POSSP was fundamentally developed and updated with an equity lens. The current 2023-2029 CIP reflects this emphasis and includes investments totaling \$10 million as seed money for

Parks investments in Eastgate and Factoria, areas of the City where there has historically been a lower concentration of Parks facilities.

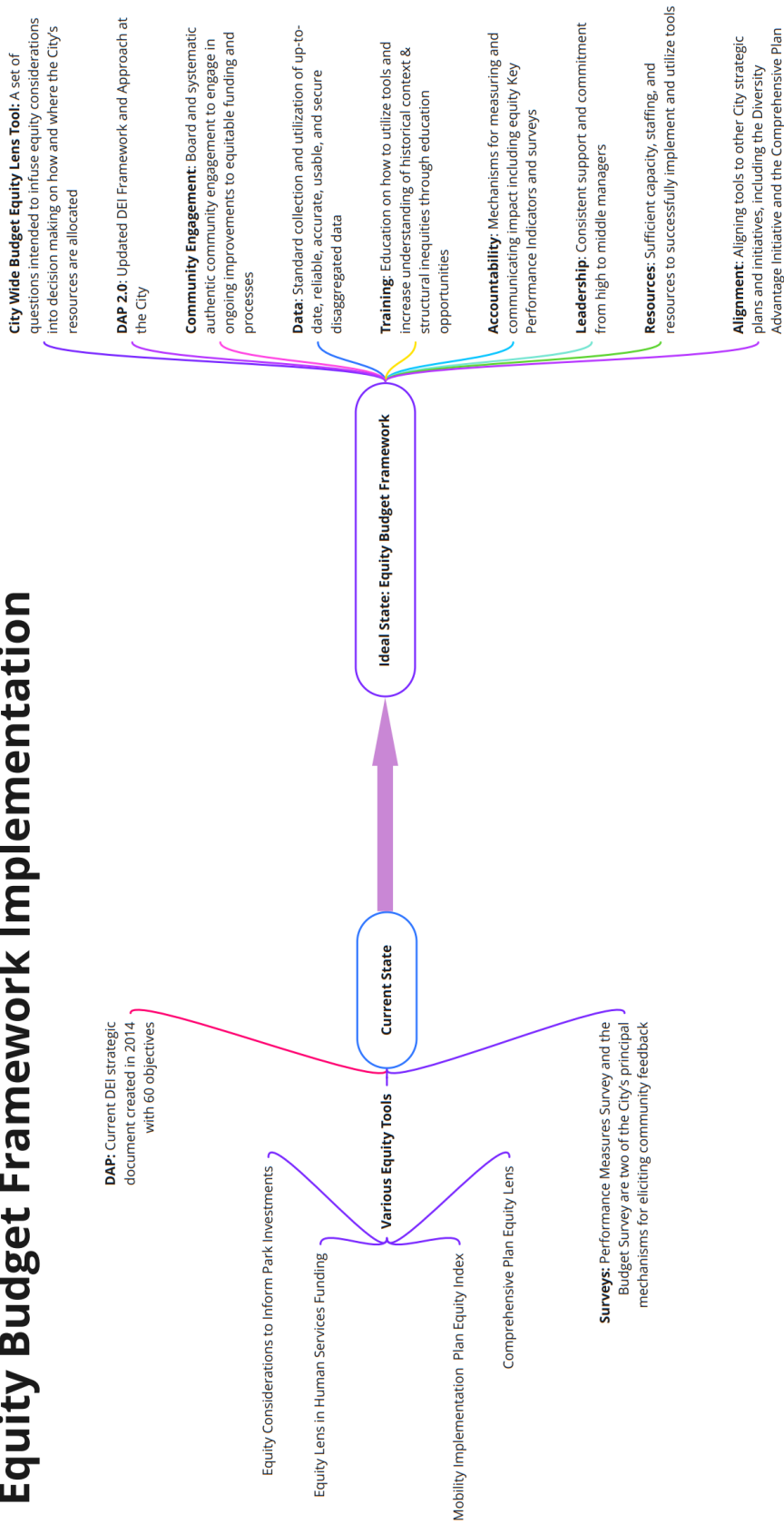
- **Using an Equity Lens to Shape Transportation Investment:** The Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP) is a new long-range planning framework developed by the Bellevue Transportation Commission at the request of the City Council. The purpose of the MIP is to ensure that all of Bellevue's transportation plans are compatible with each other and with the City's land use plan. The MIP includes an "equity index" to help identify places where specific types of projects would enable people get to where they need to go.
- **Applying Equity Lens to Fundamental City Policies-Update of Comprehensive Plan:** Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan is the City's foundational policy document, guiding growth and development for the next 20 years. The 2024 update, to guide Bellevue's development through 2044, is now underway. Recognizing the importance of ensuring that city policies are aligned to undo societal inequities and address the needs of communities that have been historically marginalized, Community Development is applying an equity lens to the Comprehensive Plan update process.
- **Incorporating Equity Considerations into City Feedback Mechanisms:** The Performance Measures Survey and the Budget Survey are two of the City's principal mechanisms for eliciting community feedback. The most recent Performance Survey was conducted in 2021 and for the first time included questions to measure residents' sense of belonging in their community. The 2022 Budget Survey was improved to collect and report survey responses disaggregated by race, among other demographic categories.

Recommendation-Moving from Current to Ideal State

The Budget Equity Framework is an opportunity to deepen the City's understanding of the impacts of budgetary decisions on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and other historically marginalized communities to ultimately eliminate disparities in outcomes within the City of Bellevue.

These recommendations are intended to guide the City from the current to a more ideal state, where equity is comprehensively and systematically integrated into fiscal decision making at all levels, as shown below.

Equity Budget Framework Implementation



Proposed Budget Equity Framework

The Budget Equity Framework is an iterative process consisting of five components: 1) Continuous community engagement 2) Data Collection and Analysis 3) Application of the Budget Equity Impact Questions 4) Ranking of budget proposals and 5) Making budget decisions with an equity lens.

Central to the Budget Equity Framework are the Equity Impact Questions. The City's budget process requires departments to submit narratives that lay out the rationale and resource requirements for proposed

programs. While in the past some proposal narratives have referenced the impact of the program on equity, this has not been incorporated systematically in the budget development process. The questions below will be incorporated into the Budget Proposal process as a means of capturing how departments, and department budget proposals, address equity.

Implementation: A Phased Approach

Phasing is intended to complement upcoming work to update the Diversity Advantage Plan and the existing budget process.

- Phase I: Complete Budget Equity Framework Groundwork (Dec 2022-Nov 2023)
- Phase II: Budget Preparation & Adoption (November 2023-November 2024)
- Phase III: Measuring Impact and Continuous Improvement (December 2024-ongoing)

First steps will include creating usage guidelines for the framework, training staff on how to use the tool, giving staff ample opportunity to engage with impacted communities, and ensuring staff have access to quality disaggregated data to inform their decision making.

Figure 2: Budget Equity Framework

